

## The Social Value of Religious Orders.

Wholesome Influence of Monasticism Often Underestimated.

Constructive Labors of Monks and Other Religious.

Most people are inclined to judge the social value of an institution by results that strike the eye and by data that can be worked up into elaborate statistics, and the press does everything in its power to foster and strengthen this idea. Such persons forget that there is an interior force that springs up in, and flows out from certain social institutions that is of no less practical advantage to a community than the actual work of alleviating some form of distress and misery. The religious orders of the Catholic Church are such institutions which have conferred vast social benefits upon society, though recognition of this service is often grudgingly given.

In the chapter in his work "The Social Question" Fr. Weiss, the noted Dominican, who lectured for many years at the Catholic University of Freiburg in Switzerland, rightly says, that persons who devote their entire lives to intellectual or spiritual work perform a social service of no less value than those who labor to increase commodities and natural products. Members of religious communities taking the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are by this very fact pledged to lead a life which is bound to exert a wholesome and uplifting influence upon society at large.

It was especially in its fight against the corrupt paganism of the first Christian centuries that the Church exerted a beneficial influence through the hermits and anchorites who lived in the so-called lauras and followed a quasi religious life. These thousands of anchorites were a disciplined army which fought the fearful vices of heathendom with powerful, spiritual weapons. Their austere and penitential lives were a continuous sermon, an energetic protest of what is best in human nature against the degrading servitude of luxury. It was a well-directed attack of the Christian spirit upon the deep-rooted rottenness of pagan society. From this point of view the asceticism of the early monks developed into a most important social function.

One of the first effects which the example of the heroic virtue of the monks wrought in that debased society was to convince it that it was possible to lead a dignified existence without giving way to the cruel and shameful slavery of sin and riotous excesses. These anchorites, moreover, efficaciously taught the value of goods of the moral and spiritual order. They made men understand how far spirit excels matter and how great is the power of the will, when assisted by grace, against the evil tendencies of corrupt nature.

To understand fully the social efficacy of the eremitical life we must recall the state of Roman society in the fourth century. Paganism as a religion and a philosophic system had fallen never to rise again. By his victory at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine had routed the army of the last heathen emperor. "In this sign thou shalt conquer," became the watchword of throngs of noble men and women, and vast numbers entered the Church, many of them voluntarily accepting poverty and the burdens of life in a religious community.

The life and example of the latter, as well as the rigorous rule followed by those who lived in solitude as hermits, became a continuous object-lesson in sobriety and self-restraint. It was certainly not of little value to a society carried away by avarice and love of gold to behold rich lords and nations distribute their wealth to the poor and live content in sackcloth and with coarse food.

In many cases these persons who left the world did not only engage in prayer and contemplation but labored with their hands for their own sustenance and that of the poor. They led the life which was later on summarized by many religious orders under the watchword "ora et labora", "pray and work." By their systematic undertakings for the material improvement of the vicinity in which they were located, many of the great religious orders merited the gratitude of their contemporaries and of future generations. Dr. Thompson recognizes this fact in his book "The Church and the Wage-earners." He admits that the religious orders acted as the bridge-builders and road-constructors of many districts in the Middle Ages. They drained the swamp and improved the fertility of large wastes and tracts of arid lands.

But this work has continued to our own day. Missionaries of religious orders became the instructors of the tribes not only in religion but in agriculture. The Jesuit Reductions of Paraguay are a telling example. In other cases the monks and religious acted not only as preachers of the Gospel but as social apostles. The Salesians are today carrying on fine social work, in the spirit of their founder Don Bosco, not only in Italy but also in South America. The Fathers of the Society of the Divine Word have been laboring successfully in Togoland in Africa, teaching their black children the Christian religion and the arts of life. The sons of St. Francis have brought the light of faith and material prosperity to the Navahos of Arizona, following in this the example of their illustrious brethren—Junipero Serra and Salvatierra. The Oblates are working successfully for the spiritual and social uplift among the Denes of British Columbia. Men like DeSmet, Fr. Merice, O. M. I., Bishop Marty, who labored among the Sioux, were not only missionaries of the "good tidings" but apostles of charity and promoters of social peace and happiness.

The social work of the religious orders forms one of the most instructive chapters in the history of the Church.

C. B. of the C. V.

## Foreign Mission News

The Propagation of the Faith Society  
843 Lexington Ave., New York City.

"At death the soul leaves the body and proceeds on its momentous journey. It can take naught with it save its deeds which must be accounted for at the bar of Eternal Justice. Charity, and above all, charity expended upon that most divine of all divine works—the saving of souls—is spiritual currency of the highest denomination. It never depreciates in value; is everywhere accepted throughout the wide demesnes of Eternity; and Holy Scripture assures us that it covers a multitude of sins. Why not procure this spiritual currency now?"

### WHAT TWO PRIESTS IN AFRICA CAN DO.

Picture to yourself two priests in an immense African wilderness, with forty stations to visit, ten schools to supervise, and all the other tasks that fall to the lot of a priest to perform. It seems impossible that even hardy and courageous missionaries can grapple with such difficulties, but Fr. G. Ollier, L. A. F. M., who resides at Warri, Nigeria, has only one assistant to share his labors. He sends this letter to the Propagation of the Faith Society:

"Three-fourths of the time is spent in a pirogue (native boat made out of a hollow log) on account of the heavy rains which deluge the country. When at home our 'headquarters' consist of a two-room house, 45x13 feet in size, with mud walls and a zinc roof. A larger native structure serves as schoolroom and chapel. Even amidst the great poverty of Africa we are the poorest of the poor.

"And of course we need catechists who really perform wonders in the way of preparing the natives for baptism; but then we need so many things! It would be discouraging to name them all.

"I wonder if this little letter will bring me in a few offerings? Africa is far away, and many persons never think of its apostles lost in the jungles, but the blacks are waiting for salvation, and we can bring it to them."

### IN MEMORIAM.

The month of November is an appropriate time to make our relatives and friends Perpetual Members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a most richly endowed society.

The offering for this is forty dollars. It entitles the individual enrolled to all the spiritual privileges of the Society in life and death. The plenary and partial indulgences granted to benefactors are many. More than fifteen thousand Masses are annually celebrated for the living and deceased members of the Society.

The offering for a perpetual membership may be made at one time, or should, otherwise, be made within one year, at the convenience of the donor. This is the best investment that can be made, because it insures for life and eternity.

Fr. Markes, E. F. M., is no stranger to the Propagation of the Faith Society. He writes frequently, and in his latest communication emphasizes the need of native priests.

"The question of forming a native clergy is of vital importance at the present time, and more so after the war, when the question of foreign missionary priests will have to be faced. The missions are short of priests everywhere, and the missionary colleges are practically empty."

## K. of C. Service Appreciated by Soldiers.

None can gauge so well as a Chaplain serving abroad transports, bringing wounded soldiers and sailors home, the sentiment of our fighting men toward the war relief work carried on by the Knights of Columbus. During the homeward voyage across the Atlantic, the men are inclined to talk and it is then they refer to the service, in their behalf, extended by the Knights.

Father Marcellus Horn, a Capuchin priest, whose home is in Wheeling, Va., assistant pastor of St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Cumberland, Md., has served as Chaplain in transport service since June and has made several trips to and from France.

"I am deeply impressed by what our soldiers and sailors told me about Knights of Columbus Service", he said, "and from personal observation, I know how deeply K. of C. service is appreciated. Without exception (mind I say 'without exception') every soldier and sailor with whom I talked on transports, returning to this country, sang the praise of Knights of Columbus Service. Those who had been in actual fighting were strongest in their commendation. They could not visit K. of C. buildings and get the many comforting things distributed by K. of C. secretaries, but those things were brought to them right in the front fighting lines. Smokes, candy, soap, towels and stationery were given them immediately before and after battle, and I tell you the men appreciated this service.

"I talked with many who were wounded in the battle when Pershing's men wiped out the St. Mihiel's salient, and they told me about the Knights showering them from aeroplanes, during battle, with cigarettes. They cited this as an example of what the Knights did for them."

Father Horn always takes with him a generous quantity of K. of C. supplies for the men abroad transports.

"When motor trucks stuck in the mud, ambulances were impressed and when these also mired, machine gun limbers were used and finally stretchers were utilized to carry Knights of Columbus supplies to the front-line trenches and dugouts during the recent rapid advance of American troops toward Berlin. The final leg of the journey for these supplies was usually the backs of K. of C. secretaries and appreciative soldiers."

The above description is the substance of a letter received at K. of C. Headquarters, Paris, from Chaplain Thomas F. Coakley, 47th Infantry, A. P. O. 746, in which, in his own name and in behalf of the officers and men of the 47th Regiment, he thanked the Knights of Columbus for a large supply of cigars, chewing gum, candy, chocolates, cigarettes, smoking tobacco and writing material delivered to them by K. of C. secretaries under most difficult circumstances.

## WEEKLY CHURCH CALENDAR

### DECEMBER

#### Child Jesus' Month

- 1st Sunday of Advent
- 1 S St. Eligius Bp. C.
- 2 M St. Bibiana V. M.
- 3 T St. Francis Xavier C.
- 4 W St. Peter Chrysol. Bp.
- 5 T St. Sabas Ab.
- 6 F St. Nicholas Bp. C.
- 7 S St. Ambrose Bp.-D.

## Late News of Ireland

### Cork

Mitchelstown Workhouse has been sold by Fermoy Guardians, subject to the sanction of the L. G. B., to Messrs. J. Russell and T. E. Fitzgerald, Mitchelstown, for £1,625, with a guarantee to erect machinery for shirt making and hosiery within 12 months, and to establish a bacon factory within 12 months after the war.

Youghal U. C. passed votes of condolence with the relatives of the late Dr. M. Curran, with those of the late J. M. Collins (formerly chairman of Council, and with Thomas Hennessy, vice-president Gaelic League, on the death of his daughter.

Mallow Urban Council expressed regret at the death of Rev. M. Lane, C. C., Mallow.

The death has taken place of T. C. Murphy, Newmarket, a well-known auctioneer.

Miss H. Roche (Sr. M. Gabriel), only daughter of the late M. F. Roche, Sunday's Well, Cork, has been professed a member of the Mercy Order by the Most Rev. Dr. Ward at the Convent, Brentwood.

### Dublin

Ex-King Manuel visited the Sphagnum Moss Depot at the Royal College of Science, where he was received by Sir T. W. Russell, M. P.; T. P. Gill, George Fletcher, Miss H. E. Reed, Lady Superintendent, and Miss B. O'Brien Hon. Sec.

The organization of the National Novena for the Feast of All the Saints of Ireland (November 6), was entrusted by the Hierarchy to the Lourdes Pilgrimage Committee, under the direction of Most Rev. Dr. M'Hugh and the General Secretary, Rev. William Lockhart, C. C. This is the first time the people of Ireland have been invited to honor all the Irish saints by such a Novena.

### Kerry

Married—September 10, at St. John's Cathedral, Limerick by the Rev. Canon Lee, P. P., Newcastle-West, Patrick, eldest son of P. McCarthy, Inchicullane, Killarney, to Kathleen, daughter of Michael Murphy, Newcastle-West.

Killarney Guardians expressed sympathy with T. O'Donnell, M. P., Killorglin, on the death of his daughter.

### Limerick

Alderman Joyce, M. P. for Limerick, was on the steamer Leinster when she was torpedoed. His boat picked up two men and a woman from a raft.

The death has taken place of P. Molloy, founder of Limerick Town Tenants' League.

### Mayo

Mrs. P. Sweeney, Belmullet, has died, aged 107.

Died—October 9, at Dublin, Agnes, daughter of the late Charles H. Gallagher, of Bunree, Ballina.

### Tipperary

Married—September 11, at SS. Peter and Paul's Church, Clonmel, by the Right Rev. C. J. Flavin, P. P., V. F., assisted by Rev. Martin Ryan, P. P., Annacorthy (cousin of the bride), Right Rev. Monsignor Innocent Ryan, P. P., V. G., Dean of Cashel, Rev. W. Ryan, C. C., SS. Peter and Paul's, Clonmel, Bridget Ann, daughter of Mrs. Murphy, 35 Gladstone street, Clonmel, to John S. youngest son of the late James Purcell, Boherclough, Cashel.

Died—Recently, at Rockley, N. S. Wales, Archdeacon Denis Aloysius McGrath, brother of Mrs. Power Coolnagun, and of John McGrath, Ballinlough, Golden.

## Catholic Short Notes.

American Bishops will not be required to make their "ad limina" visits in 1919. If conditions permit, they must do so in 1920. But they must send their reports to the Holy See in 1919.

Louisville, the metropolis of Kentucky, is celebrated in the Church in North America for its first and original religious foundations—Loretto, Nazareth, Dominicans, Trappists, Good Shepherd and Xaverian Brothers.

The service flag raised in the Cathedral of Los Angeles has 1,490 stars.

The colony of Franciscan Sisters which went via San Francisco from New York for the Chinese missions, have arrived in China safely. Some are at Bivanski, a leper settlement.

A U. S. naval reservist, St. Clair Hertel, at Jacksonville, Fla., rescued a priest-chaplain from drowning.

Cardinal Gibbons, the late Cardinal Farley and Bishop Chastard were born in the same neighborhood in Baltimore in 1834, were baptized in the same church the Cathedral of Baltimore in the same year, were students in Rome at the same time, and became illustrious prelates of the Church in the United States.

In Soissons diocese, France, 300 churches are reported destroyed.

In continental Portugal the Church comprises three Archdiocesan sees containing twelve dioceses. The Bishops are nominated by the Government, appointed by the Pope and paid by the State.

Probably the most beautiful carvings in the Church are to be seen in Portugal.

The world's greatest portrait painter and decorator was Raphael. Raphael's tomb is in the Pantheon, Rome.

The Council of State of Warsaw passed an unanimous resolution demanding that the Polish Government take immediate steps for the abolition of all restrictions on the Catholic Church which were imposed by the Russian government.

The growth of the Church in Holland, these last fifty years, has been wonderful and unmistakably providential.

In his recent Letter to the Irish Hierarchy, the Pope alludes to the fervent faith of the Irish people, and their unflinching loyalty to the Holy See.

The spire of the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes on the highest point of the Vatican Gardens is visible from nearly every part of Rome.

A Belgian paper says that a brave religious, the Superioress-General of the nuns of the Sacred Heart of Berchem, has been sentenced to two and a half years of penal servitude, after having already been imprisoned eight months in Antwerp.

Mgr. Don Barlassina has been appointed Auxiliary to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who, at last accounts, was still in deportation at Nazareth.

In Great Britain a St. Michael's Guild for Airmen has been formed.