

Holy Father's Relief Appeal

The giving of alms to the needy has long been accepted as the most salutary Lenten practice. On Lenten Monday each year a special appeal is made for the Catholic Bishop's Relief Fund for the needy all over the world.

Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, has again sent us an appeal asking that this year we come to his assistance. Let us quote from his appeal. After expressing his gratitude for the generous assistance in the past the Holy Father continues:

"Now We wish that it sufficed to manifest Our thankfulness! But unfortunately, as you are well aware, the need for charity has not diminished; rather it has increased.

"And when your beloved flocks hear the appeal which you are again about to make to them in Our name, let them regard it as the harrowing plea of countless thousands of their distressed brethren which reaches them through the Common Father and their Bishops.

"For it is in reality, the pitiful voice of the underemployed, the homeless, the refugees, whose ranks have unhappily swollen in recent months; it is a voice faint because of hardships borne and buoyed up only by an ardent hope in the continued help of those who were their benefactors in the past.

"We are confident that Our beloved children of the United States will show their awareness of their membership of Our Lord's Mystical Body by responding in a manner which will even surpass the munificence of other years. In fact that way they will prove their gratitude for God's manifold benefits and merit for their noble country a still greater abundance of heavenly blessings."

I am sure that everyone will be as generous as possible in answering Our Holy Father's appeal. You have been most generous in the past and I am confident of your generosity to his appeal.

With a grateful blessing, I am
Your devoted Shepherd in Christ,
+ JAMES E. KEARNEY
Bishop of Rochester
P.S. The Bishop's Relief Collection will be taken up on Sunday, March 31.

Now No Obstacle, Take And Eat!

Pope Pius XII has swept away every last obstacle standing in the way of frequent, even daily Communion.

"Take and eat, this is my Body," said Christ our Lord on the night before He died.

Now every Catholic can easily fulfill this last command and final wish of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Church-made laws, hallowed by centuries of observance, came to an end this week as a result of Pope Pius XII's decree opening the altar rail to every Catholic in the state of grace.

There will no longer be any need to watch the clock as the midnight hour approaches. There will be no need to go hungry to work in order to receive noon-time Communion. There will be no bother anymore about asking the priest for permission to take medicine for a splitting headache or a rasping cough.

The simplest child can now understand the clear-cut regulation: fast from food (and alcoholic beverages) for three hours, fast from liquids for one hour. Water is permitted anytime.

And for those who are sick, they may take their needed medicine and liquid nourishment anytime before Communion, with no need to ask questions.

This most recent change in the Church's ancient customs is part of a pattern rapidly becoming crystal clear. Pope St. Pius X outlined the plan at the dawn of this twentieth century and saintly Pope Pius XII in his indefatigable, courageous energy is bringing that plan in giant strides towards completion.

The plain and simple fact is that the people of God are to take their rightful part in the worship of God.

Any and every obstacle in the way has been boldly brushed aside by the Supreme Pontiff in his constant concern for the welfare of souls.

Complications that have cluttered up the Church's ritual for centuries have been cancelled out, ceremonies have been simplified, sacraments and blessings may be given in a language the people know, and in his talk to liturgical scholars from the entire world last September, Pope Pius stated he "expressly desires" the "active and conscientious participation of the faithful at liturgical functions."

The Pope spoke of the "treasurers of grace which are derived from the active participation of the faithful in the church's liturgy."

There is no doubt about it that sincere Catholics have long desired a better understanding and a more active part in the Church's ceremonies. Our Holy Father has given conclusive proof that he recognizes and blesses and approves.

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JAMES EDWARD KEARNEY, D.D., President
The Catholic Relief Fund

Ten Reasons For Making A Retreat

IF YOU are a Catholic you have certainly heard or read, at some time or other in recent years, something about "retreats." Very probably you have not only heard or read about them, but have directly or indirectly been invited to make a retreat.

Perhaps you are among those who have not only received an invitation to make a retreat but who have accepted the invitation. If so, you will probably read what follows here with special interest, because it will all reflect something you have actually experienced.

Also it may add just that little bit of motivation that will keep you making retreats regularly, i.e., once a year or so.

But if you have never received or accepted the invitation to make a retreat, you may look upon these lines as an invitation, and the thoughts they contain as impelling motives for accepting the invitation even at the cost of sacrifice.

Don't go away or put this down until you have skimmed through what follows. It may turn out to be one of the most important decisions of your life.

WE ARE speaking here exclusively of what is known as "closed retreats." Open retreats are those that are held in parish churches, with the people coming to services perhaps in the morning and evening, and the rest of the time going about their ordinary business. A closed retreat is one in which you leave your home and all your ordinary occupations and reside at a monastery or retreat house for anywhere from two to five days.

During that time you listen to from four to five conferences given by the retreat-master each day, take part in well-spaced devotional exercises, have time for reading, meditation and private prayer because you are urged to keep silent during the retreat, and are given the opportunity to talk over special doubts or problems with someone who is experienced in dealing with such things.

You begin each day with Mass, and climax your retreat with an especially sincere, contrite and reassuring confession. This factual list of the activities undertaken during a retreat may not seem very striking to you until you have considered the following points. Each one represents all that you should have time to want to make a retreat, even to want to make an annual retreat.

Read them carefully and see if they will not create desire and anticipation within you.

TEN POWERFUL REASONS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF A CLOSED RETREAT FOR YOU CAN BE LISTED. THEY ARE THE FOLLOWING.

● Because you have problems that only a complete change of environment and scene, continuous religious thinking can help you to solve.

IF YOU SAY, in answer to this, that you have no problems whatsoever, it is either because you are not really tried by honest with yourself or because you have become dangerously blind to the important goals of your life.

We all have problems including any amongst us who may already be doing so. The problems arise in general from the fact that God placed us on earth to save our souls and try to become saints, against the attainment of which goals we find a constant uprising of contradictory desires and ambitions within us.

This is the basic problem of all human beings trying to bring our own will and our own actions into conformity with the will of God for us.

Nothing works as a greater spur to the resolving of this problem than getting away from one's ordinary environment for a period of time and being helped to see and meditate on God's will while looking over one's own life as from a distance. In these circumstances, private, personal, selfish desires begin to look very unimportant. God's will and God's love gradually appear to be what they really are: the most important goals in the world.

● Because the world around you chatters to you constantly and almost exclusively about material things, and you are

enabled to see through its deceptions only by getting away from it once in a while.

NEVER IN history was the world's voice louder in the ears of men and women than it is today. It has as outlets, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, social gatherings, business contacts and advertising in a dozen different forms. Its theme is the importance of food and drink, clothes and comforts, romance and love, vacations and travel, health and popularity.

Yet there are many people in the world who have the very best of all these things without being happy or at peace. They are missing something, and that is the only thing that brings true happiness to the human spirit.

What that something is you find out most clearly by making a closed retreat. Therein you learn that your soul and your heart and your mind are too vast to be satisfied with material things alone.

You learn that you can only really and properly enjoy the good things of the world if you are living for something outside of and bigger than this world, and that is God.

● Because you constantly need new ideas, increased knowledge, and deeper convictions concerning your primary goal in life, and the perfect way of attaining these is through making a closed retreat.

IT IS AN astonishing and saddening fact that many Catholics are content to go through life without adding conspicuously to the necessarily simplified ideas about religion that they were taught as children.

They try to think as an adult about religion, but with only the meagre concepts they were able to imbibе as children.

It is true that there are many ways in which a Catholic can add to his store of knowledge about religion. Reading is a most important one. Listening to occasional sermons is a help.

Making a parish mission or novena or retreat, during which sermons are heard each day over a period of time, is an effective means of adding to one's religious knowledge and convictions.

But a closed retreat accomplishes the feat of increasing

has learned and to apply it personally to oneself. There is time to supplement oral instruction with appropriate reading. What you learn during a closed retreat you easily retain and, with ordinary good will, can put into practice.

● Because you are granted an extraordinary store of special graces for good Christian living through the exercises of a closed retreat.

IT IS A basic fact of all true Christian thinking that nothing can be done to merit heaven or to overcome sin without the grace of God.

A counterpart of this principle is that the grace of God can be won only through sacrifice, meditation and prayer.

A closed retreat includes a concentrated use of all these means of grace. Don't let this statement frighten you. If you have never made a retreat, the spiritual exercises of a retreat are so varied and well-spaced

those causes. Protestant indignation defeated his appointment of an ambassador.

Probably President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles would like to send an envoy to facilitate America's contacts with the Vatican's immense fund of information and understanding about world trends. The intensity of the opposition deters them.

AS I SAY, I understand why these problems exist. I do not, of course, know the answers. I sympathize with all groups involved. But it occurs to me that we Americans, be we Jews, Protestants or Catholics, may sometimes be acting unwisely.

Diplomacy involves dealing not only with friends, but also with those with whom we disagree. Should such relations really be confused with approval of the philosophies or actions of other governments?

I know there is a point beyond which diplomacy's apathy from moral indignation cannot go. There is a strong case at the moment for ostracizing Moscow from the family of nations.

The central question is, should such decisions depend on emotional reactions of groups of individual Americans?

SHOULD PROTESTANTS harrassing the government when it judges that American and world interests require an envoy in Vatican City?

Should Jews and others embarrass the President in his efforts to correct the Middle East situation?

Should Catholics snore Secretary Dulles when he is convinced that a Tito visit would serve the very interests that all Americans, Catholics included, devoutly desire to serve?

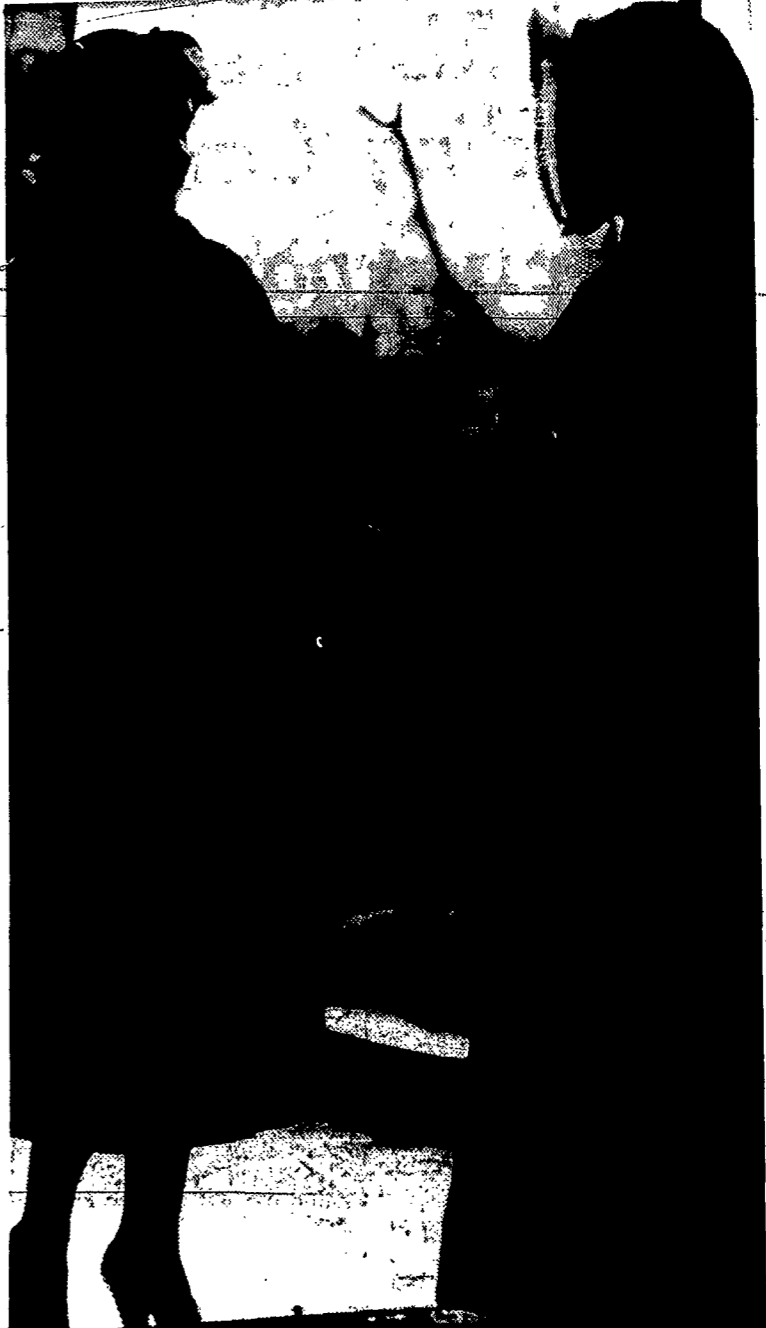
Isn't it possible that Catholics, Protestants and Jews, through overzealousness, are sometimes hurting the very causes they want to help?

Should we be slower to act, and should we place more confidence in the men we elect to make decisions?

This is a subject for serious thought, seems to me.



Redemptorist Father Fallon supervises program at Notre Dame House, Rochester's diocesan retreat center for men.



Nun welcomes guest to Cenacle, women's retreat house in Rochester.

You become aware of individuals who are grappling with far greater problems than you have ever known, and who are making the stepping-stones to progress toward perfection.

All this is accomplished even in the midst of the silence of your retreat. But it is not contrary to the spirit of silence on a retreat to speak quietly to one or the other of your companions about your mutual spiritual problems.

Some of your greatest encouragement will be derived from a few words with a fellow-Catholic who has already met and solved problems like your own.

● Because you will be prepared and fortified by your retreat to help other individuals in temptation or trouble whom you are bound to meet in your daily life.

● Because you will actually enjoy making a closed retreat as a new, refreshing, relaxing and restful experience.

PERHAPS THE MOST common objection to the making of a closed retreat, raised by men and women who have never made one, is that it will be a most difficult and trying experience.

They admit that it might be profitable, but they fear that the price to be paid for the profit will be too high. They think that all they will be doing will be kneeling, listening to conferences, going around in gloomy silence, living on bread and water, sleeping on hard beds, etc.

In reality these fears are absolutely unfounded. At most retreat houses, the food is excellent, the beds are good, and the schedule of activities is so varied that no one suffers any great pressure on his knees or any other part of his body.

With the tremendous spiritual good that is done for the soul, there usually comes a sense of relaxation and rest for the body that makes a retreat a worth while venture, even in the purely physical order.

● Because tens of thousands of men and women who have made closed retreats, testify to the incalculable good that has come to them through their retreats.

IF YOU HAVE any lingering doubts about whether you can stand making a closed retreat, or whether you will get any good out of it, ask half a dozen of your Catholic friends who have adopted the habit of making regular retreats.

The chances are that you will be given so enthusiastic a pep talk on the subject that all your doubts will be swept away.

The best proof of this is the fact that there is still so great a shortage of retreat houses in America. New ones have been springing up almost every year, yet thousands of applicants for retreats have to be turned away.

The reason is that the vast majority of those who make one good closed retreat immediately decide that they are going to make such a retreat every year. So the old-timers take most of the space in the retreat houses each year.

But your interest and your application to make a retreat will further the movement, until the day arrives when every adult American Catholic will be able to make a closed retreat each year.

This article — "Ten Reasons for Making a Retreat" may be obtained in pamphlet form for five cents a copy from the Liguorian Pamphlets, Redemptorist Fathers, Liguori, Mo.

Mary's L No C

Following is the address of the Rev. Bishop Casey's address "Ages" or "reminy for memon of Mary, th held Sunday at 24 at Sacred He

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