Sursum Corda

"Prohibition Again?"

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

For a year or more there have been hints or threats that political pressure groups which put over Prohibition in the last war will do it again in this war. And now comes the news that a national convention of the W. C. T. U. has launched the expected movement. That it will develop as it did in 1917-1918 and achieve its purpose as before is perhaps improbable. To judge from the reception given the news by movie audiences in the big cities of the Atlantic Seaboard and the Middle West, and by editorial comment in metropolitan newspapers, it would seem safe to say "there isn't a chance."

But you never can tell. Here in New York, for example, we have no first hand evidence of the sentiment of the South and West, or even of rural districts in the North and the East. It must not be forgotten that the population of the United States is still predominantly rural and unless you have your finger upon the pulse of the country at large rather than upon that of the big cities alone, you may easily make a wrong diagnosis. In the News Reel theater in a rather prosperous neighborhood there were loud bursts of scornful laughter when three or four not too prepossessing ladies of the W. C. T. U. were shown making their speeches to the microphone and the camera. They did sound silly. The ladies from Mars never to have heard the maxim "O would some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us."

It is easy to laugh a scornful laugh but not so easy to deal with the impending danger effectively. A purely negative attitude will not do. Those of us who dread the possible return of the speakeasy, the rum-runner the racketeer, the hijacker, and the gangs of highly organized murders that are perhaps the inevitable concomitants of prohibition, had better be ready with a constructive program or at least a few constructive ideas.

A constructive program already exists. The Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America is alive and active. His Eminence Cardinal Dougherty is chairman of its Advisory Board and Spiritual Director of its Executive Board in Philadelphia. Archbishops Glennon of St. Louis, McNicholas of Cincinnati, Howard of Portland, Oregon, and Bishop Rhode of Green Bay complete the National Board. There you have the nucleus of an organization which could be developed and expanded to such size that it could direct public opinion in the whole country and by inculcating correct Catholic principles of temperance and total abstinence, avert the danger of compulsory prohibition, and at the same time lessen or even abolish the evils of excessive drinking, now in war-time and in the days of peace that are to come.

One thing is certain: we Catholics cannot sit still and watch a danger developing—either the danger of Prohibition or the danger of drunkenness. We, and perhaps we alone, have the right moral principles and the true sacramental theology in the matter. What we have we must communicate. If we play the part of the dog in the manger, we shall not be without guilt. To put the matter concretely: when we hear Catholics sneering scorn upon those—whom they call "fanatics" and "bigots," why not say "Yes, yes, those poor people are deluded; they are making a wild stab at the problem; they have not the infallible Church to guide them; they are emotionalists, doubtless some of them are hypocrites, but all those retorts have been made before. To say them over and over again is not to deal with the danger. Beyond ridicule and indignation what have we to offer?"

Try this question on your Catholic friends who pooh-pooh Prohibition or grow angry when it is mentioned. "What precisely are you doing personally about this manifest and horrifying evil of excessive drink and drunkenness? Nothing? Then don't indulge yourself in the luxury of stigmatizing those who recognize the danger and are up-and-doing while you sit on the side lines and morely laugh or jeer."

There is an old saying in politics, "You can't beat any candidate with no candidate." Nor can you beat any program with no program, any crusade with no crusade.

Fortunately we Catholics do not have to commence "from scratch." And we are not without experience. When we make up our minds to it we are the greatest organizers the world has ever seen. Cardinal Dougherty says, "There was a time when there were Total Abstinence Societies not only for men and boys, but also for women and girls, and it is not necessary to say that they preserved countless families and individuals from ruin by drink." But he confesses sadly that "many of those Total Abstinence Societies, especially those for women and girls, have gone out of existence; due in no small degree to the war that was waged on the Law of Prohibition." The societies exist: they may be only skeletons of what they could be. All we need do is to provide them with flesh and blood.

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EDITORIALS

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for Masses are seldom equal to such a purpose. The priests in your parish have a weekly salary of twenty to thirty dollars; your desire for their special support, your desire to have a fair part in giving them adequate income for all their expenses, is fulfilled when you arrange for a High Mass to be said for father, mother, brothers, friends, deceased. You help them in a lesser degree when you arrange for a Low Mass. Your Mass stipend is a needed part of the support of your Pastor, your Assistant Pastor. The Solemn Funeral Mass is a proper farewell service for your parents, members of your family; the 7th Day High Mass, the Month's Mind, the Anniversary Requiem Mass, follow in ordinary sequence, are the expected remembrance you give to your loved ones deceased. They are marked by the Church as privileged Masses, and can be celebrated even on important feasts when other requiem Masses are not allowed.

Mass offerings are fixed by diocesan law. Faithful parishioners will have in mind a twofold purpose in arranging for Masses—the fulfilment of a duty of piety and family devotion to deceased kinfolk; and the fulfilment of a duty of adequate support for the parish clergy. When you see your Pastor for a Requiem Mass, have these two purposes in mind: when you make your will, be sure to provide for Masses for your soul, for the souls of those dear to you. State precisely what is in your mind; for whom the Masses are to be said; Whether they are to be High Masses or Low Masses; whether a particular time for saying them is to be prescribed if they are High Masses. The advice of a priest is in order when providing for Masses in your will, who will gladly help you or your attorney when requested in this matter. Catholics instinctively call on their priests for Masses for their loved ones; Catholics like through Mass offerings to give proper support to their parish clergy.

LAY THY HAND UPON HER

Belief in the power of Christ to work miracles and confidence in His readiness to help in affliction, are shown by the two incidents of this Sunday's Gospel. The bereaved ruler and the afflicted woman had faith in Christ, had hope in His goodness. The ruler asked Him to come to his dead daughter, lay His hand on her, restore her to life. Surely, no ordinary request! The afflicted woman spoke no word, sought only to approach Jesus and touch the tassel of His cloak. She knew her desire to be healed would be as clear to Jesus as if she were to put it in words. Both received the answer to their prayers. Two miracles now brought life to the dead girl, health to the afflicted woman.

Surely the love for Christ and His work dwelt deeply in the hearts of these petitioners. That love centered around One Whom they knew by faith and in Whom they trusted with unfailing hope. Their prayer for help was founded on the three Divine Virtues, Faith, Hope, Charity.

The report of this spread throughout the whole district. Christ's works were not in secret, His fame was not hidden under a bushel. From mouth to mouth went the stirring report, until everyone knew what He had done: in this case and in many another one.

We have the historic report of Christ's life, we have the report of all the intervening centuries down to our own day as what He has accomplished in the world at large. So compelling is the evidence of His divine power exercised in the spread of His Church, in the conversion of the world from paganism, in placing in the hearts of good men of a strong desire for peace and justice, that any earnest searcher should find it just as easy to believe and hope in Him as did the ruler and the afflicted woman of this Gospel.

Christ lays His hand upon us when we receive the Sacraments: it is His power, His grace, that the Sacrament ministers for our resurrection from the death of sin, for our rescue from the afflictions of life. Christ stands ready to answer our prayers always, according to His own promise. May the thought of Him and His goodness, His love for men, be ever before us! May we rejoice always in the possession of such a friend as Christ!

Library Signpost

"The Kingdom Of Our God"

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

In these closing weeks of the Church Year comes the magnificent galaxy of the Kingdom Feasts. Ushering them in, the Feast of Christ the King stands like a grand portal, splendid and regal, impressing upon our forgetful minds our Christian charter of royalty as princely brothers and sisters of the Divine King. The Feast of All Saints instructs and inspires us with the recollection of that tremendous commonwealth of the Redeemed who have already entered into "the joy of the Lord." They are the Kingdom Triumphant. The Feast of All Souls is not only an occasion of intercession for the dead, but also of praise to God for that other portion of Christ's Kingdom the Kingdom of Atonement the Kingdom Suffering: the Souls in Purgatory too are precious trophies of our conquering King and the note of praise resounds in the Liturgy of Nov 2 over the funeral black: "Come, let us adore the King, unto whom all things are alive."

The Kingdom Militant, which we are here on earth, also has its portion in this Kingdom sequence of Feasts. On Nov. 9 and Nov. 18, our turn comes in the Dedication Feasts of the two Mother Basilicas of the Christian world—St. John Lateran, and St Peter's in Rome. On these great festivals we praise God, not alone for the glorious record of those great basilicas, but also, and more importantly, for the whole Christian world which is seen by God and His angels as a temple of living stones more splendid than any basilica.

I have come across a wonderful passage from Cardinal Newman's Sermons which, if meditated and acted upon will bring us members of the Church Militant into fuller submission to Christ our King. He says

"O taste and see how gracious the Lord is. If you have hitherto thought too little of these things, if you have thought that religion lies merely in what it certainly does consist in also, in filling your worldly station well, in being amiable, and well-behaved, and considerate, and orderly, but if you have thought it was nothing more than this, if you have neglected to stir up the great gift of God which is lodged deep within you, the gift of election and regeneration, if you have been scanty in your devotions, in intercession, prayer, and praise, and if, in consequence, you have little or nothing of the sweetness, the winning grace, the innocence, the freshness, the tenderness, the cheerfulness, the composure of the elect of God, if you are at present really deficient in praying, make a new beginning henceforth. Start now, and rise with Christ. See, He offers you His hand. He is rising; rise with Him, mount up from the grave of the old Adam; from grovelling cares and jealousies, and fretfulness, and worldly aims, from the thraldom of habit, from the tumult of passion, from the fascinations of the flesh, from a cold, worldly calculating spirit, from frivolity from selfishness, from effeminacy, from self-conceit and high-mindedness.

"Henceforth set about doing what it is so difficult to do, but what should not, must not, be left undone watch, and pray, and meditate, that is, according to the leisure that God has given you. Give freely of your time to your Lord and Savior, if you have it. If you have little, show your sense of the privilege by giving that little. But anyhow, show that your heart and your desires, your life is with your God. Set aside every day times for seeking Him. Humble yourselves that you have been hitherto so languid and uncertain. Live more strictly to Him; take His yoke upon your shoulders; live by rule. I am not calling on you to go out of the world, but to redeem the time; not to give hours to mere amusement or society, while your minutes to Christ; not to pray to Him only when you are tired, and fit for nothing but sleep; not altogether to omit to praise Him, or to intercede for the world and the Church; but in good measure to realize by the words of the text, to 'set your affections on things above', and to prove that you do, in that your heart is risen with Him and your life hid in Him."

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If this little citation from Cardinal Newman whets your appetite for more you might satisfy yourself by procuring such a volume as *Parochial and Plain Sermons* from the Catholic Evidence Library. It has a most winning way of presenting the truth—the kind of style which does most justice to the wonderful doctrines which it was his vocation to preach. Another appropriate book to help you enter more deeply into the Church's spirit in these final weeks of the sacred year which are to her as a parable of the final days of the world, is Emiliana Lochr's "The Year of Our Lord." This book gives short chapters, of about six pages each, on all the Sundays of the year. These chapters are not a mere pious re-hash of stale moralizing, but strong, substantial doctrine in direct lineage with the Scripture, the Liturgy, and the Fathers of the Church. The author is a Benedictine nun who mastered her deep learning under the influence of the Abbey of Maria-Laach in Germany which, for decades before its conscription and occupation by the Nazis, was a light- and power-house of Catholic life, not only for Germany, but also for Europe and for the world.

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A note of congratulation to the editors of the Tablet (Brooklyn) and of the Harrisburg Transcript for the splendid witness which they bore "for the whole truth" against the partial and tendentious report of LIFE magazine on the province of Quebec. There may be space and opportunity soon to pass on to our readers at least a summary of these fine witnesses of the defense, so as to show our sometimes-too-gullible Americans that LIFE does not always have the last word on every subject under the sun.

FIVE and TEN Years Ago—

From Oct. 26, 1932, Edition

Inaugurating a series of radio broadcasts under the auspices of the Diocese of Rochester, the Rev. Leo C. Mooney, diocesan director, Society for the Propagation of the Faith spoke on Mission Sunday and the Rev. Benedict Ehmann conducted a question and answer period.

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From Oct. 28, 1937, Edition

Blessing of a new organ and breaking of ground for a new convent at St. John's Church, Greece, were announced by the Rev. John J. Baier, pastor.

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"It is the duty of Knights of Columbus to offer their services to their pastor for whatever work the pastor has for them to do, State Deputy Joseph F. Lamb told 300 members of the Central New York Chapter meeting in Canandaigua.

You can fool the people for a time, but they soon realize that you wouldn't use trickery if your cause wasn't crooked.—Wickita Eagle.

There is no true friendship save that which God creates between souls which adhere to Him. — St. Augustine.