

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

AN EARNEST WORD TO OUR YOUNG MEN

The vivid lightning of the heavens sometimes reveals in all the brightness of day what lies hidden in the darkness of night. The grace of God sometimes parallels this in a flood of light flashed at intervals upon the soul. Without warning, without apparent cause, even, it comes, a momentary brightness, but lasting in its effects. Mind and heart are illuminated, and the truth brought out in bold relief becomes a force to influence our life.

Catholic young men, has your responsibility towards others ever been thrust upon you in one of these bursts of light? Has the second great commandment of God, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," ever had any effect upon your lives? The love of your neighbor is the test of your love of God. The chief command of charity is to save the soul of your fellow-man. Nothing else matters, nothing else is of any consequence to God in the final analysis. True, you must clothe the naked and feed the hungry, but these are only means to an end, means to a greater good, the saving of your neighbor's soul. As the soul is immeasurably greater than the body, so the charity which saves the soul is greater than the charity which cares for the body alone.

Every sincere Catholic desires nothing more fervently than the conversion of this fair land of America to the true faith. How is this result to be obtained? Many will say, by the preaching of our clergy and their Apostolic zeal. My reply is—Yes—from the zeal of our clergy, in a measure, but in a far greater degree from the good example and direct personal influence of a faithful Catholic laity. It is not the priest so much, who meets the non-Catholic but seldom; it is you, young people of the laity, and especially you, young men, who are living in constant association with them.

Yes, Catholic young men, you are the object lessons from which those outside the Church judge of the truths of our Catholic Faith. You are living witnesses for or against the Church. Your non-Catholic friends read you more attentively than they would read a Catholic book. They are influenced more by your sayings and doings, particularly your doings, than they would be by carefully framed syllogisms proving the truth of the Church.

Every Catholic young man should be an apostle. A life pulsating with the purity and faith is a sermon that touches hearts, that wins converts. Would that the lives of all of you came under that heading—Apostolic. But, alas, some of you seem to be dead. The enthusiasm that brings the faith to the attention of others, the enthusiasm which should spring from the very joy of being a Catholic, is not in your possession. You could set the world on fire, and yet you are content to remain dull and sluggish.

Of what use is the preaching of the clergy if you, who should mirror in your lives the truths set forth in the pulpit, do not give a splendid example of a living, vibrant Catholic faith? Non-Catholics attend the services of the Church and they hear the priest speak most eloquently on the truths of religion; they hear him outline a method of right living which, if followed in its entirety by all peoples, for a single day even, would result in a universal Utopia. They admire the Church, they are attracted towards her—until they see you, who also listened to the same doctrine, leave the church on Sunday morning and promptly forget all about your faith for the remaining six days of the week.

They see you living perhaps in mortal sin, committing sins of intemperance, of impurity, of blasphemy, of enmity towards your neighbor. They never see you making any effort to avoid the occasions of sin against which the priest is constantly warning you. They know, too, of your sharp practices in business, perhaps even of your stealing. They notice that the Catholic workman is no different from any other in his ideals and principles, always looking for the most he can get out of life at the expense of his employer and at the least trouble to himself. They observe the Catholic employer grinding the bodies and souls of his employees into dollars and cents in order to increase his fortune.

Your non-Catholic friends see no apparent difference between those who have not heard the wonderful doctrine of the Catholic Church and those who have heard it. And then it is they recall the words of Holy Scripture, "By their fruits you shall know them." They apply these words to some of the Church's children and thereby arrive at a false conclusion. They say, Look at these Catholics; to hear their priests talk, one would think that they had all that was precious and useful in Christ's doctrine. They claim that their Church is the one true Church. They claim to have Christ always present on their altars; and yet one needs but a second glance to see that their lives give the lie to their words.

Unfortunately, those outside the Church do not allow for the frailty of human nature when dealing with things Catholic. Too often do they judge the Church by the lives of bad Catholics, the dead members of her mystical body. You, who have intimate dealings with our separated brethren, should realize the heavy

responsibility resting upon you to give a good example.

A splendid instance of the power of good example is related in the biography of the distinguished English convert, John Hungerford Pollen. One night, in the crush of a London society function, he espied at the opposite end of the room a lady trying to catch his eye. He could not recall her face, but she evidently knew him, and they both made their way through the press until they met in the middle of the room. "I see you don't remember me, Mr. Pollen," said the lady, despite polite attempts on his part, "but I have good reasons to remember you. This time last year I sat beside you at a dinner party, and a fish entree was served. I partook of it while you refused, and I said, 'You are quite wrong, Mr. Pollen, not to take some of this. It is excellent.' I will sign to the footman to bring it to you." "No, thank you," was your reply; "it is one of those fast days on which I may eat meat, but Catholics are not on such days allowed fish at the same meal." You went on to talk of other things; but my astonishment was extreme, and I was determined to inquire into a religion which could make a man forego a good dish of food. The result is that I am at present a Catholic.

To be a missionary, to win souls for Jesus Christ, to bring the light of faith to the non-Catholics of this land, is a mission to which every young man is called. Your zeal may be easily tested in the good example you set to others. Be a good Catholic in all that that means. Do not think one way and act another. Do not conduct yourself in church like a fervent Christian and in daily life like an apostate. Christ has said, "No man can serve two masters." You cannot praise God and the world in the same breath. There is no alternative; it must be either one or the other; there is no neutrality possible.

Young men, how shall you aid in making America Catholic? First, by the power of effectual fervent prayer. St. James says, "Pray for one another that you may be saved, for the continued prayer of the just man availeth much." Second, by the force of your united good example. Our Lord says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father Who is in heaven."

You should pray as if all depended on God and you should zealously labor as if all depended on yourself. What is needed to convert America is not more grand churches reared up in the name of Christ, but more eloquent preachers to go forth and repeat over and over again the life story of Our Lord. These are exceedingly good for the spread of religion. But what is supremely needed in our day is more men to live the life of Christ in this world of sin.

Ask yourselves one question: Am I living the life of Christ? If you cannot answer "Yes," then study Christ's life, bring your own into accordance with its principles, and when you can stand before men and say, I know that life by experience, then go out into the world of sin and shame, of misery and of broken hearts, of weak and sinful men and live—live that life of Christ.

Shall we succeed in making America Catholic? Yes, young men, if you and I live the life of Christ Jesus our Lord.—K. in the Missionary.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

VIRGINIA'S VALENTINES

"No," repeated Sister Helen firmly, "there will be no valentine box this year."

Pouts and protests appeared on every face in the eighth grade class room, except on one—that was Virginia's.

Virginia was the real reason for Sister Helen's refusal. She was afraid that no one would give a valentine to Virginia. The little girl had been morose ever since she had come as a boarder to St. Mary's last September, and had lived apart from the other girls. In the study hall, she was never known to ask a neighbor where the lesson was; in the recreation room she sat alone, and after night prayers she retired to her pretty private room without a word to anyone. Naturally she had no friends.

Sister Helen thought the trouble was loneliness, and she had been right at first. But Helen had recovered from that and was suffering from over-sensitiveness—while the girls thought she believed she was "too good" to play with them, poor Virginia was positive that everyone in the school disliked her.

When valentine boxes had first been mentioned Virginia's heart sank. She was sure that she would not even get a two for a cent kind. And so, as she left the room to go for her French lesson, shortly after Sister Helen had made her announcement, there was a ghost of a smile on her face.

But during her absence a storm of protests were registered at Sister Helen's desk. Girls in black uniforms swarmed around Sister's throne and teased and pleaded and smiled and frowned until distracted Sister Helen sent them all back to their seats.

"I want to talk to you," she said, "you know that the annual practice for the eighth grade girls is charity. Well, I don't think it would be charitable to have that box."

"What if there should be one girl who received none? Can you imagine her feelings? Think if that one should be you!"

"Oh, but sister, there will be no one like—"

But the protest on every pair of lips grew weak and stopped, for it came to the mind of every girl that there was one to whom no valentines were likely to come.

At last in the silence rose Joan Greely, the best liked girl in the class.

"But, Sister," she said, "if you would let us have a box, and let us give to the girl—" she amended her word—"the girls, who aren't likely to get any, then we would be practicing charity—a—a—lot."

"Yes, yes, don't you see?" cried the girls to Sister Helen.

Sister Helen was silent for a few minutes, thinking hard, and at last she said:

"Very well, under that condition you may have it. But don't forget." Just then Virginia came back into the room. Sister Helen thought she would explain the girls' smiles to her and said:

"We decided that we would have the box after all, Virginia."

If the girls had been inclined to forget their intention to send a valentine to the girl who was not likely to get any, the sudden look of appreciation that flashed across Virginia's face would have caused them to fix their promise in their minds.

Sister put her hand in the huge, gayly flowered hat box and pulled out a large embossed white envelope.

"Miss Joan Greely," she read. All blushes Joan went down the aisle as the girls tittered and flattered with expectancy.

Virginia shrank back in her seat. She had not dared send a card to anyone for fear that it might not be acceptable. Her face was almost hidden in a book which she pretended to be much interested in. Would the end of the box ever be reached?

At first Virginia could not believe her ears. She stopped reading.

"Here, Virginia." Yes, there was Sister Helen smiling and holding out a small, hand-written valentine. Dazed, Virginia rose and took it. She opened it on her return. It was a dainty and expensive little trifle of blue and pink. Who could have sent it to her? Who cared that much about her? She must watch out for this friend of hers.

In the midst of her thrilled wondering she heard her name called again. Another unknown friend? Virginia's heart beat with gladness. This time the valentine was a heart with hand painted roses on it and a pretty little verse in the centre.

Again and again Virginia's name was called. Soon her desk was heaped higher than Joan's with the little tokens of the day. One would never have believed that the same girl was sitting in Virginia's desk as the one that had been sadly waiting there with her nose in the book for the hour to be over. Virginia was shyly smiling with bright color in her cheeks.

Everyone was looking at her and smiling in sympathy. She looked like a very pretty and lovable girl when she smiled.

Each one was resolving to know her a little better.

And as for Virginia—her heart was bubbling over with love and gratitude. She would soon learn to be at one with these delightful unknown friends of hers.—Rae Dickerson, in New World.

DENIAL OF THE BIBLE

Recently before a crowded audience in St. Cecilia's Guild Hall, Boston, the Rev. Walter Drum, S. J., professor of Scripture in Woodstock College, closed his interesting course of five lectures on the Church and the Bible. The subject of the last lecture was the meaning of the Bible. Father Drum showed how simple is Biblical interpretation to Catholics.

"To the Catholic," said he, "the Bible is the Word of God, and the Church is the infallible interpreter of that Word. Hence the Catholic is not free to read into that book any meaning he has a fancy for. In the meaning is one and only one; it is at times obscure, as is the meaning of any book of centuries of existence. The obscurity of this meaning is not an obstacle to the Catholic. He has an infallible guide to tell him what is that meaning whenever matters of faith or of morals are concerned. Not so the Protestant. He finds the meaning of Aristotle, Zoroaster, Plato and other human writers obscure. So, too, does he find it hard to reach securely the meaning of the Divine Book, for its Divine thought is set in human word and phrase. And that very obscurity is the reason why the meaning of the Bible is among Protestants what you will."

This catch as catch-can way of interpretation was not always so. Time was when a self-constituted infallible Luther, or infallible Calvin, or infallible other so-called reformer kept Protestants within some bounds in their free interpretation of Scripture. Luther told his followers not to mind the Catholics; that he was a more secure leader of religious thought than had all the fathers of the Church been if put together.

"Be minded no longer to give to such asses other answer to their restless chatter about the word alone (quoted upon St. Paul in Ro. viii, 28) than again and again to say, 'Luther will have it so, and says he is a greater doctor than all the doctors of the whole of Popery.'"

"No wonder Herrack, Lutheran professor of Church history in the University of Berlin, speaks of 'the curious logic in Luther's arguments, the errors of his exegesis and the unjustifiableness and barbarity of his polemics.'"

"Luther's unbearable dogmatism was bad enough. Things are worse in Protestant interpretation of the Bible now. Take one Lutheran society of theology as an instance—that of the University of Marburg. Here Jullicher teaches the young students for the Lutheran ministry that all the supernatural elements of the New Testament were invented by the wild and fantastic mind of Paul; the early Church was so glibly able to swallow the whole of Paul's teaching; what we now call Christianity is, of a consequence, Paulinity and not Christianity at all. The work of the Lutheran minister is to cut the people loose from Paul and to bring them back to Christ."

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I wrote to John what they were going to do. He wrote right back a long, kind letter, for me to come right to him. I always had a home while he had a roof, he said. To come right there and stay as long as I lived. That his mother should never go out to strangers. So I'm going to John. He's got only his rough hands and his great warm heart; but there's room for his old mother—God bless him—"

The stranger brushed a tear from her fair cheek and awaited the conclusion.

"Some day when I'm gone where I'll never trouble them again, Mary and Martha will think of it all. Some day when the hands that toiled for them are folded and still; when the eyes that watched over them for many a weary night are closed forever; when the little old body, bent with the burdens it bore for them is put away where it can never shame them—"

The agent drew his hand quickly before his eyes, and went out as if to look for a train. The stranger's jeweled fingers stroked the gray locks; while the tears of sorrow and the tears of sympathy fell together. The weary heart was unburdened. Soothed by a touch of sympathy, the troubled soul yielded to the longing for rest and she fell asleep. The agent went noiselessly about his duties, that he might not wake her. As the fair stranger watched she saw a smile on one of her own face. The lips moved. She bent down to hear. "I'm doing it for Mary and Martha. They'll take care of me sometime."

She was dreaming of the days in the little cottage—of the fond hopes that inspired her, long before she learned, with a broken heart, that some day she would turn homeless in the world, to go to John.—Catholic Columbian.

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CATHOLIC MAYOR GOES TO MASS IN STATE

The Mayor of Richmond, England, is this year a Catholic, and he recently attended Mass in State on the occasion of the customary church going following investiture. The event was unique in the annals of the local Catholic church, for, in the past, each succeeding Mayor attended service at the Anglican church.

The new Mayor, Dr. Lewis Gibson Hunt, was very firm on the point of the official visit. When his name was put forward for the mayoralty there was a local suggestion that he should attend the Anglican church, but he claimed the right to invite his fellow councillors to accompany him into his own church.

Dr. Hunt was brought up a non-Catholic, and entered the Church by conviction. His wife, the daughter of a West of England vicar, is also a convert.

Dr. Hunt is esteemed in Richmond as a man of varied and wide knowledge of humanity, with single-mindedness and sincerity of conviction. He was born in Nova Scotia, the son of the superintendent of education for that province, and studied at the McGill University, Toronto, and at Edinburgh University. At Edinburgh he was a dresser under Lord Lister, the discoverer of the antiseptic system of surgery. For thirty years Dr. Hunt practised in Sheffield, where he took considerable interest in public affairs in general and social problems in particular. He was made Justice of the Peace at Sheffield twenty five years ago. Retiring from Sheffield for reasons of health, he took up residence at Richmond-on-Thames, where he was elected to the Town Council in 1911.

The mayoral procession to church was rendered the more imposing by the presence of a large contingent of the Richmond Company of the Volunteer Training Corps, which supplied the guard of honor, both at the Town Hall and at the church. Behind the V. T. C. men were the fire brigade, members of the Town Council, Board of Guardians, and other public bodies.

The Bishop of Clifton, Dr. Burton, was the preacher, and his Lordship, at the close of his address, congratulated Dr. Hunt upon his new dignity. He spoke, he said, as one who had known Dr. Hunt for many years, and it was his duty and pleasure to wish the new Mayor every happiness in his office; and he assured him of his prayers. Dr. Burton, referring to the many non-Catholics in the congregation, added:

"Although there may be, as there is, a sharp dividing line upon certain points between us and them, we are anxious for their esteem and good will, and we offer ours to them most wholeheartedly. We want to prove to them, as in the past, that although we differ on those essential points of religion, yet in the relationships of social and civil life we are one with them and wish to be one with them in working for the benefit of our town and of the country.—Sacred Heart Review.

INFIDELITY UNFASHIONABLE

A Jewish rabbi, preaching in New York, is reported to have remarked that infidelity is no longer fashionable, and that religion has come to be regarded as "an evidence of culture and refinement." This is putting religious faith and observance upon the lowest plane, but in itself the statement has enough truth to be interesting. When we hear a man proclaiming his infidelity we immediately set him down as a person of little knowledge and superficial thought. His assertion is itself a confession of poor taste and bad judgment.

ment. And those who observe the influences that form character need not be told that a religious habit of mind invests a man with a refinement of percept on and a delicacy of feeling quite apart from the circumstances of heredity or environment.

Nothing is more refining than piety and few things are more educative, not only to the heart, but to the mind, than a habitual prayerfulness. Whenever civilization has made most rapid progress it has been where it has been most closely identified with the influences of religion.—Catholic Universe.

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