

THE CATHOLIC YOUNG MAN

A Heart-Stirring Pen-Picture of His Social Needs.

In the morn of life, the heart is light and bright hope seems, as it were, to illuminate the veiled and ever unknown future—the smallest promise is accepted with avidity, as a certain factor of progress and the least success in the preparation is taken as an assured victory in the bitter battle of life.

In the preparation origin is forgotten; influence is of no assistance in the mastery of lessons; and social standing make the examinations at schools and colleges and of the various states for admission to the professions not one iota easier. Self-denial of all enjoyments, sometimes even of comforts are endured, without a murmur by those from the lowest strata for the ineffable privilege, to compete with, may even to expel those born blessed with all the advantages that the human heart can desire. What is denial of personal gratification in comparison to the attainment of position, power and standing which alluring hope is held out to the brave and noble? What obstacle can destroy the flame of aspiration and ambition when once fanned into existence by the stern winds of caste and bitter penury? What power under the sun can repress an independent and fearless manhood, when it has once discovered its own strength in a pure, unselfish and noble heart? Thus far the Catholic young man has the advantage; but here it ceases. The moment he steps into the arena, to do battle as a fearless Catholic, he is handicapped and his best endeavors are circumscribed by Catholics themselves.

As a Catholic young man, I can find no words adequate for the gratitude I entertain towards Tattler in pressing so forcibly and pleading so nobly the cause of the Catholic young men.

Yes, organize our young men as Catholics, or else ere you know it they are organized; but alas! not as Catholics! You may preach and exhort till dooms day, that the things of this world should be despised, yet the young man of today cannot believe in the justice of foregoing all the advantages enjoyed by non-Catholics and thus obliging those depending upon him to live in reduced circumstances. Point me to eternal damnation if you must as the consequences of the inexplicable longings in my heart to be free from the chains of absolute necessities, I cannot and will not believe that God created me to be the servile tool of another man! Nay, this world was not created for a favored few, but for all. The babbling brook, the smiling flower, the rustling foliage, and the sweet music of the birds are but a few of the caresses with which He seeks to demonstrate His love for man, and all men should have ample opportunities to enjoy them.

Let us briefly compare the position of the Catholic and non-Catholic young man upon entering active life. In the preparation the Catholic has enjoyed many advantages which his non-Catholic brother has not. Chief among these is the education of his heart in addition to that of his head, and thus he is a whole man. The non-Catholic, after returning from school, casts his lot in a large city. He is a total stranger. He is without friends, influence, and perchance even money. He has not cared much thus far for church, but he remembers once having gone to Sunday school, and wanting to feel at home somewhere he naturally drifts to a church—non-Catholic. Ere he leaves that church almost every hand of influence will have been extended to him in kindness. The pastor will have asked his name, his business, where he lives, and where he comes from. He is welcomed by nearly every one and he feels at home. If he is of a social nature, all that is required on his part is to accept invitations to the many church socials, and if he is of good character the houses are open to him. Women, ever keen to discern the needs, and ready to admire and assist ambition in a worthy young man, find it a pleasure to render more services to this young man than he ever anticipated from that source. In the many socials given by the young people of the church he is constantly thrown in the society of amiable and sensible young ladies and an ultimate union with

one of them will only enhance his chances for success in his profession or business.

There is the Y. M. C. A., a great factor for good and a power among non-Catholic young men. The dues are kept within the reach of all, and its great membership attests to the eagerness with which its advantages are accepted.

The various fraternal organizations, not only so in name but also in practice, exert an influence which cannot be estimated. To the uninitiated, thrown much in the company of such organizations, it is simply inexplicable. The rich and the poor, the high and the tiller of the soil—all are equal. They all take an interest in their meetings, as well as in each other. Lines of nationality are never drawn, but all are working in harmony for the avowed purpose of making the battle of life easier for each other. The young man is a special object of their solicitude, for they realize that upon his shoulders rests the future, and that he must continue the noble work they have begun. Verily the non-Catholic young man need not ask for opportunities, they are open for him everywhere.

Now let us look at the Catholic young man's chances in the same conditions and circumstances. There is the magnificent church, where he knows, albeit an absolute stranger, he will find something familiar. The services, he knows so well, are the same, but the faces about him are all strange. A feeling of home and mother fills his heart, and to conceal a tear, he buries his face in his hands. In his utter loneliness the most fervent prayer emanates from his heart. The services are finally over, and his eyes searchingly meet those of others, just for a nod, a word, a greeting, but all in vain. Not a friendly hand is extended him, not a sympathizing smile greets him, not a kind voice bids him welcome! He knows not why, but somehow he lingers at the entrance of the church, as if he were to meet somebody there. Finally, when all are gone, he awakes from his reverie and more than ever does he feel that he is alone. Next Sunday he goes again and if he has the money he may have a seat in a pew, but if he enters one without the privilege having been granted by the usher, a frowning face may greet him. True, the usher will not demand of him to leave the pew, if he has no money, but only those who have been in the position know the bitterness of the sting endured when the usher comes for the dime and you do not possess it. He may go there Sunday after Sunday for a whole year, and matters will not change. He may know by sight every face in that church, but the warmth of his young heart is frozen with the coldness of those who worship at his very side. He is sensitive, and do you wonder that he seeks a more congenial atmosphere? Can you justly censure him when he finds a non-Catholic for a life companion, because he was compelled to seek friendship where it was offered him? Do you wonder that our best Catholic young ladies meet with a dearth of "eligible Catholic young men?"

A social atmosphere among Catholics does not exist. There are many influences, all unreasonable, which militate against it. There is the Irish Catholic, the German Catholic, etc., a classification not calculated to foster a communion of interest among our people.

There are Catholic fraternal organizations aiming to take the place of or supply those benefits which non-Catholics enjoy from organizations after which they are patterned. All that can be said of them is that they are mutual insurance companies, no more. I will not speak of the difference in cost, although an item of sufficient magnitude worthy of investigation. They lack the very spirit—perfect equality among members—which makes similar organizations among non-Catholics so beneficial to their members.

Truly, the chances of the Catholic young man without friends, without influence and without money are not equal to his non-Catholic competitor. It is at this period that we lose many a young man because he finds excuses for the step he takes. This state of affairs is truly deplorable. It takes from our ranks the brain and sinew of our young men. Through somebody's negligence our young men with native ability, with education, with power, must be dormant or else turn to non-Catholic avenues through which they may become active.

Yes, organize our young men! Be kind to them. Give them an opportunity. Don't be forever running after men of standing and reputation. Clergy, induce your men of influence to stand at the portals of your churches to welcome and interest themselves in our young men. Speak kind words to them. Encourage them in their oft arduous undertakings and noblest aspirations. I implore every Catholic man and woman to give our Catholic young men a chance, for they have every just claim on us and they are the future hope of the Church!—*Carl A. Vogel in Catholic Columbian.*

CONFRATERNITIES OF THE CHURCH.

Their Origin and the Privileges Endowed in their Pious Members.

Rev. Pamphilus Ennis, O.S.F., blessed a banner for the Archconfraternity of the Cord of St. Francis some days ago in St. Anthony's Church. On that occasion he renewed the history of the confraternity and its privileges. Taking his text from Matt. xviii., 20, he said: From these words of our Blessed Lord it is evident, dear brethren, that the spirit of God abides with and directs those who are united in holy confraternity for the purpose of promoting in themselves and in others religious sentiments and religious practices, such as do all confraternities approved of by the Church.

And this alone should suffice to induce pious Catholics to join in this holy confraternity, under one form or another, to enroll themselves under some banner, by which they may be recognized as being guided by the Divine Spirit, and joined in fellowship with others in the cause of God and of His Church, against all who are banded together in the name of Satan; against those many evil associations whose aim is to overturn religion, and to propagate principles of infidelity and licentiousness.

In the Catholic Church many most excellent confraternities and sodalities are to be found, blessed and fastized by Her, and enriched with many indulgences and other Spiritual favors, for these pious associations of seculars the Church regards as her bulwarks against the attacks of her enemies.

St. Bonaventure, the Seraphic doctor of the Franciscan Order, is justly styled the father founder of these confraternities, for to him we owe the first confraternity approved of by the church. This confraternity was called the Sodality of Confalone, on account of a banner borne by the association on which was painted a likeness of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The rules and statutes of that confraternity were approved of by Pope Clement IV. in the year 1267, and they had served as models for all other associations of the kind that have been erected in the Church since that time.

The Franciscan Order, therefore, enjoys the signal honor of having endowed the Church with the model of all those pious associations of seculars which have proved so powerful a means of enkindling and preserving piety in the hearts of the faithful. Besides this, the Order of St. Francis has established no less than twenty one different confraternities, apart altogether from the sixteen religious Orders which have been founded by those professing the rule of the Third Order. In fact, it is this Order which commenced all the sodalities for works of charity and piety performed by the confraternities of our days. Did time permit, I could, dear brethren, read for you from this Franciscan Manual, which I hold in my hand, the names of these confraternities established by the Franciscan Order, when and by whom established, and for what particular purpose, by what Popes sanctioned and indulgenced; and, also the authorities on which this my assertion is made. But all this you can find by referring to pages 483, 484, 485, 486 and 490 in the Franciscan Manual by Father Jarlath Prendergast, O.S.F., which book some of you, members of the Cord, have in your possession.

There is one confraternity in particular which claims our special attention this evening, my brethren, namely, the Archconfraternity of the Cord of St. Francis. The members of this Archconfraternity, connected with St. Anthony's Church, are here this evening for the purpose of getting their beautiful new banner blessed. Hence, I deem it opportune to the occasion to speak to you on this devotion of wearing the Cord of St. Francis, and on the spiritual advantages

which may be enjoyed by the members of this Archconfraternity. In my closing remarks I shall have occasion to explain why on the front of that new banner there is the picture of St. Benedict Joseph Labra.

I hope what I am about to say this evening will, with God's blessing, not only encourage the members of the Cord to persevere and even more fully to appreciate the favors and blessings they enjoy, but may, moreover, induce others to join this Archconfraternity for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls.

The origin of this devotion of wearing the Cord of St. Francis, my brethren, may be dated back to the thirteenth century, the time in which the saint himself lived; for Pope Sixtus V., who was a Franciscan, says that "St. Francis by his miracles and example so drew the faithful to him that nearly all, not satisfied with loving and admiring him, essayed to imitate him, many amongst them desiring to wear a cord similar to that with which he bound his coarse habit."

The first we know to have shown this mark of love and veneration to the Seraphic Patriarch is the glorious Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers, who, according to Wadding, persuaded St. Francis to give him his rough cord, which he wore under his habit, until death, as a sign of their union of hearts and mutual love in God. After the canonization of St. Francis, wherever his children went to preach penance to sinners, they laid before them the example of their Holy Father, and exhorted them to imitate him in his tender devotion to the passion of Jesus Christ, and that they might more easily call to mind that bitter passion, they introduced the custom of wearing a cord like that of St. Francis, in honor of the cords with which our Saviour was bound and scourged.

But it was not until the sixteenth century that this devotion was raised to a confraternity. In 1585 Pope Sixtus V. established it under the title of the Archconfraternity of the Cord, or Cinchure, of St. Francis. From that time this devotion of wearing the cord became very popular, next, in fact, to that of wearing the Scapular of Mount Carmel. Kings and Queens, Popes and Bishops thought it an honor to be girded with it. "We glory," says the present glorious Pontiff, "in being on the role of the Franciscan family." And Pope Pius the Ninth, of happy memory, once said. "For my part I wear the Cord of St. Francis, but in this devotion we ought not only seek the indulgences and privileges, but still more the virtues attached to the wearing of this holy cord." In no other country did this devotion become more popular than in Ireland, my brethren; in Ireland, that land of faith and devotion, of long suffering for the cause of Christ and of His Church. And to show you that it is still popular there, I need but tell you what, a short time ago, I learned from an eye witness, nay, from one of the missionaries themselves, who wrote to me stating that at the close of one of the Franciscan missions in a town in Ireland, no less than eight hundred persons presented themselves to be received into the Cord, and in another place four hundred sought the same favor of being admitted as members of this archconfraternity.

But now what are the spiritual advantages of this confraternity. They may be classed under the four following heads, namely, first, that the members are under the protection of St. Francis; second, they share in the spiritual privileges and good works of the Three Orders of St. Francis; third, they have a communion of merit among themselves; fourth, they can gain the many indulgences granted by the Church to this archconfraternity.

To be under the fatherly protection of St. Francis must, indeed, be a great advantage, a great blessing, for, when we considered his maraculous resemblance to Jesus Christ, in the manner of his birth, his vocation, the calling of his disciples, and the wonderful impression of the five wounds; and we remember the extraordinary favors and graces given to him, and the wonderful promises made to him during his life; when we bear in mind all this, my brethren, we can have no difficulty in believing that powerful and efficacious must be his intercession, in heaven, in behalf of those in whom he takes interest.

You no doubt desire to know what are the great promises made to St. Francis.