

Sermon Cords

Mission Sunday October 18

By Rev. James M. Gillis, 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?"

By 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."

Joining 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.

2,000 have been in one way or other removed from their posts. But there remains well over 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.

How our priests and nuns and monks 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 of 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 Macedonians cry "Pass over and help us." And so he crossed the border into Macedonia. There are now-days few borders that an apostle could cross so unobtrusively. 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. Vatican City is the clearing house. The Holy Father—thanks to his political neutrality—has access to all countries.

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 Ehmann

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.

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 contact with Christ or from some kind of membership in His Mystical Body."

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!

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 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 newboy with newboys, a doctor with doctors, etc.

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) grace by the state by nature and grace. In other words, Lay Apostle, do you want to see all things related to Christ (right intention)? Have you the health, background and abilities to do the special work involved?

But the Lay Apostle must expect a terrible intellectual battle to ensue, since 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... leave the natural with the supernatural... they are materialists, and think the only solution to all our problems is in material things, 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 holy. If you're so anxious to be holy why don't you enter a convent?"

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.

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 exception, 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." St. Ignace 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. Porey, Bishop of Syracuse, at the close of his Solemn Pontifical Mass in the newly transferred church.

Quiz Corner

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

Heaven is the source of the peace and state of the blessed will not pass away. When our lives cease of heaven and earth passing away he may have referred to the physical universe which may be changed at the last day.

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. His generosity

Diocesan Recordings

Alphabetical designations for various movements, have become a part of our American way of life. They are coming on fast, however, that we are apt to overlook the full significance. A UBO-NCCS operated club has opened for the first time in this diocese in Geneva.

The UBO stands for United Service Organizations and definitely 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 whose record in war-time work for the boys in World War I is definitely outstanding for leadership. An 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 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 UBO-NCCS set-up is in good hands.

are given for more grace than we need and if only we made use of all that grace given us we should advance to a higher state. Our duty is to use it to become better than if we do not. It is because of our indifference and carelessness we do not appreciate and correspond with the grace he sends us.

How can one explain to a non-Catholic why we must fast and abstain from meat?

Our Lord conferred upon the Apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins with the words: "Whosoever shall bind on earth, they shall be bound on earth; and whosoever shall loose on earth, they shall be loosed on earth." This power is therefore conferred upon the Pope, and the bishops who are in communion with him, and the priests who are in communion with the bishops.

In a sermon the priest said that if you don't see a sign of faith in a man, you don't see a sign of faith in a man. An article of faith is a revealed truth so important and so certain that no one can doubt or doubt 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 are not led into the error 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 get divorced and sometimes go to church. I said that such people are not Catholics as the Catholics. He said that he must be right because Catholics never grant divorces. Why is that?

Anybody can obtain a divorce, civil and other Catholic divorces. The divorce is given to Catholics and non-Catholics, in suits and alimony, 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 daily to conform ourselves to that.

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

EDITORIALS

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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, law-making 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. Buying more bonds is your response to the call of your country, your way of saving 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 attached 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.