

Mission Sunday October 18

By Rev. James M. Gilha, C.S.P.

The Holy Father has this year appointed Oct. 18 as Mission Sunday. One might be tempted to ask "Why only one Sunday and not fifty-two?" The same gently critical question has often been asked about "Mother's Day," "Eat an Apple Day" and "Be Kind to Animals Week." Are we to remember Mother only once a year? Doesn't the old adage speak of "an apple a day," not an apple a year? And if we are kind to animals for only seven days, heaven help the poor things for the other 254.

But of course when the Pope names one Sunday for the Missions it doesn't mean that you will be excommunicated if you drop a dime or a dollar into the Foreign Mission Box on any other day. There is nothing in canon law to forbid your setting aside for the missions the price of a soda or a pack of cigarettes or of a movie ticket every time you indulge in those luxuries.

The Holy Father and the Church are not reluctant to use a little publicity just because the apple growers, the candy makers and the S. F. C. A. have utilized the same technique and have played up—or should it be down—to one of the weaknesses of our human nature. Somehow we seem to need a slogan and a particular time in which to do a good deed. "All up the Red Cross now!" says the radio speaker. "Promise them a blood donation now." Not some day soon but now. Or "As soon as you stop listening to this broadcast go out and get yourself a carton of those good old Elephant cigarettes or of the food that gives boxes the knock-out punch or those famous old Scrapskin razor blades. Do it now."

We may laugh at those importunate exhortations. But the manufacturers and the merchants know our weakness. They continue their cry "Do it now," and they get results. But I don't suppose they would object to selling you a cigarette or a razor blade or a breakfast food any time any day. So if you should happen to miss Oct. 18 with your mission contribution, there is nothing in the Apostles' Creed or in moral theology to prevent your handing it in any time or every time you go to Mass. It isn't "Now or Never." It is now and always.

Joking aside there is a certain question about mission contributions that may arise in the mind. I have met persons who thought that all the missionaries had been killed or sent to concentration camps or ordered home. As a matter of fact some

1000 have been in one way or other retained from their posts. But there continue to be 20,000 still in the field. In the five countries where the missions have been hardest hit, Japan, China, India, China, Malaya and the Pacific Islands, there are even yet 22,000 missionaries. In China there are 10,000 and in Japan 1,000. Perhaps the next country to "grab the headlines" in the news will be India. If so we had better be prompt in sending special quantities to the 11,000 missionaries now in that vast country.

How our priests and nuns and missionaries and catechists are getting along in the occupied and devastated countries we can know but imperfectly. They are allowed little correspondence, if any; their letters come slowly, and indeed come not at all if the censors so much as suspect that a word or a phrase conveys a hint of criticism of the occupying forces. All we know is that the priests, the nuns and their helpers are "on the job" as they were before; that they are in dire straits (harder than ever before); and that if ever we helped them, we must help them now.

St. Paul in a vision heard the Macedonians cry "Take over and help us." And so he crossed the border into Macedonia. There are nowadays few borders that an apostle would cross so unceremoniously. As for a cry being sent out, it can't be done except perhaps in a vision. To add to all their other disadvantages, the missionaries must suffer in silence. If they were to write "we are in terrible need," their words would be considered an indictment of the government that holds them captive. They cannot so much as send an R. O. M. because they have no access to the radio. We have to guess, surmise, imagine, how great is their need. But it requires no very vivid imagination to make us aware that they are badly off. That's all we really need to know.

But if missionaries cannot reach us with a direct appeal, how can we reach them with a direct contribution? Don't worry about that. Vatican City is the clearing house. The Holy Father—thanks to his political neutrality—has access to all countries. The funds collected will be received by him and their distribution directed by him. Your money will get through. If you wish to earmark it for some particular country you may do so.

Finally remember that the Holy Father cannot jog your memory to give to the missions as frequently as the Government jogs your memory to buy War Bonds. But the need for the one is as great as the need for the other. By all means contribute to the winning of the war, but do not forget that there is another war, a bigger, longer, more difficult war. The missionaries are waging incessant war against the kingdom of Satan on earth. If and when you buy a bond, or even a stamp to help the soldiers, do likewise to help the missionaries.

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Library Signpost

Rendezvous With God

By Rev. Benedict Ehmans

A professor of theology at Duquesne Seminary has just written a book on THE LAYMAN'S CALL which is being placed in the Catholic Evidence Library. By way of review I am reprinting here a wonderful letter from the Honorable de Haack's WARREN FRIENDSHIP HOME NEWS, written by Ann Harrigan who has just been sent to open up a new Friendship Home for the negroes of Chicago.

Dear Ann Marie
Remember the other night when you said you could understand how priests and nuns had vocations, but when it came to LAY PEOPLE HAVING VOCATIONS? That was unheard of. Nothing I said convinced you though I quoted the New Testament and even son pretty strong arguments from Maritain, Gilson, etc. You seemed to want proof by a priest . . . and, in a sense, I don't blame you.

Well I've got the proof. But first let me recall that conversation we had. You agreed that we are in the midst of a social revolution—that leaders lay Catholics intensely aware, intensely spiritual, are desperately needed. You became quite vehement when you asked where, in all this "mess," were Catholics. Why did Catholics just criticize other people's efforts instead of lending a helping hand? And so far into the night, we argued the spectacle of a world sick to death, being offered a potent medicine like Communism or Fascism, while we Catholics, with the real remedy to hand, sit idly by seemingly willing to let the patient die.

The book that discusses this problem is "The Layman's Call" by Fr. William R. O'Connor. The point that he makes over and over again is this simple sentence: "NOTHING HUMAN IS ALIEN TO A CHRISTIAN."

That is to say, whether a man be a capitalist, a Communist, a Negro, a Jew, a Protestant, etc., he is our brother, because ALL MEN ARE OUR BROTHERS. "No one is excluded from some contact with Christ or from some kind of membership in His Mystical Body—tenuous though it may be. The poor, the outcast, the beggar, the street-walker, the criminal, the gangster . . . the Communist, the Nazi, the Fascist . . . they are all there, members of the Mystical Body and our brothers in Christ."

Now it follows, doesn't it, that if a man is my brother I must help him out when he's in trouble. That is if there's some sore spot in the Mystical Body, how can I turn aside? Try to forget? To forget that bodies are suffering, minds are being warped and souls going to hell, perhaps: that in them Christ's passion God forbid—is in vain? Here is where the lay apostle comes in. The very essence of the lay worker is that once he sees a sore spot anti-semitism, anti-Negro bias, etc., he tries to do something about it. He plays the healing rays of Christ's sun upon it like a supernatural Vitamin D.

But has everybody a vocation to go out and disrupt society in order to put it together again? NO! Of course not. Fr. O'Connor does make the startling statement that every man and woman does have a vocation because a vocation is a "call to interior perfection rather than an exterior state, to a spirit of love and obedience rather than the mere observance of the letter of the law, to a de-

achment of the mind and will rather than a pharisaical separation from the world." But in general, a lay vocation will consist in work in one's own sphere, like with like . . . a salesgirl with a salesgirl, a newsboy with newsboys, a doctor with doctors, etc. First bring ourselves back to Christ; then—and only then—work with others.

But to work in this special way, do you need a special "call"? A strange moving of the "spirit"? Not at all: even priests and nuns don't ordinarily have these experiences. We do need, according to Fr. O'Connor, (1) a right intention, and (2) fitness to the state by nature and grace. In other words, Lay Apostle, do you want to see all things restored to Christ (right intention)? Have you the health, background and abilities to do the special work involved?

But . . . the Lay Apostle must expect a terrific intellectual battle to ensue, once he says Yes to the two questions above—criticism, from the right and from the left. The left calls you a fool, because you are trying to do the impossible . . . leaves the natural with the supernatural—for they are materialists, and think the only solution to all our problems is in material things, like more money, more jobs, etc. The right (among whom are a great many Catholics) also says you are trying to do the impossible. They have what is called the "Ivory tower" complex. BECOME HOLY IN THE WORLD? "Only nuns and priests can be really holy. If you're so anxious to be holy why don't you enter a convent?" Yet, who is to tackle some of the awful problems that beset society, who is to go into the highways and byways where it is not often possible for religious to go, if not militant lay Catholics? As Maritain says in the introduction, "There is mud and blood in the world, yet while our hands dabble therein our hearts must be pure, and, if they are, they also purify."

So the most exhilarating thing about Lay work is this: no matter where our job, no matter whom we are thrown in with, we can, by the grace of God, conquer them for Christ, not become part of them but make them a part of us, and hence of the Living Mystical Body. Thus we shall sanctify the profane, which according to the thinkers of the Catholic Renewal will be one of the main features of the new age of Christendom "into which we are entering amid ruin and agony."

The big BLINDSPOT is that we don't, enough of us, realize the meaning of the word LOVE. Love draws no circles to keep anybody out. Love embraces the whole world. Love wants to put the spirit of Christ into the world, and not keep it apart from the world. We would outdo ourselves in charity to bring back an erring brother, because to us then, the Mystical Body of Christ would not be a beautiful concept, but a LIVING REALITY.

So, to critics who say we are interfering with priest's work, refer them to The Layman's Call. Lay Apostles HAVE A VOCATION. "Sanctity and perfection belong to life in the world just as truly as they do to life in a monastery or convent." Matt Talbot made the Dublin dockyards his rendezvous with God, for "union with God can be attained no matter what our state or vocation." Here's hoping that you find yours!—Ann Harrigan.

Five Years Ago--

—In the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Oct. 14, 1937, Edition

Parishioners of St. Bridget's Church were called to renewed effort and zeal for their parish by the Most Rev. Walter A. Foery, Bishop of Syracuse, at the close of his Solemn Pontifical Mass in the newly transferred

'Quiz' Corner

How is it possible for heaven to have any if we are going to be in heaven for all eternity?

Heaven is the realm of the blessed and state of the blessed will not pass away. When our loved ones of heaven and earth passing away he may have referred to the physical universe which may be changed at the last day. Some biblical scholars interpret the text to mean that even though heaven and earth should pass away the word of God would never pass away. It was a strong comparison to suggest that the heavens are not the fact that God's word is absolute and immutable.

Do all men receive the same amount of actual grace?

No; some receive more; others less; for God is free to bestow His favors as He likes. We generally

have given far more grace than we need and if that we made use of all that grace we would be in heaven long before we were ready to go.

How can we explain to a man (Catholic) why we need receive our grace in a special way?

Our Lord endowed upon the Apostles and their successors power to forgive sins with the words: "Whosoever you shall bind on earth, they shall be bound on heaven, and whosoever you shall loose on earth, they shall be loosed on heaven." This power is thereby given to the power to forgive and power able to create. It is a judicial power, and the power which the one which he forgives or creates it is to exercise his power judicially. How can a judge create a person's property without knowing the facts and the details of the case which he is to decide?

In a certain the priest said that if you deny the article of faith, it makes a person a heretic. Please explain what is an article of faith.

An article of faith is a revealed truth so important and so certain that no one can deny it without rejecting the testimony of God. The Church points out very clearly the truths that are articles of faith so that we can tell them apart from mere beliefs and opinions, so that we can see the quality of heresy without knowing it. The divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the real Presence of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, are examples of articles of faith.

My husband says that Catholics do not attend and confess to go to church. I said that such people are not recognized as real Catholics. He says that he must be right because Catholics believe great things. Who is right?

Anybody can attend Mass, confession and other Catholic functions. The doors are open to Catholics and non-Catholics to come and sinners to the good and the bad. Catholic judges interpret and apply the law of the land just like other judges. They may approve of the law; disapprove of it personally. A Catholic judge, naturally, disapproves of the divorce law, but this does not prevent him from granting a divorce according to the provisions of the law. Finally, there is no such thing as divorce in the Catholic Church. A marriage once validly contracted and consummated binds until death.

The will of God is best for us, and we should strive hard to overcome ourselves of that.

God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him.

Diocesan Recordings

Alphabetical designations for various movements have become a part of our American way of life. They are coming so fast, however, that we are apt to overlook the full significance. A USO-NCCB sponsored club has opened for the first time in this diocese in Geneva. In Rochester there is to be a USO Club. This means, of course, that things are being done to make the lot of the servicemen in these vicinities a brighter one.

The USO stands for United Service Organizations and is generally represented as a unit in that set-up is the National Catholic Community Service. This is the organization established by the hierarchy of the United States to look after the interests of our Catholic boys in the service.

To head the NCCS the Archbishop and Bishops turned to the Knights of Columbus whom they ordered in warfare work for the boys in World War I is definitely outstanding for leadership. As chairman of the NCCS, Francis P. Matthews has attained a record equal to his predecessors as Supreme Knights of the Knights of Columbus. The work that was carried on by the K. of C. in the last year is being done now in a different set-up but with K. of C. leadership. The NCCS is operating close to 200 establishments for men in the service and for workers in war industry.

The coming of Supreme Knight Matthews for the first time in Rochester diocese on Sunday has more significance than the fact that he heads the Knights of Columbus alone. His visit should bring out the fact that the USO-NCCB set-up is in good hands.

EDITORIALS

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standing. You have your political party, with the ascendant power to make your voice heard in the choice of city, state, national, law-makers and executives. You have your societies, enjoying the protection of a free country and its laws. You have your freedom to labor, choosing for yourself the field in which you shall earn your livelihood. You have your free press, to give you the news and views that free men in a free country should have as a right and as a means of exercising properly and intelligently the right of self-government. All these are yours permanently and solidly, because you are an American. Thank God, then, that you are an American!

Let your thanks to God be reflected in your eagerness to do all you can to preserve these freedoms. America needs you, needs your help to buy arms and munitions and ships and planes and tanks, torpedoes and bombs and bullets, and a hundred other things to equip our men with the means of winning the war. Having more hands to your response to the call of your country, your way of saying practically—"Thank God, I am an American!"

FORGIVE YOUR BROTHERS

There are certain counsels of Christian perfection that are for the chosen soul, not for the many. There are precepts that are not for the few, but for all. Today's Gospel emphasizes that the spirit of forgiveness for injuries done to us, is not of counsel but of precept. God's love for us shows itself in His goodness to us particularly in His receiving and forgiving us after we have sinned.

So important, so pressing is this obligation, that it has been incorporated in the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." The Lord would have us know that it is useless to ask Him to forgive us, unless we are ready to forgive our brothers who have offended us.

So important an obligation should be conscientiously attended to. Daily examination of conscience should include a pertinent questioning of our fulfillment of it. A review of today's parable of the wicked servant should serve to keep our minds and our hearts ready.