



Faith Via The Mail

*Story of KC Catholic
Advertising Program*

“**W**HAT do you mean only one true Church?”

“Does it really matter what we believe?”

“No, belief in God is not enough.”

A person, turning the pages of a magazine after supper, sees one of these captions. The caption catches his eyes and interest. And he reads on.

The caption, attention-compelling and almost always intriguingly phrased, headlines a Catholic advertisement of the Knights of Columbus. It invites the reader to send by

mail for a free pamphlet to satisfy his aroused curiosity.

If the person is a non-Catholic who is interested in matters of faith and loves research and discussion on the subject, he will probably cut the coupon and mail it on his way to the office the next morning. If he happens to be a nominal Catholic, but who nevertheless is interested in further religious instruction, he will perhaps do likewise. And when he does, the world-wide KC religious information program goes to work on him.

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When the coupon is dropped in the mailbox, it travels all the way to Number 4422 Lindell Boulevard in St. Louis 8, Missouri, U.S.A. Here is located the KC department in charge of the Catholic information program and known as the Knights of Columbus Religious Information Bureau. A clerk picks up the envelope and opens it. It is handed to another clerk who secures a copy of the pamphlet requested and mails it right away to the sender of the coupon. Together with the pamphlet, the sender also receives an invitation to enroll in the religious correspondence course. If he accepts the invitation and returns the application for enrollment, then the KC religious information program works in full gear on him.

He will soon receive a book entitled "Father Smith Instructs Jackson." Regularly, he will be sent sets of questions about the book. He will be asked to answer and return the questionnaires to St. Louis. If he passes the tests, he will finally receive by mail a certificate attesting to the fact that he has successfully completed the course.

But far more important and valuable than this piece of thick bond paper which he will frame and hang on some wall in his room, he will ultimately acquire the priceless peace of heart and mind which goes with the true Faith. For if he is a non-Catholic, the course may prod him to make further research, if he is not convinced already, to help him to decide on joining the Catholic Church. If he is a nominal Catholic, he will acquire a stronger foundation of his Faith.

Witness the following:

"I feel," says a recent convert, "that my conversion was almost completely accomplished by the work of the Knights of Columbus." This convert took five years to make his decision from the first time he answered the KC advertisement. "Like many others who wish to inquire into the Catholic Faith," he added, "I had a fear of approaching and talking to a Catholic priest. The Knights of Columbus solved that problem for me."

A former non-Catholic who took instructions by mail in 1956 writes now to say that he was baptized eight months ago, that he won his wife to the Faith two months ago, and that he now needs additional "ammunition" to answer the increasing questions of his daughter and son-in-law. "Pray for us," he writes, "that we may be strong and they may see the light."

HOW MUCH FOR GOD

The following is a series of questions once posed by Archbishop John Mark Gannon.

"Suppose God granted you a life of 70 years," the archbishop asked, "how would it be distributed? How would you spend it? Statistics divide these 70 years in this way:

Three years would be spent in education;

Eight years in amusements;

Six years at the dinner table;

Five years in transportation;

Four years in conversation;

Fourteen years in work;

Three years in reading;

Twenty-four years in sleeping.

How much time do you give to God? If you went to Mass every Sunday and prayed for five minutes every morning and evening, you would be giving FIVE MONTHS to God; five months out of 70 years of your life. (The Monitor)

A man from Canada, who started taking the instructions two years ago, now writes in to say that he has not lost interest but has read and re-read the Order's text book, "Father Smith Instructs Jackson." He is also taking personal instructions from a local priest. "There must be many non-Catholics," he says, "who are reached by your commendable efforts, but you may not always know just how effectively."

The influence of the KC advertisements is not confined to non-Catholics. A Deputy Grand Knight of one of the Councils asks if he could take the Order's instruction by mail because "it would be to my benefit to review the instructions that I took so many years ago."

This religious advertising program is made possible by contributions from every member of the Knights of Columbus. The Supreme Knight himself, Bro. Luke E. Hart, heads the Catholic Advertising Committee, under which the KC Religious Information Bureau operates.

Inquiries or requests for free pamphlets as well as applications for enrollment in the correspondence course pour in from different countries all over the world, including Russia, Communist China and other Iron Curtain nations.

From the Philippines come one of the big-

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FATHER FELIX' QUESTION BOX

It is all very well to say, "Obey the Church." But don't you think the Church exceeds its authority in entering into the domain of science when it forbids cremation?

The forbidding of cremation to Catholics does not involve any entry of the Church into the domain of science. Nor has the Church exceeded its authority in forbidding Catholics to be cremated. Christ gave to the Catholic Church a complete mandate to attend to all matters of religious significance. He said to her, "Whatever you bind on earth is bound also in heaven." And as religion extends to the complete human personality, including both soul and body, the Church certainly has the right to prescribe the religious ceremonies for the final disposal of the body, and to demand that the method of disposal will be in accordance with her religious rites.

Why did Christ go to hell?

Christ did not go to hell in the modern and restricted sense of that word. At the time when the Apostle's Creed was composed, the word hell was used to designate any state of existence lower than heaven. After His death on the Cross, our Lord's soul went, says St. Peter, to preach to those spirits who were in prison. That is, He joined those souls which were detained from the fullness of heaven and who were awaiting the opening of heaven to mankind by Him. This descent of Christ's soul into hell was obviously not to the hell of the eternally lost, but to what we call the Limbo or detention place of the soul of the just who lived prior to our Lord's coming into this world.

What of those who have never heard of Christianity and follow other beliefs?

God obliges no one to the impossible. If these people are sincere in their mistaken beliefs, try to obey natural conscience, and repent of their failures and sins. God will give them the necessary interior graces for their salvation, graces due to the merits of Christ. The moment after their death they will know that Christ has been their Redeemer, even though, through no fault of their own, they did not recognize the fact during life.

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gest numbers of inquiries and applications for enrollment. We are next to Canada, which ranks second to the United States. As of January 1, 1959, 140,101 inquiries and 19,920 applications for enrollment were received from Canada, and from the Philippines, 16,482 inquiries and 12,709 applications. The totals for all countries, including the United States, as of the same date were 3,165,685 inquiries and 321,170 enrollments.

What are these pamphlets which the KC advertisements talk about? The pamphlets come in a handy size of 5 by 7 inches, containing an average of 40 pages. Each pamphlet is divided into several short articles on vital and controversial points about the Catholic religion.

About two years ago, the office of the Territorial Deputy in Manila ran the series of KC advertisements in the weekly "Philippines Free Press." The series which was published for a few months drew thousands of requests for the pamphlets and hundreds of applications for the correspondence course. Beginning in this issue, THE CROSS will publish some of the KC advertisements.