

Sermon Cards

'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?"

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.

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. P. 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.

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.

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.

There have been in one way or other concerted from their parts. But their realisation will never be in the field. In the few 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 over 10,000 and in Japan 2,500.

How our priests and nuns and neophytes 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.

St. Paul in a vision heard the Macedonian cry "Pass over and help us." And so he crossed the border into Macedonia. There are nowadays few borders that an apostle could cross so unimpededly. As for a cry being sent out, it can't be done except perhaps in a vision.

But if missionaries cannot reach us with a direct appeal, how can we reach them with a direct contribution? Don't worry about that.

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.

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Library Signpost

Rendezvous With God

By Rev. Benedict Ehmoma

(A professor of theology at Dunwoody 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 Baroness de Harck's HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS, written by Ann Harrigan, who has just been sent to open up a new Friendship House 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.

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.

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 kind of contact with Christ or from some kind of membership in His Mystical Body tenuous though it may be.

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.

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-

tachment of the mind and will rather than a material 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.

Not at all: even priests and nuns don't ordinarily have these experiences. What we need, according to Fr. O'Connor, (1) a right intention, and (2) fidelity to the state by nature and grace. In either work, Lay Apostles, 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 undo 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. Taibot 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. Peery, Bishop of Syracuse, at the close of his Solemn Pastoral Mass in the newly transformed church interior.

'Quiz' Corner

How is it possible for humans to pass away if we are made to be immortal for all eternity?

Heaven in the sense of the place and state of the blessed will not pass away. When our Lord speaks 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 impress upon His hearers 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

are given various graces that we use and if only we make use of the graces given us we must attain glory in better society. God does not want all of us to become saints and if we do not, it is because of our indifference and carelessness for the graces and sacraments which the grace has given us.

How can one explain to a non-Catholic why an angel cannot see him in a vision?

Our Lord endowed man with a free will and his free will is free to forgive sins with the words "Whosoever you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whosoever you shall retain, they are retained." This power to forgive sins is given to the priest and the power to retain is a power which he exercises by retaining it. It is a judicial power, and the priest must know the state which he retains or retains it. He is to exercise his power properly, how could a judge render his decision properly without knowing the facts and the details of the case which he is to decide?

In a sermon the priest said that if you deny one 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 may not fall apart from those beliefs and traditions, so that we may not be guilty 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 divorce and he wishes to go to church. I said that such people are not recognized as real Catholics. He says that he could be right because Catholics judge great divorcees. Who is right?

Anybody can attend Mass, Benediction and other Catholic functions. The doors are open to Catholics and non-Catholics to watch and listen 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 laws, 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 solemnly contracted and consummated binds until death.

The will of God is best for us and we should strive daily to conform ourselves to that.

God sent 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 URO-NGCS operated club has opened for the first time in this diocese in Geneva, in Rochester there is to be a URO 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 definitely represented as a unit in the set-up in 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 whose record in welfare work for the boys in World War I is definitely outstanding for leadership. As chairman of the NCCS, Francis J. Matthews has attained a record equal to his predecessors as Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus. The work that was carried on by the K. of C. in the last war is being done now in a different set-up but with K. of C. leadership. The NCCS is operating close to 300 establishments for men in the service and for workers in war industry.

The coming of Supreme Knight Matthews for the first time to 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 URO-NGCS set-up is in good hands.

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standing. You have your political party, with the assured power to make your voice heard in the choice of city, state, national, federal and executive. 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 live food. You have your free press, to give you the news and news 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. Buying more bonds is your response to the call of your country, your way of saying gratefully—"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 right on what God expects of us.