

TIME OUT OF MIND

[The original version wasted several chapters setting the stage. An Irish ex-seminarian returned to consciousness after twenty years in a padded cell, where he had been confined after severe head injuries. When he saw what had happened to his Catholic Church, he tried to persuade a few “sane” priests of the absurdity of the situation. We begin with his arguments. The clerical positions were all spoken or written to me by Australian priests or bishops old enough to know better. I have composed only Joe Riordan’s replies. I have prefixed all his words with an “R” unless he is specifically identified in the text as the speaker.]

Gilchrist, the keeper, came upon Joe leaning dejectedly against the corridor wall near the chapel.

“You look lost. What’s up?”

Joe grinned hesitantly. “I was told there’d be Mass here this morning.”

“It’s scheduled right now. It must be half over.”

R. “I was in there. I had to leave. That’s a Protestant service.”

“No, that’s our Catholic chaplain doing his usual thing.”

R. “A common denominator for us loonies?”

“No, that’s all the Church gives anyone these days.”

R. “Really?! I thought the chaplain had left the rails and been committed like the rest of us.”

“Are you going back in, now that you know what it is?”

R. “Do I look crazy? I knew what it was in the first ten minutes, as soon as he offered the work of human hands. I *can’t* go back in there. Canon law forbids participation in non-Catholic rites.”

“Boy, have *you* a lot of updating to do!”

Joe had already been updated—in the files. All those blanks on the computer card had been punched in. Inevitably he had come to the attention of the chaplain, Father Glinka.

So Tuesday morning a fortnight later discovered Joe seated across a desk from that worthy priest in his clerical bailiwick just inside the padlocked hospital entrance. Father Glinka referred again to a large yellowish file card.

“I find your background highly interesting. Imagine migrating to Australia to enter the seminary!”

“Not I,” said Joe. “I came to earn enough to put a brother in England through. But he left. Mother always wanted a priest in the family. The Irish consider it a tremendous favor from God. So I substituted.”

“But eventually you left, too. And now the seminary is a police academy.”

R. “You mean if I return and finish I can be a policeman?”

“Fortunately, no. We have enough demented officials.”

R. “I’ll bite my tongue. But would my *alma mater* not still be a seminary if anyone wished to attend a seminary?”

“Boys improperly educated in the faith seldom realize the necessity for priests.”

R. “Or could it be that they understand that the priesthood’s functions have changed, and that there is little reason to take the trouble?”

“What functions have changed?”

R. “You no longer offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. You preside at the family meal. Even the new ordination rite confers no power to transubstantiate or to forgive sins.”

“But these powers are implicit in the priesthood.”

R. “So why has their explicit expression been removed? Are not sacraments signs? Do they not effect what they signify and signify what they effect? It’s not as though their signification had never been explicit. Here the explicitness has been deliberately removed. One can only conclude that the intention has also been removed.”

“You go too far. The Church is behind these changes.”

R. “Even so, change creates ground for legitimate doubt.”

“Vatican II,” solemnly intoned Father Glinka, “an ecumenical council of the Church, imposed these changes.”

R. “It may have suggested changes in the rites, not in the forms. The sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ, and the forms are part of our tradition. No living authority can change the forms. The Church has no power over the substance of the sacraments, as it has always taught. But since Vatican II a brand new Congregation for Divine Worship under a man thrown out of the Lateran university for liturgical heresy has constructed a complete set of new sacraments with new forms and new matter. He was eventually unmasked as a freemason and exiled to Iran, but his reforms continue to enjoy official standing.”

“This is only an excuse for you to stay away from mass.”

R. “On the contrary, this is the result of my investigation when I found a non-Catholic service in place of Mass. Why wouldn’t I assist at Mass? I have more time than I can employ. I thank God hourly that He has restored my consciousness. Don’t you think I would love to do this at Mass? To receive Holy Communion? To participate with Catholics of all times and places in the Communion of Saints? Have you never felt the urge?”

“But,” virtuously, “the Church tells me to say this new mass.”

R. “Can’t you see that a new mass is a contradiction in terms? Anyway there’s little new in it except the strange change in the consecration. The rest of it is left over from the Reformation or from Judaism.”

“Nonsense! Most of it was found in the old liturgies. Everything is traditional.”

R. “So they keep telling us. Are these old liturgies in use?”

“No, of course not.”

R. “So you give me another contradiction in terms, an interrupted tradition. Tradition is handed down, not discarded and resurrected piecemeal. Supposing these old liturgies were real Masses, have they been reintroduced entire?”

“No, but they’ve been judiciously selected from.”

R. “Of that I’ve no slightest doubt, but for what purpose? If to create a true Mass it was an exercise in futility. We *had* a true Mass. We had several rites, too, but no one selected judiciously from rites in use. They kept only the general format. Instead this Hannibal—a most appropriate name for an enemy of Rome—Bugnini and his crowd gleefully extracted from context whatever suited their purpose. They begged a very large question in the first place.”

“And what was that?”

R. “That introduction of ceremonies or prayers to a rite or their removal therefrom can be based on their presence or absence in another rite. Each rite is an integrated whole. You can’t say that a certain part is unnecessary to a rite because it does not occur in another rite. The rites simply differ, but each rite expresses the same reality in a different manner.”

“That’s an interesting theory.”

R. “Suppose you decided to write the mystery story to end all mystery stories. Would you take the greatest stories of the centuries and extract a chapter from one, a paragraph from another, an odd clue here and there from a third, a plot from four more, and a solution to fit them all? Or would you write one integrated story built on carefully placed clues and indications? This mob took less trouble with this new rite than a competent fiction writer. Such monumental incompetence could not have been accidental. I can conclude only that they ruined the Mass with malicious intent. No one could have done this innocently or unwittingly. It is no case of ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’ These Mass-haters, these crucifiers of Christ’s Mystical Body, know exactly what they do. If they hope for forgiveness they would do well to dream up a good reason. I would not recommend ‘love of man.’ ‘Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me,’”

“Let’s get down to cases. What are your specific objections? I hear, for instance, that traditionalists object to the new consecration.”

R. “If they don’t, they should.”

“They dislike translation of ‘*pro multis*’ into ‘for all men.’”

R. “There are better reasons than that. But that’s enough to invalidate most vernacular service consecrations, even were they possible otherwise.”

“But it’s defined dogma that Christ died for all men.”

R. “No Catholic would deny that. It is stated even in the preamble to the Consecration in the Mass for Holy Thursday. It is also defined doctrine that Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and that He died on the Cross on Calvary, and that He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. None of these dogmas essential to Consecration receives mention in the Consecration formula. It is also defined dogma, universally accepted, that the Consecration is effected through a properly ordained priest specifically *acting* in the person of Christ *praying* Christ’s words of Consecration in a rite in which their intention is clearly indicated. How are we to effect anything like a Consecration reading out a narrative of institution, in a rite that indicates a counter-intention, that uses some one else’s words? ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will not pass away’—except My most solemn words?”

“But the new words have the same meaning.”

R. “Then why change the words and necessarily create doubt? How can *many* mean *all*? Why does the Trent Catechism, the Church’s official catechism, give specific reasons why *all* was not used? Why did St. Thomas Aquinas state that the signification of the Holy Eucharist is the Mystical Body, to which not *all* belong, and that in the Canon of the Mass only for members are prayers offered? Why the prohibition of change specifically in the words of the Consecration in *De defectibus V Formae* in the Missal?”

“*De defectibus* is not in the new missal. If the Church can make a law the Church can unmake it.”

R. “Would you expect violators to quote the law they’ve broken? This is not mere law. It is also fact. Given such a condition this *is* the result—not this is ordered by law.”

“The Latin says ‘would be,’ not ‘is.’ Your Latin could improve.”

R. “Show me the essential difference between ‘If this were so then such would result’ and ‘If this were so then this results.’ Use of the imperfect subjunctive with ‘*si*’ denotes a condition hardly imaginable—‘should anyone be unable to read the altar card.’ The second use conforms grammatically to the sequence of tenses. If you like literal Latin try “*Priusquam patebas sapiens eras*”

“You’re not all that wise yourself. It’s only your opinion that it’s fact and not law.”

R. “It *is* law, of course. But changeable law here would be useless, pointless, irrational. If its abolition permits change in the formula of Consecration no other change in the substance of a sacrament can be prevented. A priest could consecrate a Bible saying ‘This is the Word of God,’ or even ‘Depart from me, ye cursed’ over a bottle of Demon Rum. Canon Law 817 states that one species cannot be consecrated without the other, nor both outside of Mass. The Mass is the Sacrifice of Calvary. The new service is officially defined otherwise—defined as not a Mass. No Mass, no Consecration, no Transubstantiation, no Holy Eucharist! If this is not known to attending Catholics they commit idolatry—unwitting, of course, but still idolatry. If it *is* known they commit sacrilege and apostasy. They violate Canon Law 1258 which forbids participation in non-Catholic religious rites. And don’t tell me they don’t participate. Participation is the name of the game, and *I do* mean game.”

“You say the words must be prayed. What has prayer to do with it? The power is in the words.”

R. “Oh, a magic formula! Did the priest consecrate when he read the words during the Gospel on Palm Sunday? Mass is the official prayer of the Church. When Christ instituted the Mass and the Holy Eucharist He said: ‘As often as ye shall *do* these things.’ He raised His eyes to heaven, He gave thanks, He blessed, and He pronounced the effective words in this setting of ritual and prayer. He did not say: ‘As often as ye shall read out an historical account.’ Cranmer kept the words. Luther kept the words. Both removed the intention and the action by the manner of saying the words, and by placing them in a rite which removed or counter-indicated their intention, doing away with the reverential rubrics. Are you prepared to say, against the universal ruling of the Church from Trent to Vatican II, that the Lutherans or Anglicans celebrate Mass?”

“They have no Orders—no priests.”

R. “Some have. They’ve acquired valid, if illicit, Orders from Old Catholics, Copts, and other schismatic groups. And though Leo XIII settled the question of Anglican Orders forever, Paul VI reopened it. Under his auspices so-called Catholics negotiated agreements with Anglicans on the

Eucharist and the priesthood. And new sacraments, especially new Orders, have been imposed on Catholics both to conform to and on which to base these agreements. Since Easter 1969 we've had no priests ordained or bishops consecrated except in defiance of official Rome."

"Aha! Now it comes out! You're in schism! You adhere to that suspended archbishop in Switzerland!"

R. "Why must I adhere to a compromiser who insists that heretical usurpers are popes? I have all the genuine popes in history and the well-known, all-time body of Catholic doctrine to which to adhere. St. Paul told the Corinthians in the first chapter of his first letter that they had it all. But Paul VI always sought more, accommodated to the times, looked to the future, thus breaking continuity, denying the authority of all previous popes. They're dead, so their definitions are outdated. Now *he's* dead, so why follow *him*? Has he not publicly proclaimed heresy? Can he belong to the same Church holding different doctrine, smashing tradition, and preaching the insufficiency of Christ's revelation? How can I go into schism or heresy holding exactly what all Catholics in history held—what you, yourself, held without question only twenty years ago? Or were *you* wrong then?"

"We must move with the spirit of the times."

R. "And what was the spirit of Christ's times? Civilization had decayed to the point where nothing but improvement was possible. Divorce, abortion, perversion, and ritual murder were the order of the day. Had the Church ever gone as far as now in accommodating to the spirit of any age it would have perished, just as it appears to be perishing now. Could we not have picked a better age to accommodate? This age is even worse than Christ's. It has refused the benefit of His Revelation after centuries of continuous acceptance and belief. The Roman Empire had the grace to convert."

"Your subject has escaped. What about the Mass?"

R. "When we look at all the safeguards hedged about the traditional Mass shouldn't we consider it a little strange that nothing protects the new? Because there's nothing to protect? Or would rules retard the rate of change?"

"You're just looking for trouble."

R. "No need to look! Innovators maintain that change is necessary. It is not reasonable to expect them to stop. If it can be argued that the old Mass and sacraments should be changed there is certainly a far better case to be made for changing the new."

"Oh, they'll eventually settle on something."

R. "Not likely! Often enough we've heard: 'This is the last. The changes are finished,' But we have two self-perpetuating innovations, the parish council and the liturgical commission, created to invent, suggest, and continue change. The moment they exhaust innovation they're dead."

"I really don't think I can stand any more."

R. "Don't worry! When they've done away with the Church the world will end."

"On that happy note let's break for tea."

As the last drops trickled down Father Glinka's throat Joe pounced.

"You were there, Father. Tell me, is it true? At the funeral of Dr. Leslie Rumble, God rest his spinning corpse, were not Protestant ministers invited to receive communion?"

"Yes. I thought it a fine ecumenical gesture."

R. "To give our sacrament of unity to people who don't believe in it—who are not in unity? Or are we acknowledging that in this new ecumenical service no one receives our sacrament—merely symbols?"

"You can't prove charges like that!"

R. "It's one or the other, isn't it? And it's not for me to prove. Innovation must be proved—not tradition."

"But this innovation, as you call it, has the backing of Pope Paul VI."

R. "Certainly, *and* of his successors. What does that prove—that popes guarantee error? Or that these guarantors are not popes? They're proven wrong on doctrine. Why take their word that a blasphemous ecumenical service is a Mass?"

"You sound like all the bigots that ever bellowed 'No Popery!'"

R. "Not I. I cry 'No Japery!'"

“Japery?”

R. “Yes. John Paul, J.P., Jape I, the smiling humble man that would not be crowned—who was installed, just as appropriately as Paul VI’s obsequies, outside the church, in the square, encompassed by added thousands to witness his superb humility. He simplified matters for us all. He further reduced the authority and prestige of the papacy, the office of Christ’s vicar, the greatest office on earth, for his own ‘humble’ preference. Never before, of course, was there a humble pope. But this man flaunted a flagrant example of vainglorious humility, so that it becomes virtue instead of lunacy to accept humbly whatever is put upon us. Suggestions from such a holy, happy, humble man must, as with the two whose names he so pointedly adopted, be divinely inspired.”

“Oh, you’re too one-eyed.”

R. “In the country of the blind—and look who’s talking! You’ll look at nothing traditional.”

“And you will see nothing else!”

R. “Tradition did my grandfather and his grandfather. If they’d wanted these changes they could have turned Protestant with profit. You don’t give me even *that* incentive. A profit is not without honor.”

“I’ve heard wretched puns before, but never without coffee.”

R. “And I’ve been to Mass before, but never without offertory and consecration. And this is no time to start.”

“So *you* feel that way. That is no reason to rock the boat, to scandalize Catholics, to try to put them in bad conscience.”

R. “Where else should they be, committing idolatry? Do I not owe them the facts in charity? The hierarchy will never tell them.”

“But if they’re in good faith leave them alone.”

R. “A beautiful sentiment. That’s what did in the entire missionary effort to convert men from false worship and idolatry to Christ. We were taught that error leads to hell. Beyond that, how can any instructed Catholic follow this ecumenical ‘Church’ in good faith?”

“Then why bother him? Won’t he see all this himself?”

R. “What happened to your charity? ‘I’m all right, Jack!’ But if you go I’m *not* all right. When the Church dies the world goes with it. While it dies it loses its influence and authority, morals decay, law and order vanish, civilization crumbles; life is hardly worth living. Only hermits and lunatics can keep their senses.”

“We should still do well. I’m alone among you lunatics.”

R. “And your status hardly improves when you leave here for your clergy conference.”

“I hear the chaplain called you in,” said Gilchrist.

“That he did,” said Joe.

“And he hasn’t been the same since,”

“I scared him?”

“Not enough. But after supper you can come with me and put the wind up my parish priest.”

“if you want to waste an evening. There’s little we can tell priests that they don’t know.”

“But they’ve been indoctrinated and pushed an inch at a time. Coming face to face with what they were may shock them. Take my own case. I never liked the changes, but it took my second daughter’s wedding to shock me awake.”

“What was the big shock?”

The bridegroom’s father is a convert. On the way out of the supposed nuptial mass the most common comment from his relatives, Methodists all, was: ‘What a beautiful ceremony! It’s just like our own.’”

“You’ve made your point. What can I lose but my temper?”

Gilchrist punched the presbytery doorbell promptly at eight. Father MacFelimigh ushered the pair into the parlor and seated them. Joe contemplated the ruddy, smiling face

that had grown over the top of the priestly head. Too complacent, thought Joe, if I'm wasting time I'll waste the minimum.

"Father, what do you think of the new conciliar Church?"

"I'm not too happy with a lot of the changes. The change I liked least was this new mass. But I must obey legitimate authority. I have to say it in public."

R. "Granted, you must say Mass for your parishioners, but this new rite is not Mass."

"The pope called it a mass when he put it out."

R. "But even he did not command its use in any comprehensible language."

"But everyone so understands it. My bishop interprets the law for me."

R. "What law? St. Pius V's *Quo primum* published in every altar Missal? The decrees of Nicaea and Trent? St. Pius X's Syllabus of Errors of the modernists? Canon 1261, which charges your bishops to exclude all heresy and superstition from divine worship? Divine worship is, after all, the chief purpose of religion. So it is the chief concern of divine law. Why has your bishop scrapped divine law and the divine institutions it covers?"

"He's obedient, too. His orders come from Rome."

R. "Who ordered a new rite? Show me where and when. Supposing some one did or could, how can a new invention gain exclusive rights over what has been our unquestioned obligation since the Church's foundation?"

"The pope knows the situation. He consents by silence. This is what he wants. We can only obey."

R. "At the expense of sanity and salvation? Even a pope can't condemn anything without showing it contrary to Catholic doctrine or practice, or productive of evil. Can you fit the traditional Mass into either category?"

"The traditional Mass blocked ecumenism. Protestants would not have it."

R. "Of course not. They're Protestants *because* they can't believe in the Mass. This is supposedly why they left us four centuries ago. The way to get them back now is to show that we don't believe it either? We've been wrong all this time? Why believe us now? They're more likely to look up our sleeves. We could have kept them all when Luther started by admitting that he was right. If our central purpose and doctrine must go for the sake of ecumenism, ecumenism obviously costs too much."

"Pope Paul gave us the new mass in obedience to Vatican II, as he said in his promulgation."

R. "Then he lied. Vatican II never ordered a new rite. Nor did he owe the council obedience. A council's decrees don't bind until a pope promulgates them."

"But he did promulgate them."

R. "He certainly did. He signed his name to at least twelve previously condemned heresies that Vatican II propounded. That makes him a public heretic. No public heretic can hold office in the Church."

"But that would make my bishop a heretic, too. *And me!*"

R. "You're so right! As soon as you recognize this you have no reason to obey Paul VI. Why don't you have to obey St. Pius V or St. Pius X?"

"They're no longer popes. They're both dead."

R. "So is Paul VI, but you insist on obeying him."

"But no later pope has changed Paul VI."

R. "And who changed *Quo primum*? It remains the law of the Church."

"Oh, no! Paul VI changed it."

R. "When? Where? How? He has stolen your Mass and replaced it with doubtful, at best, and heretical worship. You can't play with such a situation. It involves you in sacrilege and idolatry."

"I won't wear that!" The priest rose and thumped the table with his meaty fist. "You can't tell *me* my consecration is no good! I obey the Church. I have the proper intention to do what the Church wants."

R. “But you omit the *action*. You read out a narrative, in a rite, defined as a memorial of the Last Supper, which purports to offer the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands. This is not and never was the intention of the Church, which has always offered Christ’s Sacrifice of Calvary, and used Christ’s own words set in Christ’s own action to effect it. There is nothing supernatural or particularly propitiatory or pleasing to God about fruits of earth or work of human hands. If there were, why did Christ come to redeem us the hard way? We could have done it ourselves. Even the horse worked to plant the wheat. Even the cow and pig contributed manure to bring it to fruition. Pursuing this new rite, its definition, and its declared intention to logical conclusion you could offer the chamber pot and the work of the worm in the compost heap.”

“But Rome changed that definition.”

R. “In response to an outcry that it was not the definition of a Mass. But neither is the replacement definition, which still offered the wrong things, substituted a narration for the action, and pretended to consecrate with the wrong words. Most of the objectors to the definition continued to accept the unchanged rotten rite that it correctly defined.”

“But I stick to Latin at the consecration. So I use Christ’s words.”

R. “In the new rite?”

“Of course.”

R. “Is there a difference between a narrative with the right words and a narrative with the wrong words? The rite itself still offers nothing worth offering. It simply is not a Mass. When you attempt to consecrate in it you violate canon law and common sense. You lead your people, who trust you, into sacrilege and idolatry. You won’t get a fool’s pardon, even if you are a fool and not a knave.”

“There’s the door! Come back when you can be civil. And just remember that it takes more than *you* to declare a rite invalid. *The Church* must say so.”

R. “So a new rite, defined as not a Mass, flaunting condemned heresy, perverting Christ’s own most solemn consecratory prayer in both word and form, contradicting Christ’s and His Church’s sacrificial intention, fraudulently introduced as an experiment in flagrant violation of laws made to protect our Holy Mass and in deliberate fracture of two most solemn oaths required of and sworn by every priest at ordination and every bishop at consecration, nineteen centuries too late for revelation, can be a valid Mass? No one may accord it validity or any other Catholic status without supporting specific condemned heresies. An Arian is not a Catholic!

Father MacFelimigh asked me to bring you back. He wants another crack at you, now that he understands your difficulty.” Gilchrist smiled broadly.

Joe looked up from breakfast in mild surprise. “I may as well argue with him as with that bishop I’ve been writing. Which has the longer ears, a jackass or a jackrabbit? What has our Father MacRabbit up his short sleeve?

“Solicitude for your mental health, possibly?”

“This evening, then?”

Joe sank into a chair in the presbytery office. “I’m happy you decided to pursue our discussion. When you threw me out I assumed you simply couldn’t answer my arguments.”

“Some times it takes time to come up with an answer. We priests are accustomed to having our words accepted. But you lose your temper on occasion, too.

R. “But for opposite reasons. I present murderous arguments, and the innovators refuse logic, even shifting definitions to avoid coming to grips with reality, or go over the same ground again and again, just as though it had not already been cut from under their feet.”

“I’ve decided you’re entitled to your opinions, like anyone else.”

R. “Generous to a fault—a grave and fatal fault. Neither of us is entitled to opinions on most of these matters. They’ve been defined and are not subject to new interpretation.”

"I follow Paul VI, a safer guide than a layman with a history of twenty years in a mental institution."

R. "Next you'll tell me he was infallible."

"He was."

R. "And when did he exercise infallibility?"

"He signed the documents of an ecumenical council."

R. "But council arguments and documents have never bound us. Infallibility supports the canons, the decrees on matters of faith and morals. These all take the form 'If anyone shall say Let him be anathema.' Not only was Vatican II convoked as a pastoral council for the avowed purpose of updating—not for definitions or condemnations—it actually voted and promoted heresy. Public approval and promulgation of heresy removes a man from the Church. By both reason and canon law a heretic cannot be pope. Catholicism has no honorary degrees or memberships."

"A pope cannot teach error."

R. "Several popes have done so. Honorius I was condemned as a heretic by his tenth successor, St. Leo II. You probably mean that a pope cannot teach error *ex cathedra*."

"That's correct."

R. "Since Honorius' actions merited condemnation by another pope, either he or the pope that condemned these actions was in error."

"Obviously they weren't both correct, so one or both weren't *ex cathedra*."

R. "So if Paul VI taught error it was not *ex cathedra*."

"Obviously not."

R. "And a pastoral council, convoked not to define anything, if it voted error could not be infallible?"

"Of course not."

R. "Then what is your problem?"

"All the bishops in the world convoked in ecumenical council under the guidance of the Holy Spirit could not have erred."

R. "But they contradicted the Council of Trent, an ecumenical council guided by the Holy Ghost, properly convoked to define doctrine and condemn error, particularly the rampant errors of the Reformation."

"But Vatican II had the same authority as Trent. How can you determine which was right?"

R. "No council has authority to correct canons, decreed faith or morals, or definitions of earlier councils. The earlier is right. If you say the later, you must say that the Church taught error for at least four centuries. To what authority can Vatican II pretend except the authority of the Church that has backed Trent and has been wrong four centuries?"

"Suppose they were both right."

R. "There is a speculative possibility that contradictory stances could both be wrong, but not both correct."

"Where were they in contradiction?"

R. "In their entire attitude. Trent confirmed and defined tradition. Vatican II was convoked to make changes, to open windows and let in fresh modern air. Its primary objective was *aggiornamento*—updating. It was null and void from the start, in clear violation of Pius II's *Exsecrabilis*, which forbade appeals from popes to councils."

"That is all subject to argument. Give me specific examples of contradiction."

R. "Delighted!" Riordan produced a copy of Walter M. Abbott's **The Documents of Vatican II**. "I shall cite first the argument on the authority of a Church known to need correction—to have been in consistent error for centuries. The Decree on Ecumenism says, in paragraph six, that the Church is to be corrected where it erred in formulating doctrine. The whole decree scraps tradition, and wanders almost stupidly into open heresy in paragraphs 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9. Our true religion revealed by God is to deal with

necessarily erring religions on equal footing. We may compromise what belongs to God. We may participate in non-Catholic, therefore false, worship, through which other religions are said to channel grace. The Decree on Missionary Activity, which no longer exists except to preach the social gospel and foment revolution in poor imitation of the World Council of Churches, propounds the nonsense that the living testimony of the devoted missionary will more easily achieve its effect if given in impossible union with other, necessarily erroneous Christian communities, according to the norms of the Decree on Ecumenism. Not satisfied with accommodating Protestantism, the council in its Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions—a relationship formerly described in one word, *teacher*—praised every kind of error. It even ascribed holiness to false religions. It waxed lyrical over Islam and post-Christian Judaism—both founded on outright rejection of Christ’s divinity. Better to accommodate these false religions, the council dreamed up a Masonic Declaration on Religious Freedom, wherein was accorded a ‘right’ to choose among divinely revealed truths—to select points on which we shall believe or disbelieve God—and stated without qualification that the Revelation was complete with the Crucifixion. So the Jews were right—no Resurrection! Without which, says St. Paul, then is our faith vain. Haven’t you read this garbage?”

“Who has time? If we ever had any we now spend it in committees.”

R. “Where you settle nothing. You investigate in depth the disastrous drop in conversions, or the graver loss of our school system graduates. But you won’t return to the system that worked—preaching the gospel as received. What is your conversion rate in committee?”

“We’re not there to convert anyone. We listen to everyone’s ideas.”

R. “As long as they’re new. How far do traditional ideas go?”

“Sometimes as far as the bishops’ conference.”

R. “But mostly you search for new solutions, or even for new problems, like popular demands to drop the Creed. Here you follow Vatican II again. It tells us in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World that Christians are joined with the rest of men in the *search* for truth, rather than differentiated from the rest by its possession and our mission of teaching it to the rest (16). It promotes dialogue and cooperation with God’s enemies (21). It proclaims the rights of man, and greatly esteems today’s dynamic movements by which these rights are ubiquitously fostered. By pretending that marriage has other purposes as important as its recognized primary purpose (50) it has cleared the way to every possible abuse, even to homosexual ‘marriages.’ Then it replaces our obligation to serve God with another gigantic and binding task—to serve the men of the modern world, wherever *that* is. By serving God we preserve our Faith for future generations, which cannot survive without it.”

“But all this is just too much to believe. Why should I listen to you more than to any other malcontent, dissident, or schismatic from the past?”

R. “If you won’t believe the evidence of your own eyes and ears how can I expect you to believe me when I point out the same evidence? But your own memory should convince you that I am neither dissident nor schismatic. I tell you nothing you didn’t hear from your parents and even from your seminary professors. The only reason that I must tell you is that you no longer tell me. Priests no longer preach these Catholic doctrines or follow these Catholic traditions and laws. But you hold down your parishes and block Catholicism. Who would listen to me if you did *your* job?”

Joe rapped on the chaplain’s door. “Not you again,” wailed Father Glinka. “You’re not only crazy, you’re a heretic!”

“Specify, if you can,” said Joe as he occupied the best chair.

“You won’t obey the pope.”

“Lots of people won’t obey the pope. Are all those birth-controllers heretics?”

The priest frowned slightly. “I suppose they are, if I want to be consistent.”

“Then why aren’t they called heretics?”

“You’re off the point. Let’s stick to the Mass.”

R. “But contraception is a moral issue, clearly within the scope of infallibility. Paul VI said his new rite was mere change in ritual and rubrics, outside that scope. I am free to disobey, then, without stigma of heresy, on Paul’s own terms. I am not even disobedient to an order, only to Paul’s hopes and wishes.”

“But he *was* pope. So he *was* infallible.”

R. “Wasn’t St. Pius V an infallible pope when he protected, preserved, and standardized the Mass?”

“But he’s long gone and Paul had the right to change him.”

R. “And now Paul’s gone and we can change him?”

“Logically, I suppose. But our newer popes keep abreast of the times.”

R. “All the more reason to change Paul. You think he was a conservative. All he had to do was start the ball downhill, then sit back and deplore.”

But in actual fact he only did what Pius V did, institute a new rite.”

R. “Now that’s inactual fact if ever I heard it! Why do all you innovators keep up this fiction? You know as well as I that St. Pius V invented nothing. He confirmed the Roman rite then in use for over a thousand years.”

“Well, it needed updating.”

R. “Revealed religion is not matter for updating.”

“That doesn’t apply to the Mass, mere ritual.”

R. “What Mass did you say twenty years ago?”

“The Tridentine, of course.”

R. “Was it proper worship? Was it a true Mass?”

“Of course.”

R. “What has made it improper or untrue?”

“Oh, it’s still true.”

R. “Who has authority to forbid a true Mass, to deprive God of proper worship?”

“Why, the pope. Who else?”

R. “Where did he come by such authority? Several popes have said that it is well known that the Church has no power over forms instituted by Christ, the substance of the sacraments. Christ gave the Church these to preserve, not to alter. Remember what Vatican I taught infallibly in *Dei Filius*?”

“Refresh my memory.”

R. “In Chapter Two of its Canons, Canon 2 reads: ‘If anyone shall say that it is impossible or inexpedient for man to be taught by revelation concerning God and the worship to be rendered to Him, let him be anathema.’”

“But that is purely negative. It has no bearing on the case.”

R. “Let me flip the coin. Since we are anathematized for holding impossibility and inexpediency, we must believe in both possibility and expedience. This clearly implies factuality. The Church never obliges us to believe in mere arguments, even those advanced as reasons or support for infallible decrees. We are to believe the result but not necessarily the method.”

“So where does your fact take you?”

R. “Back to Revelation for our Mass. Revelation ceased with the death of the last Apostle. It is impossible for a new rite to fulfil this absolutely essential requirement, even were a new rite’s very existence not clearly a grievous breach of Church Law.”

“But Canon 2 said taught by revelation *concerning* worship, not that revelation prescribed the rites of worship.”

R. “So now you want revelation to teach me about worship that did not exist. What is the chief end and purpose of religion?”

“That God’s rational creatures may worship and glorify Him.”

R. "So He gave us this complete revelation on which our salvation depends, and He omitted the little matter of rites for its central purpose! You're exempt. You said rational creatures."

"But Paul VI said several times that it was merely ritual and rubrics, insufficient matter for infallible pronouncements."

R. "Since he obviously wished to impose an unnecessary new rite, he had to manufacture some excuse. But why believe Paul when he says he can institute a new Mass, a new substance for the Holy Eucharist? Isn't he nineteen centuries late? When was the papacy invested with divinity? Institution of Mass and sacraments is a divine prerogative. There cannot be even a valid assumption that this innovation is a valid Mass."

"Why couldn't Paul VI abolish the Tridentine rite? Pius V stopped the Sarum rite."

R. "St. Pius V outlawed all rites in use less than two hundred years in 1570 to restore the far older traditional rite. The Sarum rite differed mainly in its calendar and Proper, especially in the number of Lessons and length of prayers. Its Canon conformed word for word with the Tridentine. Most people would hardly have noticed the difference."

"If we don't need the Sarum rite why do we need the Tridentine? The rite is gone but the Mass is forever, 'from the rising of the sun even to the going down.' Why won't you accept the changes for the sake of tradition and essential continuity?"

R. "Strictly speaking we don't need the Tridentine. We could use another traditional rite—a rite currently in use old enough to carry the Church's guarantee, which of its nature can cover neither long dead practices nor innovation. Change destroys tradition and breaks continuity. On a notable occasion of broken continuity in worship in the absence of clergy—"

"All our fault again! When was that?"

R. "When Japan lost its clergy about 1620 till St. Patrick's Day 1865. The Japanese Christians accepted their new priests, nearly 250—not a mere 20—years later, only on their identical doctrine and practice. This constancy, universally praised in seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Japanese, stands condemned in twentieth-century Australians. You've read Leviticus, Father?"

"Of course."

R. "Of what use is it?"

"It prescribed the worship and rites of the Jewish religion."

R. "Generally or specifically?"

"Right to the last detail of the priest's clothing."

R. "What of the Ark of the Covenant?"

"Prescribed minutely in Exodus xxv, 10-20. I've never forgotten the setim wood or the measurements, 2½ x 1½ x 1½ cubits."

R. "Do you recall the strictures on the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies?"

"I recall an occasion recorded in II Paralipomenon on which King Ozias decided to offer sacrifice. He would usurp the functions of the priesthood and enter the Sanctuary."

R. "What happened?"

"God protected His Sanctuary. He struck King Ozias with instant leprosy in the forehead for all to see."

R. "This put a crimp in the king's normal activities?"

"In effect it dethroned him. It removed him from the community. He was cast out of the temple and dwelt in a house apart, as Scripture phrases it."

R. "He had broken the law of the Sanctuary. Why should he regard other law?"

"Wouldn't you heed the law when its last violation had brought you leprosy? Besides, his own authority depended on the law. Obviously, a leper who had been king for fifty-two years could not rule by personal might. The law ostracized his disease."

R. "Does not Church law ostracize heresy?"

"Yes, of course. St. Paul said to shun incorrigible heretics."

R. "When the man who occupies the throne of St. Peter publicly embraces or promulgates heresy, as Paul VI did at least twelve clearly demonstrable times in signing and publishing the documents of Vatican II, does not such action dethrone him and place him outside the house of the Lord? If he clings to his throne has this action not demolished the law that supports his throne? Jurisdiction and Canon Law protect Catholics, not heretics. When the public heretics in charge overreached their authority and forbade the Mass and sacraments they placed the regulation of Mass and sacraments outside of their jurisdiction, to which as public heretics they had no claim in the first place."

"I can't believe that. Murder is not placed outside a court's jurisdiction because it is forbidden."

R. "Not outside the jurisdiction of a competent court. But you can't prosecute for murder or procure its penalty in small claims or petty sessions. A public authority quite properly forbids and penalizes crimes. It cannot properly forbid man's natural or supernatural functions, though it may regulate these where necessary. Who is obliged to worship God?"

"Everyone."

R. "And the Church has always insisted on the Mass because God has shown that this is the way in which He wishes to be worshipped. Is Mass, then, to be compared with murder, to be legislated against, penalized, forbidden? What court can arrogate to itself even a shadow of competence or maintain a shred of credibility in such actions?" Riordan paused. "We have just agreed, Father, that concerning the sacrifices and sacraments of the Old Law God and His inspired Word prescribed specifically and minutely, and backed these laws with genuine force. So meticulous with the types, the foreshadows, the insufficient sacrifices, when He came to fulfil and perfect all these types, prophecies, and worship, to provide the perfect and efficacious sacrifice, to reintroduce men to grace, He left the prescription of the rites to *men*? Had He not reserved such matters to Himself in pre-Christian times?"

"There is no mention of any such action in the Gospels."

R. "St. John told us why the Gospels were written: to prove Christ's divinity. He wrote also that Christ had said and done so much more that the world itself would not contain the books needed to record it all. The Mass and sacraments preceded the Gospels, and there would be little point or purpose in including ceremonies with which Christians were familiar, and from which even catechumens were excluded."

"But the rites and ceremonies could have been formulated under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost."

R. "But St. John quotes Jesus: 'But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.' (xiv:26.) 'But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself: but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak. And the things that are to come, he shall shew you. He shall glorify me: because he shall receive of mine and shall shew it to you.' (xvi:13-14.)"

"Whether or not that quotation beats me, it surely knocks props from under the charismatics. But don't we all agree that revelation was complete at the death of the last Apostle?"

R. "We agree. And that nails down the impossibility of a new mass or new sacraments, or of any change in their definition or purpose."

"Aren't you taking the bit in your teeth? What's your basis for such blanket theorizing?"

R. "How about the Vatican Council of 1870?"

"Oh, back to that again."

R. "Better back than ahead. All we can look forward to is new truths we never needed. We necessarily look back for Catholic doctrine and practice."

"But consider, in these rapidly changing times when everyone suffers from future shock, perhaps the Church can't find its way either. It doesn't know which way to steer people."

R. "What is the Church for if not to steer and guide us? Who needs a mixed-up guide?"

"There's no use talking to you. You don't believe in infallibility."

R. "Whose infallibility? St. Pius V's? St. Pius X's?"

"You really should listen when a pope speaks. He's infallible."

R. "When he proposes for belief a known, condemned heresy, what becomes of his infallibility? Infallibility in matters of faith and morals is essential to the papacy. This man deliberately and knowingly contradicts infallibly promulgated doctrine. He thus proves himself not infallible in a pope's proper field. Does he not thereby prove that he is not pope?"

"This is a complicated question. The Faith does not solve the complexities of history. How can you and I judge these matters? What can we know beyond what our parents and teachers taught us?"

R. "How can we *not* judge these matters? How can we remain neutral when our Faith is perverted? All we need is to apply Catholic doctrine, law, and principles. These have laid low all the complex heresies of history. If such application is inadequate or insufficient then Christ left us a helpless, defective religion. So nothing else He gave us can be trusted."

"You're saying the Catholic religion is false?"

R. "Or else you're mistaken and we must judge these matters."

"But we're incompetent in these matters."

R. "Perhaps you're incompetent. But I was taught my religion."

"Let's change the subject."

R. "Let's discuss oaths."

"You go from blasphemy to profanity?"

R. "They're your oaths. You swore two oaths at ordination, to uphold the Council of Trent, and against modernism. Or you would not have been ordained. Do priests subscribe to these oaths today?"

"No. They're out of date."

R. "Has anyone released you from your oaths?"

"Some one must have."

R. "Who? Where? When? How?"

"I don't know."

R. "Why don't you keep them?"

"The Church has advanced beyond them."

R. "Only by changing its defined doctrine. When Vatican I defined infallibility it stated that doctrine defined is defined for all time."

"So?"

R. "So why don't you keep your oaths?"

"If I stuck to that old stuff the cardinal would have me out of here yesterday."

R. "You're in a nut-house. What does he care what you tell us? If we dobbed you in for saying Mass, who'd believe us?"

"I won't do it! I obey orders."

R. "I've been ordered to assist at Mass on Sundays. How can I obey if no one will say Mass?"

"I can't help that. Why can't you go to the new mass?"

R. "I can't believe it is a Mass. I see no authority that can substitute a doubtful and sacrilegious—to say the least—loose, low-grade, vernacular service for the Mass at which I must assist."

“I find nothing wrong with it.”

R. “I find everything wrong with it. I must follow my conscience. Isn’t that what you tell the birth-controllers?”

“You know more than an ecumenical council—more than two thousand bishops and the pope?”

R. “I know what the Council of Trent and most bishops before and since taught. I know what you swore to uphold. I know your authorities, Vatican II and Paul VI, stand behind doctrines the Church never taught, doctrines that contradict those of Trent, practices that violate the traditional Code of Canon Law. How can infallible authority, having declared itself, infallibly change its mind? How can it back contradictories?”

“This is one of the mysteries of faith. We must obey infallible authority.”

R. “There is nothing mysterious about absurdity except that you can believe and obey it. A mystery is something beyond human comprehension that we receive on God’s authority—the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, Calvary’s identification with the Mass, Transubstantiation. You can’t call refusal to think straight or to face plain fact an act of faith. You could call it laziness of a feeble mind.”

“You’re the mental superior of all those bishops? Watch out for pride. That’s what did Lucifer in.”

R. “Pride? You innovators are classic examples. You know more than nineteen centuries of Catholics. Your minds can extract new meanings beyond the comprehension of Augustine and Aquinas from the original Revelation always under the direct care of the Holy Ghost, Who spent all His time, you imply, keeping it from the Church He inspired. I hold exactly what I was taught, which is the action of faith, the result of humility, and the appreciation and apprehension of fact. I can’t help what bishops won’t see. I see no need to improve on Christ.”

“Blasphemy!”

R. “Bull dust! Two more questions: Who has prescribed or taken an oath to support the doctrines of Vatican II? Why are we all, clergy and laity, treated as though so obligated?”

Father Glinka poured another round of tea. Joe took up another oath.

R. “What is your opinion, Father, of the Masonic oath?”

“Immoral and blind. It commits the swearer to things of which he knows nothing. He commits himself to a false religion, a so-called common denominator on which all men agree. It is therefore not Christian, not Moslem, not Hindu, not voodoo, not much.”

R. “Has this oath been modified so that it can be taken in good conscience by Catholics?”

“I have it on the word of several masons that it has not changed in any way to accommodate anyone. Change would run counter to their membership policy. They pretend that men practically beat down the door to join—that they never ask anyone. They plant the idea (‘I’m surprised that *you’re* not a mason.’) implying that your exalted standing entitles you to hobnob with them. They point out this or that mason who has just secured a promotion or a contract. They appeal to the advancement of man, but never neglect that of the particular man they won’t invite in.”

R. “Has masonry changed its aims?”

“It insists that it has not.”

R. “Has the Church not banned membership in the masons to all Catholics?”

“Since 1738 joining the masons has drawn excommunication.”

R. “Don’t you think it a trifle inconsistent, then, that Paul VI permitted Catholics to join the masons without penalty?”

“He must have had good reasons.”

R. “Good, no doubt, but Catholic? Can a man join a false religion without abjuring the true?”

“He must have allowed it for the sake of ecumenism.”

R. "His ecumenism certainly fits the same pattern. All these false religions have equal status with God's revealed religion. Don't convert people! Convert the religion! People risk hell for error. Religions are in no danger, not having individual souls to answer responsibly. But how convert a religion? A changed religion is a destroyed religion."

"Catholicism can't be destroyed. Christ said He would be with us all days, even to the end of the world."

R. "Right after He said 'Going therefore teach ye all nations,' which the postconciliar 'Church' has ceased to do. Besides, the world must end some time. When has it ever been this bad? If you were the God that sent the Flood, would you not consider it time for the fire?"

"Pride again! Now you tell God how to run His world."

R. "Not I! But Paul VI did. He shirked his job of running Christ's Church while reassuring all with the comfort he felt in the knowledge that Christ's hand was at the tiller of Peter's Barque. Surely it is not telling God what to do to look at His record? All history shows that He takes just so much from us before driving us back to our knees."

"But why should this be the end?"

R. "I haven't said it is. But the world will not outlast the Church. And Paul all but killed the Church. Given more time he might have finished the job.

"I wish you wouldn't talk like that about the Holy Father."

R. "A Holy Father that told us we can bind ourselves by blind, immoral oath to a false religion in an act of essential apostasy? Holy Father of what? Lies?"

"Now you've gone too far! What lies?"

R. "He lied in his actions, his omissions, and his decrees. When he promulgated his new rite of worship he called it mere modification of ritual and rubrics. He implied that he had done the same as Pope St. Pius V in his *Quo primum*, as though St. Pius had promulgated a new rite. Paul pretended that his hopes and wishes must be obeyed, and stood behind their deliberate mistranslation into commands in the various vernaculars. He hid his intentions from the ordinary Catholic and imposed them gradually and secretly through the hierarchy. He fractured unity of worship and belief, and then insisted on conformity with his new rite to restore the unity his new rite had fractured, knowing full well that the new rite embodied both invalidating change of the Mass intention and outright heresy. He even ordered, as though this were within his power, what the words of consecration should be—to facilitate concelebration, mind you—then stood behind and even used their deliberate mistranslation into the vernaculars, which are used almost to the exclusion of the Latin version. How many more lies do you need? Where could they do more harm than in the very center and purpose of religion, worship of God?"

"The Mass is guaranteed free from error. Even the Council of Trent said that."

R. "It described the ancient, traditional Mass it knew, not the four centuries later *novus ordo* replacement."

"But the *novus ordo* is a true Mass, on papal authority."

R. "Papal authority can't guarantee that cheese is banana oil."

"No, but the Mass is his province."

R. "Only to preserve, not to change. He introduced error, so his rite hardly fits Trent's description."

"What error?"

R. "How does Eucharistic Prayer IV's Preface begin?"

"Father in heaven, it is right that we should give you thanks and glory: you alone are God, living and true—"

R. "Arius rides again!"

"Well, now, you have to take into account how it's meant."

R. "Could anything be clearer? The words leave no room for equivocation or redefinition."

"But I never use that Eucharistic Prayer."

R. "But you use others guaranteed by the same authority. Can a pope guarantee Arius?"

"But I have a choice."

R. "*You* have a choice. But your parishioner has none. He's stuck with the priest's choice, and often enough its E.P. IV—or II, which deletes all mention and implication of sacrifice, and is used by Lutherans who deny the sacrificial nature of Mass. But nowhere is he allowed the Mass Trent called so pure and free from error. This obtains on imputed authority of men who guarantee the condemned heresy of Arius."

"Well, if that's all you object to—"

R. "Not by half! The first principal part of the Mass, the Offertory, for which our presence was always required to fulfil our Sunday Mass obligation under pain of mortal sin, has been removed altogether. In its place is a Jewish meal blessing used in the Passover rite, which denies the entire intention and purpose of the Mass. All it offers is the work of human hands and the fruits of the earth. That's what Cain offered. That's what God refused."

"But He accepted bread and wine from Melchisedech."

R. "That was before Calvary. All He has accepted since is the Sacrifice of the Cross, the Body and Blood of Christ."

"But at the Offertory it is only bread and wine. It isn't Christ's Body and Blood till the Consecration."

R. "In the Mass we offer Calvary's sacrifice, which took place nearly twenty centuries ago. The Offertory is part of the same sacrifice as the Consecration. Why should it offer something different? Did the Tridentine Offertory mention bread and wine? No, it offered 'this spotless Victim' and the 'chalice of salvation.' You did this for years. But now you offer only bread and wine because it is not yet consecrated. Doesn't that tell you something? Like it never will be consecrated? The Mass offers what it clearly intends. And this new rite offers the work of human hands as it clearly intends."

"No. All required is the words of Consecration."

R. "Nonsense! Cranmer kept them. And the new rite has changed them."

"You're wrong there. It kept the meaning. Anyway I use the Latin there, and with Eucharistic Prayer I, the Roman Canon, I won't use Eucharistic Prayers II or IV."

R. "Why not?"

"I don't like them. They seem almost Protestant."

R. "They come from the same authority on which you accept Eucharistic Prayer I. Who are you to pick and choose? That's what heresy is—choice. You don't like this, you like that or the other, like any Protestant. Catholicism is one integrated whole, to be swallowed entire or rejected entire. If you reject any of these Eucharistic Prayers you must logically reject them all. All enjoy the same backing."

"But even you must accept E.P. I. It's the same as the Tridentine Canon."

R. "Moosefeathers! Compare them! Then explain why you are allowed to use E.P. I but not the traditional Canon which it is the same as."

"I'll have to look into that. I can't remember all that Latin."

R. "Let me assure you that in the official English version more than a hundred Latin words have been deleted or substituted—over three hundred fifty words in accurate translation. And the new rite makes strange changes in rubrics and punctuation, especially at what was the Consecration, now the narrative of institution, Cranmer-style."

"But it's accepted theological opinion that a Catholic priest can transubstantiate using the Anglican service from the Book of Common Prayer."

R. "Impossible! Almost as ridiculous as a priest consecrating a bakery. Fine theories in seminary class often disintegrate in factual situations. Since when has theological opinion bound us?"

"For transubstantiation you need three things, form, matter, and intention. Matter is there, bread and wine."

R. "No grape juice?"

“Form is there, the proper words. And the priest has the Church’s intention to transubstantiate.”

R. “And theologians really hold that a priest who deliberately uses a non-Catholic rite can have the Church’s intention? We *must* assume the opposite, because he has deliberately avoided the Church’s sure Catholic rite, simultaneously violating the Church’s strict prohibition to attempt consecration outside Mass.”

“But surely the theologians who formed this opinion considered this?”

R. “Then how did they surmount the facts? Canon 817 forbids consecration outside Mass. Mass is the Sacrifice of the Cross. The Church of England’s thirty-nine articles, Article xxxi, declares our Mass a blasphemous fable. So evidently their service is not a Mass.”

“But that Canon 817 is only law. The Church can change it.”

R. “Canon Law is acknowledged to contain positive Divine Law. Law on Divine Worship must be accorded that status. This is no regulatory law, such as prescribes time for Mass or pre-communion fast. And it accords perfectly with our Mass obligations. On Sundays and Holy Days we could not satisfy our obligation under pain of mortal sin unless we assisted at the Offertory, the Consecration, and the Priest’s Communion. If the sole requirement for transubstantiation, even in our true Mass, is consecration, what is the rest of the Mass for? And why are we obliged to assist? And why is the parish priest equally obliged to furnish the principal parts so that we may fulfil our obligation? We can’t do it at the Church of England service because Canon 1258 forbids Catholics to attend it. This canon, which also binds the priest, is generally conceded part of the Natural Law, over which the Church has the power of support and codification, as with positive Divine Law.”

“And where is your degree in Canon Law?”

R. “The same place as your degree in theological opinion. Some opinions stand up well in the classroom, but when they escape they line up on the side of heresy. They give away the argument to the innovator over the Church’s practical traditions. They are thus shown absurd.”

One week later Father MacFelimigh admitted Jack Gilchrist and Joe Riordan to the presbytery. “Ah, the inevitable cranks again! I can’t understand, Jack, why you listen to this certified nut.”

“I know he’s right. His education lets him express what I know in my Catholic bones. I met this terribly learned priest who thought I should listen to him because he speaks seven languages and has a degree in sociology. I suffered, he said, from all the popular religious misconceptions.”

“Such as the Council of Trent’s decrees in Latin?” asked Joe. “Perhaps he could relate to them better in Double Dutch.”

“Something like that. Because I’m a layman I am not expected to know my religion. I need priests for sacraments, but if I can’t know my religion why have the priests wasted their time and mine instructing me? And how can they expect me to learn all this new garbage?”

“Enough specious reasoning,” said the priest. “let’s get to the meat. How do you account for all this chaos?”

R. “The success of the plot.”

“Plot indeed! Paranoia!”

R. “This is all accidental? Catholics may have wished another religion, but none would dare invent one. They had to follow accepted authority, which of its very nature could not change. We’ve always had the odd priest run off or bishop go haywire. But universal imposition of anarchy presupposes a plot—a recognizable plot whose aims we’ve known for centuries. When we see these aims accomplished is it paranoia to suggest that the plotters have succeeded?”

“But bishops, cardinals, even popes are parties to the plot?”

R. “How else could it succeed? A proper pope could put it down in half an hour.”

“With all those plotters you’ve placed about him, how could he act?”

R. “What’s new about plotters about a pope? In 1130 a plotter seized the papacy. In only eight years he nearly destroyed the Church.”

“But he was an antipope!”

R. “He was legally elected by a thumping majority of cardinals. He ruled in Rome. He was buried in papal vestments. He was called antipope not by law, not for improper election, not even for heresy, but for his destruction of the Church.”

“But there was a pope at the time.”

R. “But who could be sure? He had a very shaky claim at law. Six cardinals pulled a swifty—then they all fled for their lives.”

“But St. Bernard and St. Norbert supported Innocent II.”

R. “After they’d seen Pierleone’s actions. No vows of obedience silenced them in the presence of evil. But they were canonized anyway. Why can’t *you* see where *your* duty lies? How can vows of obedience be used against their underlying purpose, support of religion?”

“A very involved question. You laymen have no comprehension of the theological difficulties.”

“Some of us take marriage vows,” put in Gilchrist.

“Obedience doesn’t follow the same rules. It’s not always clear where it’s owed.”

R. “Since obedience obliges, its limits must be clear. Is it owed to heresy? Is it owed to the point of sacrilege or idolatry?”

“Of course not.”

R. “Is it to be placed at the service of a dishonest quest for truth? Is it to be diverted from its purpose, the service of God, to be fulfilled in the service of modern man, the heroic task Vatican II loaded onto us? Didn’t we have enough to do to convert the world to Christ?”

“If you want a job done, give it to a busy man.”

R. “How much more do you get done? Even hospital rounds are done by nuns.”

“There aren’t enough priests to go around.”

R. “Naturally not. Who would sacrifice his life to preside at an assembly? You’ve downgraded your office till no one will have it. And priests don’t go around right on the spot. Last week I met a priest filling in at a parish for Sunday service. As he distributed ‘communion’ a nun trotted up to the wall-safe, removed a loaded ciborium, and took up her post beside him. She cut distribution time from four to two and a half minutes. Five minutes later Father met the parish priest—rising from his leisurely breakfast.”

“I suppose it could happen.”

R. “Only down the road laymen pass out the bread into cupped hands.”

“I hate communion in the hand. It does away with the paten. I’ve seen crumbs and large flakes fall to the floor to be trampled or vacuumed up and thrown into the dustbin. I’ve complained to my bishop, who agreed with me and brought it up at the next bishops’ conference, where my objection was rejected.”

“Why don’t you just stop the practice?” asked Gilchrist.

“I have to do it. The pope said the people have the right.”

R. “But the people have no right to the traditional Mass, or even to the paten. What happened to Canon 2320?” [Persons who cast away the Sacred Species, or carry off or retain them for an evil purpose, are suspected of heresy, incur excommunication *latae sententiae* reserved in a most special manner to the Holy See, are branded ipso facto with infamy, and, if they are clerics, are to be deposed.] “What about the greater possibility of deliberate desecration? Innovators always seem to have rights over all. The practice began, often enough, in seminaries. Logically it followed the earlier abuse of lay distribution. This, in turn, was imposed through telling people that they suffered from inordinate pride in refusing to receive from unordained distributors. The priests that formerly preached reverence for the

Sacred Species now pushed passing the biscuits at the banquet. Then the practice was forbidden except where in defiance of the law it had become customary—like for two months. Then came the public clamor for it by all the faithful. Surely you heard it.”

“No, never. But I know priests who’ll refuse you if you kneel.”

R. “Gleeson, Arch-heretic of Adelaide, who has never deigned to hear a request for the traditional Mass, heard this scream for pat-a-cake. He induced the Episcopal conference to request permission from Rome. It was, of course, granted forthwith. Rome prescribes conference agenda in the first place. Now the man who wishes to show respect and reverence to the Blessed Sacrament by kneeling reception at the consecrated hands of the priest is discriminated against by the Church that taught him this respect and reverence.”

“I’m forced to agree. And this man will be forced to accept it.”

R. “Surely, if the pattern is followed. All our changes were introduced supposedly as experiments. After the trial period, without consultation of the faithful, at whose request and for whose benefit the change was said to have been made, the experiment is declared a success, and the change is imposed. But one additional reason is always adduced, in case ‘popular demand and approval’ wears thin. The innovation becomes the exclusive rule for the sake of unity and uniformity, the very unity and uniformity which the experiment had shattered. If this pattern holds universally, we shall all wind up freemasons. Why do you tolerate it?”

“I’m bound by obedience. I’m no theologian to argue with my bishop. I got through the seminary by the skin of my teeth.”

R. “What courses did you flunk? Did you fail your canonicals? All you priests used to brag about your erudition, your languages, your courses in philosophy, apologetics, logic, exegesis, theology. You were the best-educated men in the community and you never let us forget it. Now all you tell us is how stupid you are. The shepherds have become sheep. Have you lost the power to reason? Most neglected or misused talents decay.”

“If I get myself thrown out of here you’ll get worse. It’s easy for you. Your job doesn’t depend on it.”

R. “No. Only my salvation.”

Gilchrist entered the recreation room, spotted Joe at a corner table immersed in a book, and strolled over.

“What’s the book?”

“A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law.”

“A coincidence!”

“Elucidate.”

“Forgotten you eat with us tonight?”

“Not likely. Dinner at your house is the high spot of the week.”

“Tonight I’ve invited the parish priest. If he blows his top again at least he can’t throw us out.”

“And you’d like me to hit him with Canon 682.”

“How did you guess?”

The instant dessert had cleared his larynx, Joe attacked. “I understand, Father, that you deny Mr. Gilchrist his rights as a Catholic layman.”

“Preposterous!”

“According to Canon Law the laity has the right to receive from the clergy the spiritual goods and especially the necessary means of salvation, according to the rules of ecclesiastical discipline. Now Mr. Gilchrist has asked you repeatedly for the traditional Mass of his rite. He has an absolute right to it. Why do you refuse? How can you justify a gross violation of Canon Law?”

“According to the rules, you said. The rules have been changed.”

R. “By whom? Even Vatican II guarantees these rights. The laity have the right (*Lumen gentium*, 37) to receive in abundance from their sacred pastors the spiritual goods of the Church. It then recommended that every layman should openly reveal to those sacred cowards his needs and desires. When these words were written, what else but the traditional Mass stood first among the spiritual goods of the Church?”

“Nothing, of course, but we still have mass in the parish church.”

R. “Can you be sure? ‘Mass’ as it occurs in your parish church contains enough deviations, enough outright contradictions to arouse irreconcilable doubts and difficulties that prevent Mr. Gilchrist’s assistance thereat for fear that he may participate in terrible and irreparable affronts to his Creator and Judge.”

“Why can’t he accept the word of our Holy Father in these matters?”

R. “All his life he accepted the words of our Holy Father, St. Pius V, who dealt with these matters, and of all our Holy Fathers since, until since 1958 certain men succeeded, for all practical purposes, in driving out tradition. No reasonable man can expect him to change his beliefs and practices to suit absurdity, or to accept *anyone’s* word that what he knows from all his teachers can be changed by the calendar. The calendar has always changed, and will continue to change as long as God permits. And Mr. Gilchrist, like all Catholics, has the right to all the certainty the Church can give him. In the final analysis you are here, your bishop is here, your pope is here for *him*. Without the layman what is the point of your sacramental ministry? Why would you have a parish? Who do you think will support it when its prime accomplishment is destruction of the altars for which the parishioner paid?”

“But these changes have all been ordered from above.”

R. “With the excuse, among others, that the laity asked for them. But what of the laity that asked rather for exactly what the Church has always supplied?”

“But we still have the same essentials.”

R. “When you change the principal parts of the Mass how can you prove that they remain the same? Surely you leave room for doubt, and the Catholic may not permit doubt in his worship and sacraments—especially when all doubt may be allayed by following traditional forms concerning which he had no doubt.”

“Then he refuses to submit to the living magisterium of the Church, which has decreed these changes.”

R. “From the moment when it decreed these changes the magisterium committed suicide. Last week I copied Volume VIII of the 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia, pages 749-750, for Mr. Gilchrist. Perhaps he will read it.”

“Delighted.” Gilchrist produced two photocopied pages.

R. “Only what I bracketed.”

“Duties and rights of the laity. They have therefore a right to share in the common spiritual goods of the Christian society, which implies a corresponding obligation on the part of the clergy to bestow on them these goods, in as far as this bestowal requires the intervention of the ministers of religion and of the spiritual authority. But if the laity are to share in these common goods they must employ more or less frequently the means of sanctification instituted by Jesus Christ, and of which the clergy have been put in charge. Further, the laity, being subject to ecclesiastical authority, must obey and respect it; but in return they have the right to obtain from it direction, protection, and service. Thus, for the laity rights and duties are, as always, correlative. The first duty of a Christian is to believe; the first obligation imparted to the laity is, therefore, to learn the truths of faith and of religion, at first by means of the catechism and religious instruction, and later by being present at sermons, missions, or retreats. If they are thus obliged to learn, they have the right to be instructed and consequently to require their priests to give them and their children Christian teaching in the ordinary way. Second, a Christian’s moral conduct should be in keeping with his faith; he must, therefore, preserve his spiritual life by the

means which Jesus has established in His Church: the Divine service, especially the Mass, the Sacraments, and other sacred rites.

“This necessity of having recourse to the pastoral ministry gives rise to a right in the laity as regards the clergy, the right of obtaining from them the administration of the sacraments, especially Penance and the Holy Eucharist, and others according to the circumstances; also all the acts of Christian worship, especially the Mass, the sacramentals, and other rites, and lastly Christian burial. These are the spiritual goods destined for the sanctification of souls; if the clergy are appointed to administer them, they are not free dispensers, and they are bound to give their services to the faithful, as long, at least, as the latter have not by their own fault placed themselves in a condition which deprives them of the right to demand these services. Assistance at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, annual confession, Easter communion, the reception of the viaticum and the last services of religion, the celebration of marriage in the prescribed form, the baptism and religious instruction, and, finally, the rites of Christian burial—all these suppose a recourse to the ministry of the clergy which is of obligation for the laity, Seeing that in the Church the superiors have been established for the welfare of the subjects, so that the pope himself glories in the title ‘servant of the servants of God’, the faithful have the right to expect the care, vigilance, and protection of their pastors; in particular they have their right to refer their disputes to the ecclesiastical authorities for decision, to consult them in case of doubt or difficulty, and to ask for suitable guidance for their religious or moral conduct.”

“So why won’t Mr. Gilchrist refer his dispute for decision?”

R. “He and laymen the world over have complained. The response follows an invariable pattern. When the bishops’ feeble bluffs are rejected or refuted, the authorities then take the matter under advisement—the Church never decides anything in a hurry, no matter how entitled we are to the decision. These changes accumulated in a monstrous hurry, stayed only to avoid massive resistance. But if we press for a ruling to which we have every right, and an adverse ruling could be shown ridiculous or otherwise contrary to defined Catholic doctrine, the authorities take umbrage at our impatience, bad manners, or intransigence, and refuse to deal further with obvious cranks. They pretend we have no right to anger or even impatience at being robbed of our ordinary means of salvation. If we contain our natural anger the authorities will dialogue us literally to death. We may return next year or next decade. But we will never receive an acceptable decision. Meanwhile a new generation matures unaware that it has been robbed. When we die all protest ceases, the Church itself ceases, and the world with it. And you, who could act, sit and let it all proceed. And you wonder what happened to respect for the cloth.”

“And you sit there and pontificate. You tell me what the Church teaches.”

R. “Some one has to do it.”

“Where is your authority? What do you know that I don’t?”

R. “I propose only the doctrine and practice of the Church. I was trained thoroughly in both. With a twenty-year blank I absorbed none of your gradual misdirection.”

“How do you know you’re right? Nearly everyone disagrees with you.” Don’t forget Newman’s *consensus fidelium*.”

R. “Is that part of the apostolic tradition? Nearly everyone *now*, perhaps, when disagreement with tradition is all they agree on. But not fifty, a hundred, a thousand years ago, And I can well remember literally hundreds of times when one alone, usually the teacher, had the correct answer. If you’re right you’re right, no matter who or how many disagree.”

“Doesn’t it bother you to be in such a small minority?”

R. “I’m accustomed to minorities. The majority has never been white, blue-eyed, Catholic, male, or even Irish. Often in a theater I’ve laughed alone at a comedian’s joke.”

“Maybe no one else thought it funny.”

R. "I usually smile at a joke. When I laugh aloud it is extremely funny."
"You're the expert. Twenty years at the laughing academy."
R. "Now *there* I was in a majority!"

A week later Gilchrist reminded Joe of his regular dinner invitation.
"Will Father MacFelimigh be there?"
"Never again. You are a pertinacious heretic whom it would behoove me to shun."
"No more free meals?"
"Fear not! I've found a seminary professor for you to devour at 8:30. Sharpen your teeth."

It was nearly nine when Gilchrist asked: "Father Small, why don't you say the traditional Mass here at the seminary in private?"

"If I should say a Tridentine Mass I would be committing a mortal sin."

R. "I knew I should have brought along that conical head-rasp. Has it occurred to you that a lie of such magnitude is a mortal sin?"

"The pope says the new mass. I must be in union with him."

R. "That should eliminate the Eastern rites."

"I am vowed to obedience."

R. "To the same extent as your bishop. He was consecrated before 1969. He vowed obedience in all things and in accord with Canon Law. The laws dealing with the essential elements of divine worship and the sacraments depend on positive Divine Law, and are not subject to change. You are oath-bound to the Council of Trent."

"It's the same thing."

R. "As what? Obedience to Vatican II?"

"Yes."

R. "You haven't compared them lately. But how do you obey Vatican II in changing your rite? Where does Vatican II even recommend a new rite? Or make the Mass of the ages sinful."

"It must have said so somewhere."

Joe passed the priest *The Documents of Vatican II*. "Show me! Slow down, you'll rip the sacred writings. Look in the index. Then try the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. I can put on the tea kettle."

"Yes, yes! Anything for silence!"

Joe returned in ten minutes with tea and sandwiches. "You live pretty high on the hog. Find anything yet?"

"No. Nothing here."

R. "Then why do you use the new rite?"

"Pope Paul promulgated it."

R. "Didn't he say in his promulgation that he did so in obedience to Vatican II?"

"He may have meant the spirit of the council."

R. "For which he was largely responsible. It certainly favored change. Why won't you admit he lied?"

"Because he was the pope acting officially."

R. "But not infallibly. Are you saying a pope has never lied?"

"Why not infallibly?"

R. "He himself disclaimed it on two occasions."

"He did? Why would he bother?"

R. "If he claimed to act infallibly here, how could he deny infallibility to Pope St. Pius V's *Quo primum*?"

"And you think *Quo primum* infallible?"

R. "Of course. It bears all the earmarks and fills all the requirements. But whether it is or not, it is the unabrogated, unrepealed law of the Church, and it forbids the use of any Mass rite whatsoever that cannot claim to have been introduced before 1370."

"But the pope can make changes. Despite *Quo primum's* prohibition several popes have changed the 1570 Missal."

R. "Who has changed the Mass until John XXIII and Paul VI?"

"How about Clement VIII in 1604?"

R. "He corrected errors in the printing and restored St. Pius V's Missal."

"Urban VIII in 1634?"

R. "Slack printers again. And some clarification of rubrics."

"Don't forget St. Pius X?"

R. "He streamlined the calendar so we use the Proper of the Sunday more often."

"And then there was Pius XII."

R. "He changed the time on the Easter Vigil. I said 'changed the Mass,' not some regulation in the Missal governing its use. Anyway the prohibition concerned heedless change, not all change."

"The Church's official changes are heedless?"

R. "Heedless of the definition and intention of the Mass. After removing the parts where the intention is declared, they impose the replacement to the exclusion of the traditional standard. Surely that is heedlessness carried to the ultimate."

"But the pope had to follow the council—to try to suit the modern world—modern man."

R. "When Christ came did He accommodate His eternal message to the world and modern man of His day?"

"But the Church wasn't growing fast enough. After nineteen centuries we were still less than one quarter of the world's population. He had to do something different."

R. "Christ's mandate was to preach the Gospel to all nations. The power is in His words. St. Paul said that God gives the increase. Why should we become disheartened or impatient with the result of our efforts? I won't go off to seek new truths if tradition and Catholic doctrine won't convince *you*. But Paul VI did this all the time. He sought for truth that Christ had already given us, as though he had given us not enough for salvation. He heaped scorn on Christ's insufficient message, and expected us to accept his own absurd quest for God knows what."

"But modern man was not accepting Christ's message."

R. "So much the worse for modern man. He had heard it. So Paul accommodated the message to suit man. And for what? Are there long queues at the baptismal fonts?"

"But this changed attitude takes time to create an effect."

R. "So what is the quarrel with the time taken by traditional methods?"

"We had to try something new."

R. "Then why didn't you? These accommodations have all been tried and condemned. Look at the Jesuit-Brahmin experiment, and even the French worker-priests."

"But these things have not been tried on modern man."

R. "What makes him modern? Where is he modern? Namibia? Karamoja? Tibet? Is he advanced because he drives a car where his great-grandfather drove a horse and carriage?"

"But John XXIII, Paul VI, and their council have all spoken to modern man, so he must exist."

R. "I can talk to the green dragon down the street, too."

"But evolution is a fact."

R. "Then there should be some evidence. At some time in history some one somewhere should have recorded an example of such a mind-boggling occurrence. But where is the record? Even its inventor called it only a theory."

"But it's accepted by scientists."

R. "Not too many centuries ago scientists practiced alchemy and thought the world was flat."

"The Church has never condemned evolution."

R. "Perhaps it had a Galileo complex. Or perhaps it thought, like most men of Darwin's day, that it was not to be taken seriously. It never condemned the proposition that the world was flat either."

"But who cared?"

R. "Precisely. And who cares about evolution except those who speak to modern man as he evolves into a god, because there is no God to Whom he is responsible? What was the Church's attitude before Vatican II?"

"Whether or not man's body had evolved, God created each soul immediately and individually."

R. "Remember your catechism? What is man?"

"Man is a creature composed of body and soul, made to the image and likeness of God."

R. "And this likeness is chiefly in the soul?"

"Correct."

R. "And what is God?"

"God is a spirit infinitely perfect."

R. "Therefore He is unchangeable. How can perfection be changed? Change from perfection must be imperfection. Changes or stages to perfection must be less than perfection."

"Of course. Eternal perfection postulates unchangeability."

R. "And when God creates something He creates it perfectly according to its nature. He has no need to change its pattern."

"That seems reasonable. Trial and error don't fit omniscience."

R. "If it is reasonable in the world we see, should it not apply absolutely to the spiritual? When He creates a human soul, is there any possible reason why he should pattern it on a different image and likeness of the Unchangeable?"

"But the Church always excluded the soul from the evolutionary process."

R. "Then why does it promote different measures to save our identical souls? Salvation's requirements must be the same for all souls—me, you, your grandfather, his great-uncle, St. Leo the Great, and Simon Magus."

"But the Church has not condemned evolution of the human body, the human brain, the human mind."

R. "Then it's high time. But the postconciliar 'Church' won't condemn what it's built on."

"This is my point. If the Church has built on it, it must be true."

R. "But the Church was built more than eighteen centuries before this absurd theory evolved. What was it built on then? Supposing evolution could be true, would the eternal God, Who would have created it and its effect on the human mind, have left this effect out of His calculations in presenting His revelation? Is it your position that the improving human mind can draw more or different conclusions or meanings from His revelation?"

"That is certainly implied by Vatican II and Paul VI. Therefore it must be true."

R. "Then you and they would have the availability of salvation depend on intelligence?"

"Well, yes, the intelligence of the race."

R. "In New Guinea? Or Nicobar? Or Yakutsk? Who was the highest intelligence God created?"

"Lucifer."

R. "If the human race is becoming more intelligent the process violates the known laws of heredity."

"Where did you get that weird idea?"

R. "The nut falls not far from the tree. The farmer saves large potatoes for seed. Racehorse breeders pay through the nose for winners."

"What are you on about?"

R. "Contraception. First accepted and practiced by university graduates, the enlightened, the intelligent. These people do not replace themselves, leaving the population supply—explosion they call it—to the less intelligent, even stupid, ordinary proletarians. So the average intelligence of the race declines, even without the planned decay of the school systems, and massive loss of whole generations of our strongest in war."

"According to your reasoning, then, the Catholic clergy is a dead loss, even a disaster, to posterity."

R. "Passing over the lowered standards in modernist seminaries, basing the argument on the days when a priest commanded respect, you disregard two points. Priests and religious usually come from large families. They had siblings galore, often better endowed, to pass along family endowments. The priest's sacrifice, his celibacy, was in a way also the race's sacrifice to God, who was always offered the best of the herd, flock, or crop, and who always turned adherence to this practice to the sacrificers' benefit. A real loss, superficially of the same type, sacrifices the sickly, ugly or malformed—not for God's glory but for convenience of parents or tribe. Recognized genius is often coupled with physical handicap or poor health. The poor fellow can't do ordinary work and is forced, or given time, to develop his mind. So-called primitive peoples sometimes evolve from higher cultures that killed their 'defectives.' Since they violated God's law He could hardly be expected to preserve them from violation's consequences—to maintain them at Adam's level of civilization."

"You think Adam was civilized?"

R. "I think Adam was perfect. Before the fall he had everything. Directly from God's Hand, he had all he needed to establish civilization. He was probably the strongest, healthiest, quickest, most intelligent man who ever lived. Except for Jesus Christ we have all degenerated from him. *There* is your modern man, your superman, the man with the best chance to be godlike. God created man as He created everything else, perfect according to his nature. We can evolve only downhill."

"Man can't improve?"

R. "Individually—within his nature and capacity. He can't increase hereditary endowments to pass them on through heredity. He can decrease them through abuse or disease."

"You paint a gloomy picture."

R. "No, I focus a camera. This is how things are. The entire universe is slowing down. Everything decays. But man is exempt from this universal law of nature? He didn't come from the ape, but he can degenerate to the ape's capacity—especially if he takes the word of the evolutionist and retreats from facts, logic and revealed truth. The moment he accepts the absurd theory that he is advancing to godhead he places himself above all his ancestors, so why should he listen to the poor defectives? What can they tell him? Do you suppose he can seriously carry this attitude to its logical conclusion?"

"Which is?"

R. "You tell me I cannot assess what is happening in the Church—I must await the judgment of history."

"Right! You don't have all the facts."

R. "A fine practical application of evolution! We must leave our problem to the superior intellects of the future and their improperly postulated greater access to the facts. How will they discover all those facts if no one that perceives them speaks? Who keeps records of silence except to call it consent? The logical outcome is the antithesis if

ancestor-worship, which is based on superior knowledge attainable through study and emulation. Descendant-worship leans chiefly on wishful thinking. The future's great intellects, that we systematically breed out of the race, will solve all our present problems—in the past! How will that help you or me? Even could they arrive at a perfect solution, we would be dead—saved or lost—without benefit of this mighty and informed judgment of generations that need not face our problems and may therefore not even consider them. Who worries about Julius Caesar's problems? Evolution, after all, follows chance and environmental factors. Above all, it needs time by the eons. Nothing mutates on the instant but over countless millennia all impossibilities become possible. All this shortens the utterly impossible odds. Or hadn't you heard?"

"Drink your blasted tea! Time is cooling it."

Another week, a new game. Jack Gilchrist answered his pertinacious doorbell to find two soberly dressed men who asked to be admitted. Robbers? Mormons? No, their hair was too long. Jehovah's Witnesses? No, by gosh! In the foyer light he recognized Jones and Hobson, doubtless on their weekly assignment for the Legion of Mary.

"You look happy to see us," said Jones in some surprise.

"Oh, I am! Right this way, gentlemen. Mr. Marcus Jones, Mr. Pincus Hobson, may I present Mr. Joseph Riordan." The battle lasted two hours.

"You throw words like 'heresy' and 'heretic' around loosely," eventually said Hobson. "But it's hard to detect heresy these days. And what *is* a heretic? *You* can't declare anyone a heretic!"

R. "Modernists cloud everything, but their very tactics are some of the signs. Heresy detection is not all that hard. Ask yourself whether you've encountered this fog before, and whether you can elicit sense from it. If it's new, or not clear, it's not Catholic doctrine. And I don't declare heretics. A heretic declares himself in heresy. Still, 'heretic' is defined in Canon 1325 of the 1918 Code—anyone baptized, retaining the name Christian, who obstinately denies or doubts any truth proposed for belief by the Catholic faith. All I need show is that a belief is so proposed and that a *soi disant* Christian denies its truth."

"No, you have to warn a heretic. And you can't tell a pope what to do."

R. "You can tell him he's not pope *because* he's a heretic for denying a truth known to all ages of the Church, which is of itself sufficient warning. How could he not know, given two years philosophy and four years theology?"

"But Paul VI spent very little time in a seminary."

R. "So he took on the job irresponsibly? Wasn't it his job to know the faith? Isn't it *your* job? And mine? How can he teach us what he can't know? How is he pope if not infallible teacher?"

"What about the admonitions required by Canon 2315?"

R. "For *suspicion* of heresy. When anyone publicly promulgates or adheres to heresy he is not under suspicion of heresy. He is a public heretic and Canon 2314 applies. Suspicion is canonically incurred by actions which *imply* but do not state heresy, such as participation in a non-Catholic religious rite, or knowingly helping in some way, such as financial contributions, to propagate heresy."

"But Canon 2314 says that *admonished, unrepentant* heretics are to be deprived of position, and, if clerics, shall be deposed."

R. "That's the second penalty, which covers the paperwork. That canon's first penalty is *ipso facto* excommunication. And it quotes Canon 188, #4—a cleric who publicly abandons the faith loses every ecclesiastical office by the very fact and without any declaration. This is only logic. A Catholic heretic is a contradiction in terms. And so is a system of Canon Law which would guard the non-existent Catholic rights of heretics and paralyze Catholics in absurd subjection to heretics."

"But we must not judge lest we be judged."

R. "We don't condemn the heretic to hell. Just possibly he qualified for invincible ignorance, but if we can't judge heresy we have no knowledge of or protection for our faith. We shall all come to judgment anyway. I'd far rather be judged overzealous than cowardly. And I won't dare plead ignorance. The Church taught me."

"I can't answer you. But our priests and bishops can, I'm sure."

"Bring the men around, boy," said Gilchrist.

"That's the idea behind the Legion of Mary. To extend and multiply the parish priest's arm. To reach more people. His time is much too valuable—"

R. "To waste on individual Catholics? He puts plenty of time into his ineffectual committees. He no longer trusts in his Apostolic graces. He *knows* he withholds readily available sacramental grace."

"So they send out you Legion of Mary and Blue Army types," said Gilchrist, "happy as Larry in your sincere daily rosaries."

"What's wrong with that? Didn't Our Lady say she would one day save the world through the rosary?"

R. "If you say so, Pincus, but consider the implications. Certainly Our Lady, a Catholic, believes in the efficacy of our Holy Mass, which has always been held to appease God's wrath and thereby preserve the world. So for the rosary to take over this vital function the Mass must disappear."

"Yes, the day will come when only the rosary will be left us."

R. "And we'll have no Mass? No sacraments? When?"

"We can't tell about prophecies. Perhaps by the end of the century. Things are really going to the dogs."

R. "But it *will* happen?"

"I have no doubts. Some of these prophecies are set down in Holy Scripture—in Daniel—in Thessalonians—so we must believe them."

"What you say is," said Gilchrist, "it can't happen today, but beware next week, next year, next century—always the future. What good are prophecies that never come true? Our whole religion, nearly two thousand years old, is *fulfilled* prophecy. Why are your prophecies necessarily unfulfilled? How is prophecy tested except in fulfillment? If each generation pushes fulfillment off to the next generation it will never come, and the prophecy is therefore false. You almost convince me, but you yourself don't believe. Aren't you just a bit afraid of that unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost, resisting the known truth?"

R. "Marcus, you've agreed with everything we've said. Why won't you stand up and fight?"

"We've got to go along with the bishops, haven't we? We must belong to the structure of the Church—operate under its authority!"

R. "Where's the structure? In the new bishops' conferences? St. Jerome wrote: 'Where the faith is, there is the Church.' You can't find the Church in heresy, in the absence of the faith, in a stolen structure. How many bishops face the responsibility they voluntarily assumed for souls, or keep their ordination oaths?"

"If they lead us wrong they're responsible. But we're obliged to follow."

R. "Over the precipice? Into heresy? Into idolatry? Your attitude sank Britain and Northern Europe during the Reformation. The correct attitude saved the Church from the fourth-century Arian hierarchy. You may think yourself inculpable—placed in a dilemma beyond your capacity to resolve. No instructed Catholic can plead ignorance when faced with heresy, particularly condemned heresy. If he permits a demonstrable heretic to lead him he consents to the heresy. And innocent men are killed in millions because two or three leaders can't agree. Look at the ten plagues of Egypt. One man, the pharaoh, withstood the will of God shown him convincingly by Moses. One man! But who copped the boils? Whose firstborn were slain? The whole nation suffered for the sin of its leader. What guarantee that God will not repeat Himself? Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

“But we simply don’t know.”

R. “Scott McCallum refers to ‘that departure of the damned: Admirably described by a legendary Scots divine “Lord, Lord, we didna ken,” they wailed in woe; And the Lord, with dryness infinite, succinctly said “Ah, well—ye ken noo!” ’ ”

“Remember,” asked Gilchrist, “those two Legion of Mary boys that dropped in last week?”

R. “Who could forget Marcus and Pincus?”

“They led Father MacFelimigh to infer that you and I couldn’t reply to their arguments, and that Father might see us soon at church.”

R. “And how did his reverence take that?”

“With a grain or two of salt. I’m afraid. He told them we’d be more than welcome at any time. I have the afternoon off.”

R. “What are we waiting for? Let’s take him at his word, like old times.”

So in due course through midday traffic they found themselves turning away from the presbytery door. Back at the gate they encountered a balding, purpling, black-clad tornado.

“So this is why you don’t answer your door,” said Jack. “Where’ve you been?”

“Over at that flaming school again, if it’s any of your business!”

“I’ve seen you happier.”

“That school’s in my parish. Canon 469 makes me responsible for the doctrine taught there. But that blasted Brother refuses to let me instruct my own parish children.” Father MacFelimigh admitted his visitors.

R. “How can he do that? Canon Law won’t let him lay hands on you.”

“According to the same Canon I can’t belt him either.”

R. “Suppose you just walk into the classroom and start teaching.”

“Brother calls the bishop. The bishop orders me out.”

R. “Suppose you refuse.”

“Then I’ll lose the parish and the duty under Canon Law.”

R. “What’s wrong with the brothers’ teaching? They taught you and me.”

“Have you seen the texts? Do you know what is taught? Or how?”

R. “I’ve heard something about new methods.”

“They don’t work. They’re brought in only to camouflage new doctrine.”

R. “What’s wrong with new doctrine?”

“It’s different. It contradicts the old. It’s downright heresy!”

R. “What have you done about it?”

“I’ve written the school, the Catholic Education Office, the bishop, the Apostolic Delegate, and Cardinal Wright in Rome.”

R. “That ought to get some action.”

“Are you trying to be funny?”

R. “Well, if you can prove they teach heresy—“

“What heresy would you like? Let me count the ways. They canonize Martin Luther. They continually cite that phony expert, Teilhard de Chardin. They turn Christ Himself into an imbecile that didn’t know why He came, operating on blind faith, only gradually becoming aware of His mission. His authority is made to depend on His openness to people. What happened to His Divinity?”

R. “Sounds heretical enough. How can the kids swallow it?”

“They don’t. But they think that’s the teaching of the Church, so they quit the Church in droves. We’re losing a whole generation in trying to accommodate outsiders.”

R. “Do the parents realize this?”

“Many complain. I advise them to remove their children from the Catholic schools and handle their religious instruction at home.”

R. “But doesn’t that leave the field to the heretics?”

“In a way. Heresy is still taught in our schools, but no one is forced to sit and listen. But when I voice this parents often tell me state schools are worse—that they want their children in Catholic schools.”

R. “As distinct from receiving a Catholic education.”

“I’m afraid so. I tell them they pay their money to have their children’s faith destroyed. At least they’d know what to expect in the state schools. No one holds them up as religious authority.”

R. “You would say, then, that the Catholic school actively destroys the students’ faith?”

“There is no question—it does just that. It graduates modernist Janissaries to compound the felony.”

R. “And your bishop knows this and will not stop it?”

“You should see the letter he sent me. You wouldn’t believe a bishop could be that stupid!”

R. “After what that crowd of bishops did at Vatican II? But you told the Apostolic Delegate and the cardinal in charge of catechetics in Rome. And they did nothing?”

“Nothing. The heretical texts and impossible teaching methods remain.”

R. “The authorities, then, both local and Roman, condone heresy.”

“That is undeniable.”

R. “It is their duty to eradicate heresy.”

“Instead they deny that it *is* heresy.”

R. “But you and I know that it is heresy, do we not?”

“Of course we do! We were taught better than that.”

R. “You never cease to amaze me.”

“What’s wrong now?”

R. “You’ve been roaring for minutes that your bishop and the Roman authorities are wrong in this vital matter of doctrine—that they knowingly permit deliberate perversion of the children’s faith, that, in effect, they put them on the road to hell with the backing of supposedly Catholic authority.”

“Right! I couldn’t have put it better myself.”

R. “Yet you bleatingly accept the same authority when it tells you to change your official worship and to use new sacraments not instituted by Christ, on the grounds that the same authority that you execrate and excoriate cannot be wrong—that it can destroy the souls of our children, turn them into heretics, and separate them from the Faith, but that it would never attempt to pervert us also in at least an equally serious matter, a prime purpose of religion—worship.”

“But the Church is competent in these matters.”

R. “Has the Church not always been competent in these matters?”

“Of course.”

R. “Then from the time laws became necessary to preserve unchanged the traditional Mass, why has that competence forbidden change? Is the Church not competent to preach the Gospel? To teach all nations?”

“Yes, of course.”

R. “Then why reject its competence when it alters doctrine?”

“Absurdity! How can one authority back contradictory doctrines?”

R. “I don’t know. How can it back doctrinally contradictory worship and sacraments?”

“Two very conservative parishioners attend my mass every Sunday morning. They experience none of your difficulties.”

R. “You refer to Mr. Jones and Mr. Hobson?”

“Yes, a solicitor and a mathematics professor.”

R. "I spoke to them last week. The solicitor maintains his equilibrium rather simply. He simply ignores the congregation and the priest, and reads out of his old Missal. But Mr. Hobson chooses to follow the new through all its turns and twists, much as he dislikes it. And do you know why?"

"He tells me that he must stand by the wounded body of Christ."

R. "Even he admits that the Church is not what it was—strong, healthy, recognizable. But he guards the tomb of the severed branch—in the same phony sleep as the original guards."

"Suppose I grant that John XXIII and Paul VI changed the Church radically. There are signs that their successors wished to restore certain things. It took time to accustom us all to change. It will take as long to return. Where's your patience?"

R. "The same place as Christ's when he drove the money-changers from their long-accustomed tables in the temple. Thieves He called them. Suppose He had found idolaters! Can you really imagine that men up to their eyeballs in preparation of two of Vatican II's least acceptable documents wished to restore us to preconciliar doctrine or practice?"

"They seemed willing to allow the traditional Mass."

R. "How generous, seeing that they had no right to disallow it in the first place. We need no permission from authority that continues to stand behind the *novus ordo* service."

"Choosy, aren't you? That's the only authority you have."

R. "Maybe *you* have, not I! Religious authority deals with eternal truths. When it promotes changes by the week it can hardly call itself authority. If it commands obedience will not its subjects hold all compliance until next week or next year to see if the command is rescinded or the subject changed? Who obeys an authority when he can't keep up with its prescriptions? What kind of authority destroys its own laws and customs because they conflict with novelties? It will have an excuse for its existence when it condemns the Second Vatican Council and throws out every change imposed since."

"You traditionalists all want your own way. You're too proud to obey constituted authority."

R. "We know constituted and delegated authority have limits. And listen to the warped logic of the innovator. *You* fellows are proud—too proud to be satisfied with Christ's Revelation and sacraments that all we poor traditionalists have accepted for nineteen centuries. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away.' But *you* can do things better. *You* give us the words of Vatican II. To your great intellects come new insights denied all our Catholic ancestors. How could they, poor insufficiently instructed dim-wits, have been saved?"

"Oh, they had everything necessary for salvation."

R. "Then who, at this late date, can impose new or different necessities on me? I'm not proud. I'll be content with what the Church gave and taught me—and my grandfather—and his grandfather."

"But vernacular worship, for instance, was necessary. No one could understand the Latin."

R. "Prayer books with good translations of the ordinary were cheap. And how many centuries had no one understood Latin? Did you know what went on at Mass before you knew Latin?"

"Of course! From sermons and Religion class."

R. "I suppose you were taught about the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption?"

"Certainly."

R. "Have you ever preached or instructed on these matters?"

"Naturally."

R. "Do you understand them?"

"Far from it. They are revealed mysteries to be taken on faith in God."

R. "Is the Mass a mystery? How is it the Last Supper or the Sacrifice of Calvary? How about Transubstantiation?"

"These things must be taken on faith."

R. "Will the vernacular help anyone understand them? Why, if I cannot understand them, must I put up with ineffective aids supposedly for that purpose, such as the vernacular, even were the translations correct?"

"You don't approve the approved translations of experts?"

R. "Never mind how expert they were. Their translations err repeatedly in vocabulary, grammar, omission, and doctrine. How has this escaped your notice? Didn't you study Latin, theology, or logic? Can't you see that an authority that suppresses true worship of God and commands an ineffective, heretical substitute has apostatized? Are you omadhaun enough to believe that obedience, or any other pretext, can excuse apostasy or idolatry—rejection of God?"

"You laymen just don't understand these things."

R. "Mysteries, are they? We understand why God hates a coward. Cowardice is, in the end, despair—the antithesis of trust in God."

Back at the asylum, Joe sought out Doctor Blottnik, in charge of Joe's case.

R. "As you know, Doc, I've tried to find my Church."

"I can certainly appreciate your quest. Stability is the mother of sanity. Any progress?"

R. "I found a traditional Mass. It is regularly celebrated by a priest who should, I believe, be confined here. He read out an opinion of St. Robert Bellarmine that no one can depose a legitimate pope. He immediately vaulted over all intermediate steps to the *non sequitur* that anyone who will not acknowledge the authority of the current antipope is in schism, and will not be given Communion."

"Did he refuse you?"

R. "I could not approach under such a condition. I view it as public submission to non-existent, impossible authority. Whose authority does he think makes the new service compulsory to the exclusion of the Mass he himself celebrates? Is he not refusing to acknowledge John Paul II's authority in celebrating Mass the moment he has even an acolyte, never mind a congregation?"

"With all your experience of hierarchy and clergy, why did you expect logic or consistency from this priest?"

R. "Being legally insane myself, I entertained a vague notion that if a man can see what is wrong he should see that an authority backing that wrong cannot be other than wrong."

"Perhaps he takes the view that no authority is perfect—that he should follow it everywhere except where he knows it is wrong."

R. "That makes him selective. He operates on private judgment, not on principles of the Faith. Besides he admitted John Paul II is wrong. He asked for prayers to wake him up. He cited Pius IX who supposedly changed his liberal views at the shock of his prime minister's assassination. If that's all it takes maybe some one should knife Casaroli. But why must Catholics wait for a pope to agree with them? Where does he think John Paul II is while he disagrees, if not in heresy and idolatry? And heresy removes all his imputed authority, as clearly stated by Innocent III near the turn of the twelfth century—as clearly decreed more than three centuries later by Paul IV, before Bellarmine was seventeen years old—as Bellarmine himself wrote in the next chapter of the quoted book."

"Didn't some one call this to the priest's attention?"

R. "He would take a page from the innovators. Since Paul IV's legislation was supposedly not incorporated into the 1918 Code of Canon Law, that Code supersedes it—whereas the codification's purpose was neither new laws nor replacement or abrogation of old laws, but synthesis of an unwieldy set of codes. Nevertheless it was undisputed law

for more than three centuries, and it covers the existing situation. Since no other law appears to cover it, except such laws—Canons 188 and 2314—as everyone refuses or fears to apply, why may not the ‘superseded’ law be applied? The Church, being the sole avenue of salvation, has the right and duty to protect itself.

“Or else he would conveniently forget the objection, especially the point that indisputably remains in the law concerning persons, Innocent III’s statement that a pope would vanish into heresy.”

“If the argument were written and documented?”

R. “According to several of his flock he would simply refuse to read it, thus preserving his invincible ignorance.”

“Ignorance in a traditional priest?”

R. “He keeps what he has through stubbornness—not logic. He leans so heavily on theological opinions that he can’t see when they do not apply. He has delusions of personal homiletic infallibility. His sermons are not subject to discussion or criticism.”

“Perhaps he belongs here.”

R. “We don’t need disturbing influences here. Think of my welfare.”

“But you’re fresh out of isolation, a case of future shock. The world has progressed an entire generation in your absence.”

R. “And you’ve accustomed yourself to gradual change almost without noticing. You don’t recognize the advanced symptoms of social insanity because they’ve become normal procedures.”

“You want me to commit the whole world?”

R. “It’s too late for that. Should this age miraculously survive to become history, it can be set down only by ‘psycho’ annalists. Everywhere I see deterioration, disruption, mania for unwarranted change, all fostered by media, government, and Church. Even the pound, mile, and gallon are gone—to fit the computers, we are told. But computers figure 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, etc., and require programming to handle decimal or any other numerical system. It’s only another sign of social dementia that supposed convenience for a mechanical contrivance outweighs human customs, privileges, and rights.

“Bewilderment, friction, frustration, confusion, contradiction, and revolution are promoted by the bastions of stability. Civilization, happiness, sanity itself rest on a firm moral base, a definite set of limits and ground rules, stability. That’s one monster asylum out there. Please put me back in my padded cell. It’s the only stability left in this mad world!”