

AMERICAN SEMINARIES

An Interview with Father Doyle who has recently visited many Seminaries. Over four thousand Students.

(Catholic Citizen)

Rev. A. P. Doyle, rector of the Apostolic Mission House, has just returned to Washington after making an extended tour of the seminaries of the country and talking to the young men who are preparing for the priesthood, of the great opportunities that are before the Church in this country.

Visits Seminaries

He visited ten of the largest seminaries in the country and addressed 1,384 ecclesiastical students, and everywhere was received with the utmost cordiality by the seminary authorities. Talking about his trip he said: "I have done no better work in all my ministry than the work of these two weeks. It has been a great joy to impress on the minds of these young men on whom the Church depends for her future welfare in this country, that if they are true to their training and rise to the opportunities that are presented to them here and now, it will not be long before Catholic sentiment dominates the thought of the country."

"How did the seminaries impress you?"

"Most favorably. They are full of enthusiasm for the mission work. They listened with eager look and most willing ear to the statement of the glorious opportunities that are before the Church. What impressed me particularly is the high grade of young man that is consecrating himself to the service of the Church. I have had occasion to observe closely the thousand or more young men studying at the college of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, perhaps the largest and best medical school in the country. I have seen the West Point cadets at many of their gatherings, but from point of view of physical appearance, clear-eyed, clear-skinned, manly-looking fellows the young men in the Catholic seminaries preparing for the priesthood put up the peg a bit higher. I cannot tell you what a sense of joy and hope this has given me. The Catholic Church in the United States has the future within her grasp, when we make a study of the religious conditions, particularly when we look at the crumbling creeds and disintegrating denominations about us. But as to whether she will seize the opportunity depends entirely on the young priesthood. If they are ordinary, commonplace fellows, with no higher ambition than a good living and an easy time with a lot of ball games thrown in, the Church will miss the best opportunity that has ever been given to her in the world's history, and the American people will drift away into infidelity. One can hardly believe that this will be so when he looks into the face of the coming generations of priests."

Some Impressions

"What seminary seemed to have the best class of students?"

"Now, do not ask me to make comparisons. They are all the best. St. Mary's, Baltimore, had the largest crowd. Some 230 young men were there under the training of the Sulpicians and 157 at Dunwoodie. I did not get a chance to look into the faces of the young men at St. Bernard's, Rochester, though the bishop says he has a splendid lot of young men. At St. Bonaventure's seminary at Alleghany, the gathering of the young men of the college and the seminarians in the chapel was a most impressive sight. The Franciscan Fathers are in charge here and Father Butler is a great big noble-hearted, whole-souled man, full of enthusiasm for the non-Catholic mission work and quite facile in filling the young men under him with the same enthusiasm.

"The Josephinum at Columbus, O., is a remarkable place. It is under the Propaganda and all the seminarians wear the Propaganda habit with its red trimmings and sash. They take boys there between fourteen and sixteen years of age and give them a full course of twelve years, and the young men seem to respond to the splendid training they get. There is evidently a deep sense of piety and strong missionary spirit among these young men. At Mt. St. Mary's of the West, at Cincinnati, there are 126 students and the same spirit of devotion, zeal and enthusiasm seems to fill the souls of these young men. There is probably no better mission field than the middle West, and converts may be had in the Mississippi valley by the hundreds for the asking.

More Seminaries

"At St. Vincent's monastery, Latrobe, Pa., under the Benedictines, I found a large and deeply sympathetic audience. The Benedictines are among the best missionaries in the country. They have eagerly sought the distant places, in the far west and south, and have done pioneer missionary work where it is most needed. Their college and seminary at St. Vincent's turns out a sturdy race of men."

"Do you consider that there are seminary accommodations enough for the vocations in this country?"

"Not by any means. While there are over 4,000 seminarians, still there is almost everywhere a dearth of priests, and while there have been built within the last few years some of the largest and best seminaries, still they have not kept pace with the demand. With the many new seminaries the old ones are just as crowded and hundreds of boys are being turned away from the priesthood because there is no opportunity for them to study. On the other hand there is no difficulty in getting money enough to support seminaries. There is no cause the people will give money for with more readiness than the education of priests. The yearly collection in the archdiocese of Philadelphia for the seminary is nearly \$50,000.

"On what do you base your optimistic views of the future of the Church in this country?"

The Situation

"Why, the whole situation is as plain as a pikestaff. The Church is splendidly organized and pretty thoroughly equipped to do its work. The hearts of the people are full of faith and loyalty. Protestant churches have lost all hold on their people because they have no dogmatic life. Religion is the strongest and deepest passion in the hearts of the people, and no people has existed without some definite religious belief. The Catholic Church alone can supply it to the American people. Given then, a priesthood full of zeal, not merely content with administering the sacraments to the souls who come asking for the graces of religion, but eager to go out among the vast throng of non-Catholics who are thirsting for the waters of life, it will not take long to convince them where the pastures of the Good Shepherd lie. As soon as they are convinced of this, nothing can resist the coming of the throngs of non-Catholics into the Church. It all depends upon the young priesthood for the next few decades of years. This is what the Apostolic Mission House stands for. It not only creates missionaries, but it opens its doors to the young priests who have a positive desire to fit themselves for the effective ministerial work. It is the duty of every priest, though he be engaged in simple parochial work, to know how to meet the non-Catholics and to be facile in explaining Catholic doctrine. This sort of training he gets in the Apostolic Mission House."

STODDARD'S RETURN

Charles Warren Stoddard, he of the South Sea Idylls, is come back to his own again. He arrived in San Francisco last week and will live there, he says, for the remainder of his days. His interviewer quotes him as saying:

"I am going to stay right here for a year or two to build up, for I haven't been as strong as I ought to be since my illness. Little things bother me and I'm terribly susceptible to climatic changes. They have 'em in the East to beat the band. I'm searching a streak of atmosphere that contains the elixir of life. It ought to be some where in the south, and when I find it I'm going to stay right there. Gertrude Atherton wrote me that she had an ideal place on the side of Tamalpais where she could work all day and sleep all night. Already I know that I can feel this climate in my bones.

"I'm sure I can't understand why all our young literary men from here are drifting to New York. They want to be in the whirl of it, I suppose. For myself, I simply loathe it. When I go to Boston from there I like to take the train that crawls around the city so I can hate it on all sides."

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