

The Theology of Sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church

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Abstract

One of the most endearing features of the Bahá'í Faith is its openness to people of different beliefs and traditions. But that openness demands a knowledge of the belief systems of the people with whom one is in dialogue. This paper attempts to enter into a dialogue between the theology of Roman Catholic Sacraments and the Bahá'í response to that theology.

Introduction

One cannot ignore the part played by the Sacraments in the life of a Roman Catholic. While there may be a decline in the actual belief that people have in the Sacraments, they continue to be administered at crucial points in an individual's life. Perhaps it is because they are thus administered that they still hold such importance. Many Catholics today may see the Sacraments as mere empty formulae, but others see them as stepping stones along the path to eternal life, whereby the believer is infused with the Grace of God at significant points in their lives: they are seen as signifying no less than Christ's hand in humankind's redemption.

The intention of this paper is to examine the background to the Sacraments, their central importance to Catholic belief and their significance in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. It would not be possible to treat each of the Sacraments adequately in this space, but it is hoped that a detailed explanation of the Eucharist will give Bahá'ís some understanding of the importance of Sacraments in Roman Catholicism.

What are Sacraments?

The seven Roman Catholic Sacraments are: Baptism, Penance, Confirmation, Eucharist (or Mass), Marriage, Holy Orders and Sacrament of the Sick (formerly "Extreme Unction"). The Church tells us that Sacraments are "the signs and instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ, the Head, throughout the Church which is His Body" (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 774). The noun "sacrament" is derived from the Latin *sacramentum*, originally "a military oath" taken by Roman soldiers not to desert their standard, turn their back on the enemy or abandon their general (traces of which survive in early Christian usage), but whose present meaning comes from its employment in the Latin New Testament to mean "sacred mystery." As one receives each Sacrament, he or she experiences the Grace of Jesus Christ and ultimately of God in a deeper way than experienced in previous Sacraments: one experiences God in a deeper way when one receives the Sacrament of Confirmation than when one is baptised. In the *Vatican Council Document* ("The Constitution on Sacred Liturgy," Section 59), we are told that the "purpose of the Sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ [the Church] and finally to give worship to God."

However, they also act as a form of instruction. Usually before one receives the Sacrament, one goes through detailed instruction about that Sacrament and its significance in the Christian life of the individual and the community. We see this especially in the case of adult Baptism, Penance (Confession), First Communion (Eucharist), Marriage, and Holy Orders. Bahá'ís might be familiar with the elaborate preparations for First Confession and Holy Communion among children in primary schools and also the preparation for Confirmation when the child reaches about eleven years of age. Much of this preparation concerns instruction in the meaning of the Sacrament being received. The person who is to receive it must have a strong Christian faith, but at the same time the celebration of the Sacrament helps the participant to nourish, strengthen and express his or her faith still further. That is why they are called “sacraments of faith” (*Vatican Documents : The Constitution on Sacred Liturgy*).

Sacramental Grace

In addition to this, the Church teaches that for believers, the Sacraments are a requirement for salvation and entry to eternal life (The Council of Trent, 1547). The reason for this is that Christ - through the Holy Spirit - bestows “Sacramental Grace.” This grace (which comes from the Latin *gratia* or “gift”) is defined as “a participation in the life of God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 1997) and is the “gratuitous [free] gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it” (Ibid., Section 1999). Without this, one cannot participate in eternal life with God. More than a gift, therefore, it is a relationship with God.

Bahá'u'lláh, in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* (the Book of Certitude), also highlights this relationship when He says: “...for the highest and most excelling grace bestowed upon men is the grace of attaining unto the Presence of God, and of His recognition, which has been promised unto all people” (p. 138). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also highlights the importance of grace in the spiritual life of a believer: “It is evident that the souls receive grace from the bounty of the Holy Spirit which appears in the Manifestations of God. Therefore, if a soul does not receive grace from the bounties of the Holy Spirit, he remains deprived of the divine gift...” (*Some Answered Questions*, p. 128). He goes on to state: “Therefore, it is evident that the spirit of Christ is a heavenly grace which descends from heaven; whosoever receives light from that spirit in abundance - that is to say, the heavenly teachings - finds everlasting life” (p. 98).

While ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is saying that the Holy Spirit gives us eternal life through the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Catholic Church also teaches that the Holy Spirit is received by reading the Word of God or Bible (*The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelations: Vatican Council Documents*); in addition, the believer receives the Holy Spirit in a special way through the rituals and symbols enacted in participating in the Sacraments.

Sacraments as the Continuation of Jesus’ Revelation

A key role played by the Sacraments is that when the Church celebrates them, “she confesses the faith received from the Apostles” (*Catechism of the Catholic*

Church, Section 1124), and indeed from Christ Himself. It is He Who acts in and through the Sacraments and communicates the grace that each Sacrament signifies. In this we are being told that the Sacraments go back to the time of the early Church, and have been given to us by Christ. If one examines the Gospel, however, one does not find any account of Jesus prescribing the Sacraments in detail. The Church explains that while Jesus did not directly institute the Sacraments while He was on earth, He nevertheless instituted them through the Apostles and their successors. The Gospel reference to Jesus' appointment of Peter as first Pope - the so-called Petrine Clause - is used to explain this:

“...thou art Peter [Gk. *Petros*], and upon this rock [*petra*] I will build my church; and the gates of hell [Hades] shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19).

The Council of Trent (1545-63), the 19th ecumenical gathering of the Roman Catholic Church, which, in response to the Protestant Reformation, initiated a general reform of the church and precisely defined its essential dogmas, stated in 1547:

Adhering to the teaching of Holy Scripture, to the apostolic tradition and to the consensus... of the Fathers, the sacraments of the new law were... all instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Section 1115) tells us that “the mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments through the ministers of his church.” This means that the unfolding mysteries of Jesus through the ages are being revealed in the Sacraments and that through them, He is revealing Himself to suit the needs of every age. This Revelation of Jesus in the Sacraments is being carried out through His ministers - the bishops and priests - who are seen as the direct link with the apostles and therefore with Jesus Himself. Since the existence of the Apostles' Creed as a formula from about the second century, the Church has, since the eleventh century, formally defined itself as “Catholic and Apostolic”.

One can see here again the need that the early Church had for putting the Christian faith under the authority of bishops and priests. Because the Sacraments are important steps in the life of a believer, the doctrine around them was very much influenced by the need to have an authoritarian priesthood. When the Sacraments were first instituted in the first or second century, it was necessary to emphasise the direct line with the Apostles and with Christ Himself. The bishops and priests, as the successors to the Apostles, acted as administrators of the sacraments, as in today's Church. This was necessary at that time because of the fear of schism and because it was necessary to keep the purity of Jesus' teachings intact. (It could be said that this also happened in the Bahá'í Faith with the succession of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi as the two authoritative interpreters of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and also with the “learned arm” of the Faith, specifically the appointment

of the thirty-two Hands of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi between 1951 and 1957 for the purposes of its protection and propagation.) However, it also meant that the Church authorities controlled the development of Jesus' Faith, and did not take into consideration the spirituality of the people and how Jesus was working through them. This is also understandable in that the laity was not educated enough to be able to think for itself: it was a flock needing pastoral guidance (John 10:11-16) and, in a metaphorical sense, feeding (John 20:15-17).

Signs and Symbols

Part of the celebration of the Sacraments is the use of signs and symbols, which derive their meaning from both the Old and New Testaments. Their purpose is to allow humanity to "express and perceive spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 1146). In the same way that in the world of social relationships one uses actions, gestures and words, so also the Catholic Church teaches that we need signs and symbols to conduct a relationship with God. In many cases these signs, symbols and rituals are born out of the social relationships of the day. Washing and anointing, breaking bread and so forth help to demonstrate the presence of God and our relationship with Him while simultaneously being practical activities in the contemporary social milieu. The Sacraments integrate all of these signs and symbols in ritualistic celebrations.

The Church goes further than this in its use of symbol. St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), the foremost Scholastic scholar and theologian and a major figure in the medieval Roman Catholic Church, tells us that a sacrament is an "efficacious symbol," which means that what is symbolised happens. For example, the bread and wine at the Sacrament of the Eucharist (from the Greek word, *eucharistos*, meaning "grateful," literally a "thank-offering" or "thanksgiving") symbolise the Body and Blood of Jesus, but because the Eucharist is a Sacrament, Church teaching states that what is symbolised actually happens: that is, the bread and wine actually *become* the Body and Blood of Christ, while still remaining visibly bread and wine.

Why is it necessary to give signs and symbols such importance? Why is it so important to insist that people believe that this bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, when it is so obvious that they are merely bread and wine? In today's world, does this belief in Transubstantiation recreate the image of fellowship and community that was evident during the Last Supper? The answer possibly lies in people's need in the past for the miraculous and mysterious. It also placed the priest, who was representing Jesus at the altar, in a position of authority. Today, however, people are much less willing to accept this use of symbol and the authoritarian, centralised model of Church that accompanies it. A new understanding of symbol is required.

Bahá'u'lláh discusses symbols as follows:

Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such hath

been the way of God amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 49).

In this we learn that symbols are used by the different Manifestations to show us what God expects of us: they are a means of *understanding* God's expectations. In the same way, Jesus used symbols to convey or reinforce His Teachings. He spoke of shepherds (John 11:11-16) and fishermen (Matthew 4:18-22) in relation to how His followers should act. He addressed the nature of fellowship by invoking the analogies of the vine and its branches (John 15:1-9) and of bread and wine. Symbols have a purpose, they are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. To a large extent with the Catholic Church and its teaching on "efficacious symbols," this use of symbols has become an end in itself, where the symbol is often more important than what it represents. 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarifies that "Outward forms and symbols must be used to convey intellectual conceptions" (*Some Answered Questions*, p. 83). He goes on to explain what this means by using examples:

...so the symbol of knowledge is light, and of ignorance, darkness; but reflect, is knowledge sensible light, or ignorance sensible darkness? No, they are merely symbols. These are only intellectual states, but when you desire to express them outwardly, you call knowledge light, and ignorance darkness. You say: 'My heart was gloomy, and it became enlightened.' Now, that light of knowledge, and that darkness of ignorance, are intellectual realities, not sensible ones; but when we seek for explanations in the external world, we are obliged to give them a sensible form. It is clear and evident that these signs have symbolic signification, and that they are not literal (p. 84).

Regardless of what Bahá'ís might feel regarding the application of ritual and the use of symbols as they apply to the Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, they are an essential part of Church teaching. It is a core teaching of the Church that they are the "signs and instruments" by which the Holy Spirit spreads the Grace of Christ to all believers. To certain Catholics, they are greater instruments than the actual teachings of the Bible.

Perhaps the greatest sacramental instrument is that of the Eucharist. This is commonly referred to as the Mass (from the Latin *missa* or "dismissal," signifying the solemn dismissal by the priest of the baptised congregation after it had partaken of the Eucharist in the early Church) and it is obligatory on each Roman Catholic to attend Mass each Sunday and Holy Day.

The Eucharist

Recognised by the Catholic Church as "the source and summit of the Christian Life" (*Vatican Documents: Lumen Gentium*, Section 11), the Sacrament of the Eucharist has as its basis the Last Supper of Jesus Christ portrayed in the synoptic Gospels. It was the night before He was to be crucified. The meal has a poignancy that did not exist at any meal up to this. What added to its importance and solemnity was that it was also the Jewish Passover Meal (Pesach), which commemorated the

Exodus of the Jews from slavery in Egypt, an event, we are told, in which the angel of death *passed over* all the houses of the Jews and entered the homes of the Egyptians and killed their firstborn. As a consequence, Pharaoh released them from slavery (Exodus 12:31-32). Since then each year to commemorate this event, a Passover meal was prepared in each Jewish home, a long-established tradition which continues to this day. It included bread and wine, which were recognised as “the first fruits of the earth” and were offered as an acknowledgement of the greatness of God. The bread was unleavened (without dough and therefore not fermented) to signify the Jews’ hasty escape from slavery. Central to the commemoration was the celebration of Yahweh’s Covenant with His people, in which He promised to be faithful and loving to them in return for their acceptance of Him as the One True God. It was at this most important time of the Jewish year that Jesus chose to have His last meal with His closest followers.

It is the belief of Christianity that Jesus was herewith establishing the new Covenant. At Passover a lamb was sacrificed and eaten. Under this new Covenant [Testament], Jesus was the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). He had come to die for the sins of the world, a death that was imminent. This was a highly momentous occasion. All that had been said and done by Jesus over the three years of His ministry was encapsulated in this meal. Because He was hosting the Passover Meal, Jesus “took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission [forgiveness] of sins’” (Matthew 26: 26-28).

What is the meaning of these words? The Catholic Church takes them literally. By the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, Roman Catholics believe that at the Consecration of the Mass, which is a re-enactment of the Last Supper, the substance of the bread becomes Christ’s Body and the substance of the wine becomes His Blood. This was referred to above as an “efficacious symbol”, which means that what is symbolised actually occurs. The bread and wine offered at the altar are believed to become the actual Body and Blood of Christ. This doctrine, formulated at the Council of Trent in 1551, teaches that Christ is “whole and entire in each species”, that is, in the bread and in the wine. How does this happen? St. John Chrysostom (354-407), Bishop of Constantinople and Doctor of the Church, in his book, *De Proditione Judae*, tells us that “the priest pronounces the words, but their power and grace are God’s,” while St. Thomas Aquinas informs us that the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ “cannot be apprehended by the senses but only by faith which relies on divine authority” (*Summa Theologica*). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* today tells us that this transformation happens “in a way surpassing understanding” (Article 1333). There is no rational explanation for this, so the believer is expected to take Transubstantiation as an article of faith.

Is there a different meaning to what Jesus was telling His disciples at the Last Supper? By going back to the Passover meal commemorated each year by the Jews, we see that the bread and wine are symbolic of food that sustains life, while the lamb in the Old Testament was a sacrificial victim in rituals. Jesus tells His

listeners: “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Here Jesus is saying that He is the real food of life. The bread symbolises the spiritual nourishment that He gives through His Teachings. In verses 49-51 of this same chapter, Jesus tells those assembled in Capernaum’s synagogue:

“Your fathers did eat of manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

His listeners took offence at this last remark: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” (John 6:52). Even His disciples found His figurative use of bread to be “an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60), and “From that time many of [them] went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66) and were thereby “tested and proved,” as explained by Bahá’u’lláh with reference to symbolic language. Yet Jesus is the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). The new Covenant or agreement between God and His people is sealed by the shedding of Jesus’ blood in the same way that the shedding of the lamb’s blood at Passover (Exodus 12:7-13) brought about the safe passage of the Israelites into the Promised Land. By His death and resurrection, Jesus is bringing about the New Covenant, a Covenant which the Letter to the Hebrews explains as letting “us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (10:22).

The image of bread has another meaning also. Jesus refers to Himself as the “bread of life.” He also says: “...the words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*, and they are *life*” (John 6:63, emphasis added). The bread He gives is the spiritual nourishment or sustenance of His Teachings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that this “celestial food is the divine bounties, the spiritual splendours, the heavenly teachings, the universal meaning of Christ. To eat is to draw near to Him and to drink is to believe in Him [John 6:35]” (*Some Answered Questions*, p. 98). He concludes by saying: “Then it is clear that the bread and wine are symbols, which signified: I have given you My bounties and perfections, and when you have received this bounty, you have gained eternal life and have partaken of your share and your portion of the heavenly nourishment” (p. 98).

Because the early Church took Jesus’ words literally, this non-symbolic interpretation became the Sacrament of the Eucharist. As a result the spiritual meaning of the Last Supper was clouded. The reasons for this misunderstanding may lie in the fact that during the formative period of the early Church, there were similar examples of sacred meals where bread and wine were consecrated. Among the Essenes, a monastic group from the desert areas, there existed a “common meal,” and according to the Damascus Document found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, a priest blessed bread and wine. There is evidence that some of the members of the early Church had some contact with this group. There is also evidence of sacred meals partaken of by the Romans, where bread and wine were consecrated. It is probable that from these related examples of sacred meals, which

were part and parcel of the culture of the time, developed the concept of the Eucharist, as celebrated at Mass today.

The Eucharist, which began as the re-enactment of the Last Supper, evolved into what is called the Mass. It is one single act of worship and contains two fundamental parts. The Liturgy of the Word includes readings from the Gospel and the Old and New Testaments, the homily or sermon given by the priest and the prayers of the faithful. This is followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which comprises the offering of the gifts of bread and wine, the Consecration - where the bread and wine are blessed and changed into the Body and Blood of Christ - and finally the faithful partake of that meal which is called Holy Communion. This present format seems to have developed early in the Church's history. St. Justin (100-160 CE), who wrote to a pagan emperor around the year 155 CE, records what the Christians did:

On the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and for a considerable time he gives thanks that we have been judged worthy of these gifts. When he had concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to the acclamation by saying 'Amen'. When he who presides has given thanks and the people responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the 'eucharisted' bread, water and wine and take them to those who are absent (*Apologiae*, chapters 65-67).

There are many similarities between that account of the primitive Mass on the Sabbath and the Bahá'í Nineteen Day Feast. The Feast constitutes the heart of the Bahá'í community, and attendance, while not obligatory, is an important Bahá'í duty. 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained the significance of these Feasts: "The Nineteen Day Feast was inaugurated by the Báb and ratified by Bahá'u'lláh in His Holy Book, the Aqdas, so that people may gather together and outwardly show fellowship and love, that the Divine mysteries may be disclosed. The object is concord, that through this fellowship hearts may become perfectly united, and reciprocity and mutual helpfulness be established" (*The Nineteen Day Feast*, p. 5). In just the same way that the Mass is the most important community prayer of the Catholic Church and its central act of worship, the Nineteen Day Feast is seen as the foundation of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Nineteen Day Feast has many similarities to the Mass in format. The first part is the spiritual or what is called the Devotional, which consists of reciting or chanting the prayers and the Writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to a certain degree corresponds to the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass. The second part is general consultation on the affairs of the Faith. During this part, the Local Spiritual Assembly, the ruling administrative body elected or formed by the local Bahá'í community each year, consults with the community and learns what the community thinks and then studies the resolutions consulted upon and passed at the Feast. This corresponds to a large extent to the priest's homily because the priest is the spiritual leader of the local parish; the main difference is that his sermon does not, like the consultative portion of the Feast, involve dialogue with the congregation. The third part of the Feast is the social. Here the host, who may be the owner of the house in which the Feast is held, prepares refreshments for the participants. Indeed, in the early Church, when numbers were small and the Eucharist would take place in people's homes, the host would prepare a meal. This is akin to the Holy Communion received by Catholics. When talking to Roman Catholics about the Bahá'í Faith, there is an opportunity to mention the Feast and its place in the Faith and to introduce its similarities with the Mass as an explanation.

For Catholics, the Mass is a very important celebration of the Christian experience. It allows the community or parish to meet each Sunday to renew their Covenant with God through Jesus Christ. Indeed, in the past in Ireland, as in other countries, it also had a social dimension in that it allowed the neighbours and parish members to meet one another on a Sunday morning after the priest had bidden his congregation to "go in peace to love and to serve the Lord."

However, one cannot help thinking that if the Church had not misunderstood the meaning of what Jesus said at the Last Supper, that celebration would have been even more meaningful. By adopting the literal meaning of Jesus' symbolic words, a very rich spiritual meaning was lost to countless generations of Catholic believers. Jesus' redeeming message was clouded by the mystery and "magic" of Transubstantiation. There must also have been good reason why the true meaning of the Last Supper was obscured in this way, however.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to give an outline of the general theology of the Sacraments, which is quite difficult in that they have evolved into what the Church explains as a special encounter with God in and through Jesus, an encounter which fills the participant with the Holy Spirit and bestows a Grace which enables the believer to draw closer to the Creator of all things, an encounter without which the believer cannot attain eternal life. While the Bahá'í Faith does not recognise these Sacraments, it is imperative that in speaking to Roman Catholics, Bahá'ís understand their significance in a believer's life.

Bahá'u'lláh has revealed:

The Word of God... is God's all-pervasive grace, from which all grace doth emanate. It is an entity far removed above all that hath been and shallbe... Know thou, moreover, that the Word of God - exalted be His glory - is

higher and far superior to that which the senses can perceive, for it is sanctified from any property or substance. It transcendeth the limitations of known elements and is exalted above all the essential and recognized substances. It became manifest without any syllable or sound and is none but the Command of God which pervadeth all created things (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 140-141).

It should be remembered that the Word of God in the Bible is also a source of Grace to the Roman Catholic. Indeed, increasing numbers of believers see the Bible as being of greater significance in their lives than the Sacraments. Bahá'ís believe that because Jesus did not directly institute the Sacraments, they do not have the same Divine impact or efficacy as the Word of God or Gospel. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that the Sacraments are no longer necessary or essential, but to say this to a devout Roman Catholic is to dismiss a core article of their faith.

As a Bahá'í who was once an active believer in Roman Catholicism, I feel that when speaking to followers of the Catholic Church, it is vital to understand where they "are coming from." In this paper I have tried to explain the teaching behind the Sacraments and particularly the Sacrament of the Eucharist, while at the same time offering a Bahá'í perspective that will allow for dialogue between both Faiths. I feel that it is only in such a spirit of sensitive and constructive dialogue that Roman Catholics - who constitute the world's largest and most widespread Christian denomination - will begin to consider investigating the Bahá'í Faith and that Bahá'ís themselves will consort with Catholics in a more focused and positive way.

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