

TO CALL MAN MÉDIOCRE IS TO INSULT HIM

(Continued from Page 1)

gushed robber baron or a famous racketeer (in any age; and every age has had them) not only steals from the men of his day, but steals a place in world history. Ordinary sinners, like the rest of the ordinary herd, carry their nonentity with them into the future.

Poor Saint

And yet there are millions who are satisfied with being called just ordinary Catholics. They probably will save their souls. They probably will never do anyone any great harm. They are at low Mass on Sunday, at Communion three or four times a year, they put a nickel in the collection box, are without great sins to confess or any virtues to make the world happier.

They are just ordinary Catholics. We say it and pass them by.

For what we need in the world today is not just ordinary Catholics. We need extraordinarily fine ones. We need Catholics whose lives stand out, in the startling comparison of Jesus Christ, like cities seated on a mountain top. We need Catholics who are intelligent, alert, leaders, devout, nobly good. We need saints.

Mass Mediocrity

The generation of which we are part is unique in that it is productive of the most astounding masses of mediocrity and yet professes to be so contemptuous of anything mediocre. We are almost a leaderless world. Such leaders as Europe has developed are so unusual that they have almost no second in the countries they rule. The times seem to be able to produce not more than one really outstanding man to a country, where it does not produce merely a crew of blundering incompetents.

We have in America good, capable, hard-working, and more or less conscientious men at the top; we have few who give us a sense of power and the awe of real leadership.

Yet, if this generation has been cursed with mediocrity, it is also impatient of mediocrity. It manufactures heroes when it cannot produce them in the course of nature. It stages gigantic elvish parades and tears up telephone books and ticker tape (a not uncharacteristic home-ago; where other ages hung roses, we sing waste paper), and toils all the horns of the city because somebody drove 250 miles from home (as was it a minute) from no place to nowhere, from Dover to Dover, or outtrocked one hundred competitors in the rocking-chair marathon, or completed his or her fiftieth success-

ful talking picture on an equipment of three types of smile, one stern look, and one puzzled expression that passed for thought, worry, or the pangs of love. Being without leaders, clever press agents must make them for our reverence.

We Cannot Be

Because we are surrounded by ordinariness, we may easily come to be satisfied with being ordinary Catholics. And ordinary Catholics won't do. We cannot build magnificent churches, pour hundreds of millions into a most elaborate educational system, build up a Catholic press and literature, demand of men and women lives of consecrated devotion and self-sacrifice, and then, as the end product of all this produce ordinary Catholics.

For ordinary Catholics make no real impression on their generation and leave the world just where they found it. They never bring before non-Catholics the beauty of their faith. No one embraces the faith because of them. They have not the stuff of missionaries. They cannot be effective lay apostles. The Catholic truth that has been given to them lies fallow or dormant. They are just ordinary and they leave an ordinary world behind them.

Power

On the contrary one extraordinary Catholic changes everything with which he comes in contact. A saint has an influence that transforms individuals and groups and cities and nations. One man or woman who really knows and loves the faith, who lives a life of outstanding virtue, who is impressed with a responsibility for bringing others to the knowledge of Christ by example and actual apostolate, who is interested in all that concerns the Church Universal, is worth a thousand ordinary Catholics.

Without Equipment

To be an extraordinary leader in other fields special talents and gifts may be required. One cannot become an unusual writer unless one has a fundamental natural equipment to cultivate. Unplanned opportunity paves the way for much leadership in the world of politics or science. Ordinary men are often commonplace clerks or inefficient plumbers or uninspiring teachers just because they have not the natural endowments that are needed for greatness.

But anyone, no matter what his natural endowments, can become an extraordinarily fine Catholic. A more frequent use of the sacraments than is customary for the ordinary Catholic, a deeper study of the faith than the careless memorizing of the catechism, a sense of responsibility for good example, a desire to serve Christ notably, an appreciation of what the Church does for humanity—these things, available to the most naturally mediocre man, are the very things that make more than the ordinary Catholic.

God, Give Us Saints!
We need this type of Catholics. We need saints.

After our century of tremendous physical growth in America we are now in a position where we must develop Catholics who are outstanding. Our educational system is tuned up to high speed. Our churches give the most complete spiritual service in the world. Great movements, like that of laymen's retreats, offer Catholics a specialized training in leadership. The Sodality clamors for lay apostles. The world is hungry, without knowing it, for the things that our faith alone can give. It is looking for Catholics who can lead and will lead.

You have in your hand all the materials needed to become an extraordinary Catholic. You can, if you wish, no matter what your work in life, become a saint. It is an insult to be called ordinary in any line. It is an insult that seems almost a contradiction in terms to be called just an ordinary Catholic.—Queen's Work

DEGREE FOR CARD. VILLENEUVE

(N.C.W.C. News Service)
Montreal—His Eminence Jean-Marie Rodrigue Cardinal Villeneuve, Archbishop of Quebec, will be honored with the degree Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, at McGill University, a non-Catholic institution, on May 25.

National Executive Secretary



DOROTHY J. WILLMANN

Catholics Have No Denial of Fact That They Are "Different" Is Pointed Out

"There is just one trouble about you Catholics," said my otherwise tolerant friend. "You sometimes give the idea that you think you are different."

"Yes?" I said, more to advance the conversation than by way of question or agreement.

"Precisely. You seem to feel you are not like the rest of men. And that's not fair."

"Sorry," I said apologetically. "But the plain fact is that we don't think we are different. We are different."

"You admit it?" he demanded in astonishment.

"I do. We are different in more ways than you could possibly guess, and it would be simply stupid and foolish to deny it."

"Well," he grumbled, "you Catholics are a queer breed. Here I said something I was afraid you would think very hard and perhaps a little insulting, and you go me one better."

Certain and Sure

"We are queer? Different is the word, isn't it? But I could enumerate differences till you'd grow weary. We are mentally different, for example. We are the only group in the world today that have definite certainty about religion or philosophy. Protestantism thinks and surmises and disagrees. Science of the more aggressive sort changes its mind so frequently that there is no following its conclusions. Its facts are fine; its conclusions drawn from those facts differ with each scientist and with each succeeding year. And as for philosophy, well, the usual course in philosophy given students outside the Catholic Church does not consist of definite philosophical theses; it's a history of philosophy's self-contradictions.

"So we begin, you see, by being mentally different. We're certain. We know. Next year we won't be thinking differently. Nor will we a thousand years from now. That's very, very different from the rest of the world."

"But how—" began my friend. I interrupted him.

We Are Christ's

"I'm not giving you the 'how' of the difference now; I'm giving you the 'why.' We are different because of the Blessed Sacrament."

"I certainly don't see what difference that makes."

"No. You wouldn't. But receiving the Blessed Sacrament makes us part of the mystical body of Christ. Do you think yourself part of the mystical body of Christ?"

"Why, no, I can't say I've ever thought of that."

"We think of it. We know we are. And that makes a world of difference. To know that your body has become united with the body of Jesus Christ, that you dwell mystically one with Him, that His strength is your strength and His purity your purity—that's a staggering thought, you know, and one can't have that realization without being very different from other people."

"Yes, I can see that."

"We have the sense of belonging to Christ's own infallible church. To you it makes little difference whether you are a Baptist or a Methodist. You are almost getting accustomed to the fact that good Protestants can be Unitarians. But even you know that being a Catholic is very different. There is something conclusive, definite, final, absolute about that. One may be a Methodist and go to a Baptist church. One cannot be a Catholic and be satisfied in anything but a Catholic church. You think of churches. We think of one infallible, certain, Christ-established church. And that makes us very different, too."

Humbled

My friend shook his head. "I'm afraid that if it makes you different it makes you conceited."

"On the contrary, I think it makes us very humble and just a little bit afraid."

"Why, what do you mean by that?"

"Great privileges bring with them great responsibilities. Great trusts imply great obligations. It is a wonderful privilege to be a Catholic. God has given us a great trust. And that makes us humble and a little afraid."

"Because of the absolute truth God has given me, He expects me to live my life in accord with that truth. I may not deviate a fraction. My line is straight, and I must follow it. Because of my privileges I must prove myself worthy of them. I can't do a lot of things I might enjoy doing, simply because more is expected of me, a Catholic. People know I am supposed to be different, they are shocked if I am not. I may not shock them."

"They Expect a Difference"

"They don't forgive in me an unpleasant tongue, a rough temper, a mild flirtation with sins. They say I am different and that those things are not for me. They cannot understand how my tongue, if it held the Blessed Sacrament this morning, can after dinner tell a dirty story. Dirty stories may be fashionable, but they feel that I am different. If my body is part of the mystical body of Christ, I must show that fact in my modesty, my purity, my reverence for that body. Reverence for bodies is not particularly vague these days. But I'm different."

"Because of the wealth of God's grace given me, the wealth of the world must seem relatively unimportant in my eyes. I can't be all wrapped up in moneymaking or the desire of riches. I'm different. Riches are the absorption of the world. That absorption is forbidden to me."

"Yes; if I cease to be different and to appear different, God and man will both hold me accountable. There is no worse charge than a non-Catholic hurled at a Catholic than this one: 'He's a Catholic, but he's no different from the rest of mankind. He's just like the lot of us.'"

"Yes," said my friend, "I believe you're right there."

"I know I'm right. So that is what makes me afraid. I'm not afraid that I won't seem different. That's expected of me. I'm afraid that, with my absolute faith and my wealth of graces and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the fact of Holy Communion, people will still not find me different. Please, if you ever notice that I'm not different, let me know. It's a sign that I badly, very badly, need a retreat."

—Courtesy of Queen's Work

Mother's Day

Mary's Day and Mother's Day, May 12 and 14, have a special meaning for Catholics. For Catholics know they have two mothers, one of earth and one of heaven, and they honor and love them both.

In honor of Mary Sodality will hear mass, receive Holy Communion, make a sacrifice of some sort for the sake of Christ's poor, pray with special devotion to Christ's mother. In honor of their earthly mother, they will receive communion for her intention, send her some sign of affection, and ask the Mother of us all to have special care of this dear mother-to whom God entrusted us.

It is the easiest, vainest, and most unprofitable thing to criticize others.

The worst tyrant is an evil habit, as a good habit is the noblest and

DON'T RIDICULE

When during the course of a meeting a Socialist speaks disparagingly of other faiths, holds Protestant up to ridicule, or makes unfavorable comparisons between Catholic and non-Catholic, an instinctive fairness comes over the group. Everyone feels nervous and a bit abashed.

Not that for a moment they criticize the speaker. He or she is probably most sincere and so in love with his or her faith that all other faiths seem almost trivial in comparison. But everyone would be much happier if in defending and praising our own church he cast not even one stone into the stained-glass windows of any other denomination.

There are times when false doctrine must be attacked. But it is a decided question whether it can ever be wisely ridiculed. And never is there a moment when we can feel justified in holding up to contempt the sincere believer of any faith. Still less can we place them, their women, their ministers, their children, in comparison with ourselves and our priests and mothers and sons and daughters and in that comparison belittle them or fling scorn upon them.

It is one thing to attack and destroy by our arguments doctrines that are untrue, it is quite another to touch with the acid of irony or the barb of ridicule any member of any faith.

So, in all our meetings, public and private, we sincerely plead for an attitude of careful consideration toward the members of other faiths. We have suffered much at the hands of bitter members of other faiths. We have heard our priests, sisters, mothers, young people defamed and attacked. And our self-restraint in the bitterness of conflict has won us the respect of men and women whose respect is worth having. We must never, we will never, stoop to employing the same weapons that have so hurt and cut our hearts.

ATTENDS MASS IN INDIA

Mysore, India. (N. C. W. C. Files) Don Alphonso, former king of Spain, now touring India, had but a brief stop at Bangalore in his journey from Mysore to Hyderabad, Sunday, but did not fail to hear Mass.

Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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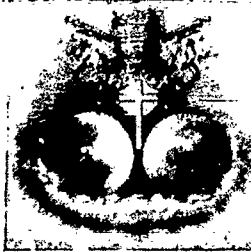
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NEED MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Letters are coming from all parts of the mission world to the headquarters of the Catholic Medical Mission Board begging for more and more medical supplies. About 150 missions are on our waiting list constantly and it is impossible to meet all the requests for medical aid. Meanwhile many tons of valuable medicines, instruments and equipment are lying about in doctors' offices. The office of the Propagation of the Faith, where it can be shipped to the headquarters of the Catholic Medical Mission Board for distribution throughout the world. Those who live nearer to the Pacific Coast than to the Atlantic Coast are asked to send their shipments of instruments, medicines and medical supplies to the Pacific Coast Depot of the Catholic Medical Mission Board, 2240 Fulton Street, San Francisco, California. This depot has recently been

established for the convenience of those on the Pacific Coast, and materials sent there will be carefully stored and sent out to the missions. Groups of Catholic girls and women are also invited to make bandages and dressings for the missions, which is another way of valuable cooperation. Full instructions for this are contained in the Medical Mission Manual which is now available in the second edition and can be had from the Catholic Medical Mission Board, 8 and 10 West 17th Street, New York, N. Y., by sending one's name and address and twenty-five cents to cover the cost of publication.

WRITES STATE HISTORY

(N.C.W.C. News Service)
Chicago. Announcement has just been made today of the publication of a five volume history of Illinois, by Edward F. Dunne, a Catholic, who served Chicago as Mayor and who later was Governor of Illinois.

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