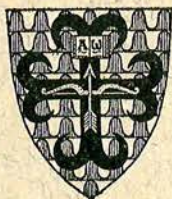


# FROM THE HOUSETOPS



PUBLISHED BY

**ST. BENEDICT CENTER**

**CATHOLIC CENTER**

23 ARROW STREET, CAMBRIDGE 38, MASS.

**Vol. II, No. 3**

**March, 1948**

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FROM THE HOUSETOPS is a Catholic quarterly published by St. Benedict Center. The price is fifty cents a copy, \$1.75 per year.

# SINCERITY

CLARE BOOTHE LUCE

DEAR SMART YOUNG MAN:

You say you are interested in Catholicism, and you have a few questions, the answers to which you want from me.

First, I must tell you in all candour that I, having seen your questions, do not think for a moment that you are *sincerely* interested in the Catholic Faith, or honestly anxious for information on what Catholics believe, or why they believe it. What I do think, is that you are eager — as always — for a lively intellectual skirmish, and that you vaguely hope, at the same time, to prove easily to yourself (in the resultant victory) that the "Mystical Body" is as dead as a dinosaur. The questions with which you wish to open a debate with me are trivial, even in your own mind. The manner in which you phrase them is the tip-off as to your whole purpose in asking them. Information is the last thing you are seeking.

You are a scientist. When not wanting to seem conceited, you refer to yourself as a "scientist of sorts." Well, anyway, you say that if I, a layman, were to ask you about how mass is converted into energy, you would up and tell me about it, and you wouldn't refer me to Einstein. The average Catholic is *not* a specialist in theology. It remains for the fools outside the Church to assert that any layman, by the mere evidence of a little interest in the subject, or because he has faith, is *ipso facto* a specialist on the subject. Imagine everyone needing to be a specialist on the subject of medicine in order to have health; everyone needing to be a specialist on the subject of law in order to have rights! Imagine one of the stenographers in your laboratory, because she *believes* in whatever the heck it is you do there, being asked to give advice "just as good as Einstein's." But let us skip all that. We are studying your basic attitude towards Catholics as step number one. I gather you assume that either:

(1) They evade your questions because they do not know the answers, from which you make the astonishing deduction that the answers are not known!