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A Christian Farmer

(A Guest Column)

"Well, Mary, it is your turn to say grace." It was the mother of a large family, now gathered around the well supplied dinner table, speaking to her youngest child, about ten years old. I found out later that there was a younger boy, he was away at his grandparents, so that the task of saying grace fell to the little girl. Reverently she made the sign of the Cross, said the simple Grace, all the rest replying.

We sat down. I noticed that on the wall opposite was a large picture of the Holy Family, another of the Sacred Heart, with the act of consecration. Between them hung a small Crucifix. No wonder they were such a happy family, making religion a part of their every day life.

"You see, Father, the youngest always says Grace, and the oldest child at home leads the Rosary every evening. They get the habit that way." Proudly she told me about each of the six children, their ages, class at school, and how each of them had some definite job to do home. In a few more years they would have their own orchestra. But now they all had their assigned task, and each was made responsible for something. They all worked in the garden; Mary looked after the chickens, Bill the turkeys. An older boy had a prize calf and some sheep.

I listened eagerly to the recital, but not half as eagerly as the family. They were so proud of their tasks. Sometimes they added a word of correction about some detail or other, and freely spoke of their plans. Joe, just finishing high school, and a big boy for 16, was soon to take his place besides his father on the farm. Teresa would go to the convent, perhaps to follow in her aunt's footsteps and become a Sister.

In the afternoon I walked around the farm with the father and listened to his plans for farm and family. Years ago he had come from the east and started to make his home on this 160 acres. There were many poor years, but he worked hard and planned harder. He grew every kind of crop that he could, had never bought feed for his stock and used every available acre he had. Even in very poor years he always had a small crop and a fair garden. That cut down his expenses. People used to laugh at him for the variety of crops he grew. But now he owns his own farm, has good substantial buildings, while many of his neighbors have lost out to the loan companies and left the country. Many others are only tenants on land that was once their own.

"God has been good to us," he said, "giving me such a good wife and family, and I am very happy." Yes, God had been very good to them, I thought, but I remembered how they were all consecrated to the Sacred Heart, how proud of their faith, how proud to be Catholics and Farmers. A good combination, I said to myself, as I departed, and may we have many of them in this country. -T. Finucane, S. J.

Prayer For Our Soldiers and Sailors

O God we beseech Thee, watch over the souls of those who are exposed to the horrors of war, and to the spiritual dangers peculiar to a soldier's life. Give them such strong faith that no human respect may ever lead them to deny it, or fear to practice it. Do Thou by Thy grace fortify them against the contagion of bad example, that, being preserved from vice and serving Thee faithfully, they may be ready to meet death whenever it may happen; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In regard to "preparedness"—the best way to prepare your boy and girl for life is to accustom them to reading Catholic newspapers.

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