

Answers to Questions

A QUESTION ABOUT THE MYSTICAL BODY

Question: In a recent work entitled the *Mystical Body of Christ*, by Dr. Friedrich Jürgensmeier, this statement appears: "Neither can one say that the mystical body is limited, in an actual sense, to those who belong visibly to the Church. As Christ is 'the Lamb which was slain from the beginning of the world' and our fathers before Him 'drank the same spiritual drink . . . Christ,' His members may be called those who live in inner, vital union with Him. This body of Christ extends beyond the boundaries of the visible Church, which is universal and includes an incalculable multitude from all nations and ages and religions, 'baptized and unbaptized, circumcised and uncircumcised, all those whose intentions are good and who maintain an inner communion with God and Christ'" (p. 49). What is to be said of the correctness of the doctrine expounded in this paragraph?

Answer: It is indeed regrettable that a statement like this appears in a work which is so excellent in many respects and which has received wide circulation among Catholics. For this statement, as it stands, cannot be reconciled with the doctrine propounded by Pope Pius XII, in the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*: "Only those are really to be included as members of the Church who have been baptized and profess the true faith and who have not unhappily withdrawn from Body-unity or for grave faults been excluded by legitimate authority. . . . It follows that those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in one Body such as this, and cannot be living the life of its one Divine Spirit. . . . It is clear, we think, how grievously they err who arbitrarily picture the Church as something hidden and invisible. . . . No, the Mystical Body of Christ is like Christ the Head and Exemplar of the Church, 'who is not complete if only His visible human nature is considered, or if only His divine invisible nature. . . . but He is one through the union of both and one in both'" (*Mystici Corporis*, AAS, XXXV [1943], 202, 223).

It might be urged in defence of the unfortunate presentation of a view that is no longer tenable, considering the Pope's clear statement, that the translation and approval of the book (in Ger-

many) date from 1939, four years previous to the issuing of the *Mystici Corporis*. It is difficult to see, however, how this fact can justify the continued distribution of a work presenting incorrect doctrine on a vital point of ecclesiology.

BLESSING OF SCAPULARS

Question: When a priest has received the faculty to bless and to impose the five scapulars with a single formula, may he consider as included in this the faculty to bless and to impose any one of these separately, with its own proper formula—for example, the scapular of Mount Carmel?

Answer: On the principle that the greater includes the less, a priest who has the faculty *benedicendi et imponendi quinque scapularia sub unica formula* may safely regard himself as empowered to bless and to impose any one of the five separately, using its proper individual formula. However, it is useful to note that the faculty to bless and to impose scapulars does not include a dispensation from the obligation of having the names of the recipients inscribed in the records of the particular religious orders with which some of the scapulars bring affiliation, such as the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. However, such a dispensation is sometimes given as a separate concession. Thus, by virtue of the quinquennial faculties, the bishops of our country can subdelegate priests to bless and to impose the five scapulars with a single formula "without the obligation of inscribing the names in cases of a great concourse of people during the time of spiritual exercises and missions" (*Faculties from the Sacred Congregation of Rites*, n. 7; cf. Bouscaren, *Canon Law Digest*, II [Milwaukee, 1943], p. 37). An even greater privilege is granted to priests who are members of the Missionary Union of the Clergy. They may not only bless and impose the five scapulars with a single formula, but they also have the faculty, without any qualification, of imposing these scapulars without the obligation of enrollment in the registers of the Confraternity.

THE "Rh FACTOR" IN MARRIAGE

Question: What is the "Rh factor" which medical men are discussing today in connection with marriage and pregnancy? Some