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THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF PRIESTS

(Sermon delivered by Rev. J. A. McCallen, S.S., of Baltimore, in the Church of the Assumption, Brookline Mass.)

"I will rise Me up a faithful priest who shall do according to My heart and soul, and I will build him a faithful house.—I. Kings ii., 25.

The training of young men for the priesthood in a preparatory and afterwards in a theological seminary is a work so fraught with important consequences for the Church of Christ that our Bishops and our clergy have no hesitation in giving to it the first place among all the tasks committed to their care.

Our Holy Father Pius X., in his very first encyclical to the Bishops throughout the world, shows that this is his view also, for he says: "All other tasks must yield to this. Wherefore the chief part of your diligence will be directed to governing and ordering your seminaries aright, so that they may flourish equally in sound teaching and spotless morality. Regard your seminaries as the delight of your hearts, and neglect on its behalf none of those provisions which the Council of Trent has, with admirable forethought, prescribed."

The importance of this work is manifest not only from the excellence and dignity of the priesthood, its sublime mission, its holy functions, its weighty responsibilities, but from the character and lives of those who must be educated and trained, before they are allowed to take charge of the flock of Christ. "As the priest, so the people." Given learned, pious, devoted, zealous, energetic priests, the Church will have, must have, a well-instructed, pious, devoted, God-fearing Catholic laity. The laity understands this as well as we do ourselves. There is no greater tribute offered to the excellence and worth of the priesthood than the high standard required by the laity for us to reach and maintain. They would have us angels, forgetting that we are but men. This only emphasizes the more their tribute. What they see in the priest is not so much the man as his sacred character. They would have us as we ought to be, other Christs. Still, they should remember that on the day of our ordination we do not cast off our humanity to take on an angelic nature. Their standard of excellence required is correct, and it is at once a tribute to their faith and to our priesthood, however unworthy we are of so sublime a dignity.

The question which first presents itself to the directors of a seminary is the important one of the vocation of those who are under their charge. This vocation must be from God, for, as St. Paul says: "Every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in the things that appertain to God. Neither doth any man take this honor to himself but he that was called by God as Aaron was." There are in the world many young men, pious, devout and talented, of whom we are tempted often to say: "What splendid priests these men would make." Yet, if God does not call them to this high vocation, they must not intrude themselves into His sanctuary. "Neither doth any man take this honor to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was."

There are other young men who, by their daily conduct, seem totally unworthy of any consideration at God's hands, and yet are sometimes called by Him to the Apostolate. Such, among others in the Church's history, was St. Paul before his conversion. Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor of Christ's Church. He stood by and held the garments of the men who stoned to death St. Stephen the first martyr. Armed with authority from the Jewish high priest, Saul journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus in order to bring about the imprisonment, condemnation and death of all the disciples of Christ whom he could find in the latter city. But, on the way, God called him to a far different mission. Struck blind and thrown to the earth, this hater of the Christian name heard a voice saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Who art Thou, Lord?" he asked. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." "What wouldst thou have me do, Lord?" "Arise and go into the city, and there it will be told thee what thou must do." A vocation then, is necessary, and the choice is left to God. This is why the Di-

vine Master said to His disciples. "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you."

But while the vocation, the calling must be from God, the nurturing, fostering and final testing of that vocation have been left by Christ to the rulers of His Church. The Bishops in turn have appointed Seminary directors for this important work. When Saul of Tarsus was called to the Apostolate, he asked "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me do?" Jesus answered: "Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." And Ananias, to whom he was sent, "was directed by God in a vision to seek out Saul, to restore his sight, baptize him and strengthen him" for the great mission to which he had been called.

The work of educating, training and forming future priests is begun at an early age. This is exceedingly wise. A young boy, selected by his parish priest on account of his piety, talents and well-marked inclinations for the priesthood, is sent to the preparatory seminary, that he may there acquire a complete classical education to fit him for his after studies, and that he may begin that training in Christian and sacerdotal virtues which is to continue to the very day of his ordination. Such a boy, you will well understand, will be as clay in the potter's hands to be fashioned into something God-like and beautiful. He will be as wax, yielding readily to the mould in which he is set. He will be as seed sown in the ground—you know the very word seminary means a nursery in which seed is sown—and this seed, warmed by God's love and moistened by the dew of heavenly grace, will grow into a beautiful plant, which will bloom not with flowers that soon fade and give a fragrance that does not last, but with the flowers of every Christian and incipient sacerdotal virtue. These, in later life, will edify and delight the beholder, and will spread among the people the fragrance of a truly priestly life.

Or, again, such a boy will be as a plant which grows steadily into a great tree, and in the days of his priesthood, spreads its branches far and wide, and offers to souls weary of the world's conflicts the shelter and repose of its luxuriant shade. Its fruits of science and piety, matured by long years of growth in study and virtue, will become the spiritual food of these poor souls unto salvation. Imagine, if you can, what grand results must be obtained from six years of such education and formation in a preparatory seminary. But after all, it is only a preparation. The young mind, filled with mere classical knowledge, is not yet matured. The young heart possibly has not gotten beyond the mere foundations of a Christian life. There is not yet in the young candidate's character that seriousness, stability, manliness, integrity and soundness which are demanded by the priestly character. Memory rather than judgment has thus far been cultivated. The young collegian is approaching manhood, and is, therefore, fitted for newer and deeper studies.

Two years of application to the questions treated by philosophy will accomplish what the college course was not meant to effect. The rules laid down by logic will serve to direct the student in the manner of acquiring truth, of getting the most complete knowledge of any subject, of distinguishing truth from error, certainty from doubt, the probable from the improbable, and of detecting exposing and refuting sophistry wherever found. This much, brethren, simply to show you on what more serious lines the further development of the young man's mind is to be cast. Mere want of time prevents my even mentioning the other branches of philosophy. Nor is it necessary. Suffice it to say that these help to prepare the young candidate for the still more important studies which await him on his entrance into theology.

How much a priest has to know! Dogmatic and moral theology, the Holy Scriptures, canon law, the liturgy, ceremonies and chant of the Church, ecclesiastical history, the lives and writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and of the great writers on all the above subjects down to our own day. Then Hebrew, and some knowledge of the other Eastern languages which offer such aid for the more thorough study

of the Holy Scriptures: the preaching of the Word of God, and all that this implies. To these add instruction on those many practical questions which meet the priest in his daily ministry, the Christian education of children, the care of the poor, the spiritual direction of souls, the conversion of sinners, the building up of parish work. Truly has the prophet said: "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek it at his mouth."

Whilst this vast field of study is being traversed, the training of the mind, heart, soul and will of the future priest is not neglected. This will be apparent to you all, my brethren, when I tell you that his day's work begins at 5.30 A.M. and closes at 10 P.M.; that, day after day, he gives the first half hour to prayer and communing with God by meditation; he hears Holy Mass daily and receives frequently during the week Holy Communion; that he begins and ends every class and religious exercise with prayer; that each day he spends at least some moments in self-examination on some fault to be avoided, some virtue to be acquired, some duty to be performed; that he is often before the tabernacle praying for light and strength, courage and perseverance; that he follows from year to year a course of spiritual reading, opening up the vast field of Christian and sacerdotal perfection, the superior of the summary discussing, developing and applying what is read; finally, that while sufficient time is given him for legitimate recreation, relaxation and repose, he spends most of the day in silence, which favors both study and spiritual progress.

Then again, what a school the seminary is to fit candidates for their future life! A priest never ceases to be a student. What abundant opportunity the seminary offers for fostering in him a love for books! He will have to deal during his ministry with persons of the most diverse characteristics, interests and views. What opportunities does he not find in his relations with his fellow-students, professors and superiors, for acquiring tact, patience, prudence and self-control! As a priest, he will have to obey the laws of the Church and the commands of his Bishop. In the seminary, from morning to night, he almost constantly has to give up his own will in obedience to that of the rule. He must strive, day after day, to correct such defects of character as would lessen his influence for good among the people. His relations with his fellow-students, by manifesting these defects, make their correction more easy.

What, think you, brethren, should be the final results of such an education and training, which lasts nearly twelve years? Do you not think that the superior of the seminary, on the day of the students' ordination to the holy priesthood, will be justified in saying to the Bishop who is to ordain them: "Most Reverend Father, our Holy Mother the Catholic Church asks that you ordain these deacons here present to the burden of the priesthood." Do you not think that, in answer to the Bishop's question, "Knowest thou if they are worthy?" he can safely reply: "As far as human frailty permits me to know, I do know and testify that they are worthy?" And how fervently the Bishop answers: "Thanks be to God."

And now, brethren, what conclusion would I have you draw from all I have said? You, brethren, who now understand possibly better than you did previously, what the Catholic seminaries in this land mean for you, wherever your lives may be cast, and what they mean for God's Church and God's people, should respond generously to every appeal made to you for the perpetuation of the priesthood through these same seminaries, remembering that your generous help will make you sharers in the rewards.

AN AGED PRIEST DEAD.

The Rev. Father Patrick Creighton pastor of St. John's Church, in Riverhead, L.I., died recently, aged 87 years. Father Creighton had been in charge of St. John's for about fourteen years. He was born in Howth, County Dublin, Ireland, and came to America when a young man. He entered Notre Dame University, Indiana, and was ordained a priest in June, 1861.

If the world would only give a man credit while he is doing things, there would be more incentive to those who hustle.

"WHY MEN DON'T GO TO CHURCH."

(From the Catholic Standard and Times.)

"Why men don't go to church" has been a problem widely discussed in the secular and Protestant press and pulpit in utter disregard of the existence of the Catholic Church and of the fact that Catholic men do go to church. Those who have been wrestling with the problem have been careful to avoid making the positive statement that Catholic men do not go to church. But they have implied as much by using the all-embracing title, "Why Men Don't go to Church." A more accurate and honest title would be "Why Protestant Men Don't Go to Church."

"But," they say, "admitting that in the United States and other English-speaking countries a fair proportion of Catholic men do go to church, what have you to say of the Latin countries? Isn't it notorious that in such places the congregations consist almost entirely of women?" This is an old charge, the most recent refutation of which is from the pen of a Protestant writer in "The Nineteenth Century and After." He says:

"It is a common fallacy of English Protestants that in Italy and France the men do not go to church, the fact being that at the hours of the morning when the men do go to church in these countries, the English Protestant is usually in bed or ruining his digestion by eating an English breakfast."

How many Protestants have even the slightest knowledge of the proportion of male attendance at Catholic services? What a revelation it would be to those who are honestly debating the problem "Why men don't go to church," if they would count heads at the various Masses in any Philadelphia parish church!

Take St. Michael's for instance. Here there is a Mass "for men only" in the basement chapel at 9 o'clock on Sundays. A representative of the Catholic Standard and Times who attended it found every seat taken, many kneeling in the aisles and even at the stairway leading to the street. Over one thousand men were present at the Mass, not to speak of those who attended other Masses. At the same hour the children's Mass was in progress up stairs, and there were some men there who were unable to gain admission down stairs. Not less than 1600 men attend Mass at this Church every Sunday.

The special men's Mass was started by Rev. Father O'Connor twenty-five years ago, and was continued by the present rector, Rev. James J. Fitzmaurice, who furnished the following conservative figures: The parish contains a little over 6000 Catholics. The attendance is greatest at the earlier Masses in summer and at the late Masses in winter. The average attendance is about 400 at 6 o'clock; 600 at 7, 800 at 8, 1000 at men's, 1200 at children's, and 800 at High Mass at 10.30. This makes a total of about 4800, of whom about 1600 are men, 2000 women and 1200 children. The 1200 unaccounted for are made up principally of infants, aged infirm and sick people. Some men perhaps do not go to church, but they are a small proportion. The baptisms in 1903 numbered 356; the marriages 70, and the number of deaths 210.

The problem of "Why men do not go to church" is evidently not much of a problem to Catholics. The few men who are nominally Catholics, but fail to go to Mass do not require to give their fellow-Catholics the reason for it. In most cases the Saturday night drunk is responsible. In other cases the moral code of the Church is burdensome, and a guilty conscience fears to consider the future life. "Conscience does make cowards of us all."

The non-Catholic students of the problem answer it in various ways. "Indifference to holy things" and "the deterioration of the modern young man," says some ministers. "Nothing to go for" and "sermons all theory and words," says some of the young men.

Rev. Dr. Savage says "the preachers have beliefs which they do not tell the people, and the people have come to know that the preachers are not quite frank with them." Rev. Dr. G. C. Lorimer, Baptist, says the dominant characteristic of the Church is timidity. "Her dominant policy is to keep out of trouble if possible. So long as that attitude is maintained the Church will never have any force."

A correspondent of the New York

Sun points out that it is the Protestant lack of teaching authority and the "higher criticism" which are responsible. He writes as follows: "I don't know why other men do not go to church, but I can tell you why they don't go in this town. "There is no longer any hell to frighten them into going, or any heaven to reward them for going. "Therefore there is nothing left to the church but its social advantages and its charities. "The female part of our families can attend to the social part, and we can mail checks from the office for charities."

A Catholic Father And Protestant Sons

The following letter, published in a recent issue of the Belfast Irish News reveals a sad condition of affairs in a family divided in regard to religious convictions. It is as follows:

Dear Sir,—I would be the last man in the world to deny that among our Protestant fellow-countrymen we have a large number of liberal-minded and tolerant towards Catholics. I have always from my boyhood upwards had close and sincere friendship with such. It pains me all the more to have to publicly complain of disregard of religious freedom in a transaction in which, trying to discharge my duty as a priest to a member of my flock, I was unhappily a few days ago concerned. I shall state only uncontroversial facts within my own knowledge, and appeal fearlessly to any candid, honest man for his verdict. A man named Francis O'Kane, Millisle, Donaghadee, Co. Down, met with a serious accident last week. His family, all Protestants, sent me no intimation, although the poor man was fatally injured.

Having heard of the occurrence, I at once set out to give Mr. O'Kane the last Sacraments of the Church. I was received courteously, but firmly and unflinchingly refused permission to see him. All remonstrance proved ineffectual. I begged hard of his son to be allowed to put the question in the presence of his father—"Do you desire my ministrations?" Even that modest request was sternly denied. And what were the reasons alleged? First, Mr. O'Kane was unable to speak to me, and what did I want seeing him? Then pressed by my importunity, his son said, "I will ask my father does he wish to see you." He returned in a few minutes with the answer, "My father, does not want you." Still I urged my request, and argued "my right to have the old man's decision from his own lips. But 'twas all in vain. I had no redress at hand. The village is exclusively Protestant, and for miles around so is the whole population. Next day I returned, hoping better counsels might obtain. I was met on this occasion by another son of Mr. O'Kane, who described himself as a "priest of the Church of Ireland," and he assured me that having had a long conversation with his father the previous evening, who, according to the other brother's account, was at that time dying and unable to talk, he knew his father's sentiments, and that his father had no desire to see me. "May not I see your father," I said, "and hear

so from his own lips?" No, decidedly no. And in spite of long remonstrance and insistence it was still a flat refusal. I came away sadly musing that it had been my unfortunate lot to have any connection with a case of such bigotry as, I hope, in recent times—even in this northeastern corner of Ireland, we have few parallels for. I wired the Chief Secretary's office on my way home the facts of the case. A head-comstable called next morning at the parochial house to make some inquiries, and proceeded to Millisle, to find the unfortunate man dead.

The question one asks at this stage naturally is, what evidence had you that the deceased was a Catholic? He never was anything else. His father and mother were Catholics, and he received the Sacraments of the Catholic Church from my predecessor last October, and from me at Christmas. I visited him since, and found him, unchanged in his religious beliefs. Yet all this, forsooth, in this land of "civil and religious liberty."

G. CROLLY, P.P.

Newtownards, Co., Down, July 3rd 1904.

Catholic Benefactors.

Captain Salvatore Pizzati, of New Orleans, who about a year ago donated \$70,000 towards the erection of St. Joseph's parish school, has now made another gift of \$75,000 to aid in building an orphan asylum and industrial school upon ground belonging to the missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. An invitation has been extended to Cardinal Sartoli to come to New Orleans to break ground for the new institution. Captain Pizzati's latest gift will rank among the largest public benefactions made by citizens of New Orleans. The lot on which the building is to be erected is 300 feet in length by nearly 700 in depth, and was purchased by the Sisters for \$18,000. When completed the institution will represent an expenditure of nearly \$100,000.

The Missionary Sisters began in New Orleans modestly with a small school in which they gathered a few Italian children. The order flourished and now owns several buildings, where they undertake the training of hundreds of poor children.

BIGOTRY.

"Bigotry has no head and cannot think, no heart and cannot feel. When she moves it is in wrath, when she pauses it is amidst ruin." — Daniel O'Connell.

The sign of an intelligent person is not possession of knowledge, but thirst for knowledge.

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