

Catholics Find Church Attack Disturbing

"Star"

11/14/60

By A. W. MALDONADO

There are signs that the Catholic Church's attack on the Popular Party is creating in some devout Catholics in Puerto Rico a deep and tragic internal conflict.

One Catholic, who asked that his name be not made public, said yesterday that the real tragedy lies in the extent of the Church pronouncement that it was a sin to vote for the Popular Party.

After a good deal of soul-searching, he said, it is now obvious to him that devout Catholics have to choose between

(See CATHOLICS Page 20)

being a Popular or being a Catholic. Under present circumstances, he said, it is impossible to be both. He explained it as follows:

"If you believed in the Popular Party, and you voted for it, you have committed a sin. But it is not enough that you go to a Catholic priest and confess it. That is, your sin will not be absolved automatically by confessing it and having a priest tell you that he, in the name of God, has forgiven it.

"The sin is only forgiven if one repents for having committed it and resolves not to commit it again.

"A devout Catholic, furthermore, cannot go to communion unless he has repented for having voted for the Popular Party, regardless whether the sin had been confessed and forgiven by a priest. For the sin remains if you know in your heart that you would vote again for the Popular party. And to receive communion knowing that you have in you an unabsolved sin, is a sin in itself, a sacrilege.

Catholics who have not repented for having voted for the Popular Party cannot in good conscience go to communion until they are sincerely convinced that they had sinned and that they will not do it again.

"Those Catholics who confessed voting for the Popular Party and then received communion Sunday without repenting, therefore, have committed three sins.

"1. Confessing a sin without repenting for it.

"2. Lying to the priest by saying that you know you have sinned without actually believing it.

"3. Receiving communion knowing that you have unabsolved sins in you.

To practice Catholicism, this person said, one must practice the Catholic sacraments. It is impossible, he said, for a devout Catholic to practice the sacraments if he sincerely believes that it is not wrong to be a Popular and to vote for the Party.

"This person said that he did not go to confession or communion Sunday because he has not repented for having voted for the Popular Party. Only if he repents, he said, would he, in his conscience, be justified in practicing the Catholic sacraments again."

A Church official, who was asked to comment on the conflict within the above Catholic, said last night that this Catholic has no authority to determine for himself what is and what is not a sin. This authority, he said, rests only in the Church.

The Church official, however, agreed that a Catholic who confesses having voted for the Popular party without repenting it, to being dishonest to himself, to the priest he is confessing to, and to God. To go to communion with an unabsolved sin in one, he said, is not only a sin but a sacrilege against the Church.

It is not priests, he said, who

absolve sins. Only God can do this, he said. One can fool a priest, he said, but never God.