

4. SOCIAL AND CHARITABLE WORK

The Catholic War Council and the National Catholic Charities Conference have done most valuable pioneer work in this field. We are deeply indebted to the Administrative Committee for its timely guidance in the problems of this reconstructive period. Three things, in my opinion, are needed. First, the presentation, definite, clear and forceful, of Catholic social principles. Second, more knowledge as to the best methods of Catholic social and charitable work. Third, a more general impulse to put our social principles and methods into operation. Society never had greater need for guidance. It is turning for light to the Catholic Church. Too often, we must admit our principles, the principles of the Gospel, have lain hidden in our theologies, so much so that the recent pamphlet on Social Reconstruction appeared to many a complete novelty. The Church has a great work of social education and social welfare lying before it. Here, again, the Hierarchy must take the lead.

Hardly anything in recent years has reflected greater glory on the Church than the care of the moral welfare of our soldiers and sailors during the War—a work begun by the Knights of Columbus and perfected by the Hierarchy through its Committee of the National Catholic War Council. Buildings with their equipment are to be found in nearly all our government forts and stations here and abroad. No one, I presume, would think we should abandon this field of apostolic work. After the record we have made, it would be impossible for us to say to our men in the service: we leave you now to the care of the Y. M. C. A., the Jewish Welfare Board, and the Salvation Army. That these organizations propose to keep up the work begun during the War there can be no doubt. Naturally, too, the Knights of Columbus do not wish to give up the work or to abandon the valuable property erected in government stations and forts. This work can be best done by the Knights with the support of the Hierarchy, as a truly Catholic work. For the sake of our men in the service, for the spiritual welfare of the Knights of Columbus, and for the honor of the Church itself, this work should continue to be under the direction of the Hierarchy.

The time will soon come, too, when we shall have to consider the best means of utilizing the zeal and good will of other Catholic societies, both of men and women, and of the laity in general. Our people long to be helpful and only need to have the way shown to them.

5. CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

The great War has revealed to the world the all-penetrating influence of the highly trained intellect. The universal unrest of the day seems a prelude to very troubled times. Evil doctrines, propounded by clever minds, will have more and more influence. Great need, then, will the Church have of leaders with sure knowledge and well trained and well balanced minds. Our greatest single hope is in the Catholic University, which in its short existence has already been of greatest service in many ways that even the Catholic public, perhaps, is not aware of. After its many vicissitudes, it stands today upon a solid foundation. We have reason to be proud of it and its achievements. It is the child of the Hierarchy and depends for its support on the Hierarchy. Continually in the past its development has been stunted for lack of funds. If it is to obtain and hold its place among the leading universities of the United States, a greater interest in its welfare and success must be aroused among our people. It ought not to be difficult to double or treble, at least, the annual contribution. Our committee should consider ways and means of effecting this.

6. CATHOLIC EDUCATION

A report on higher education among Catholics, relatively to the intellectual life of the country, is a great desideratum. It would reveal the need of greater efforts to raise our intellectual standards. Centralization in education is the trend of the day and seems due to the needs of the situation. What will be the outcome? How will Catholic interests be affected? There is no question at present on which light is more earnestly desired. It is indeed, the most pressing of problems, the one on which we can least afford to delay. I beg you to have a careful treatment of this subject prepared and submitted to the judgment of the most expert. A less pressing but even more important matter is the systematization of our own educational forces. There is great waste through lack of co-ordination. Do we not need more of system? Will not the very trend of our national life force us to study and overhaul our own educational structure?

7. CATHOLIC LITERATURE

We are not a literary Church, for our busy ministry has left little leisure for literary pursuits. Nevertheless our ministry would be greatly facilitated by the production and spread of good books and pamphlets. As a matter of fact, it is greatly hampered now by lack of literature on the most common topics of the day, which would enlighten inquirers or strengthen the faith and deepen the piety of our own people. It has been suggested that a literary bureau, under the patronage of the Hierarchy, could easily secure writers to give us what is lacking. Is this feasible? Certainly there is a great deal of literary talent among us

which a little stimulation would rouse to a very useful activity.

The various Catholic Truth Societies of the country might co-operate with greater effect, and be stirred to more productivity. It would be easy to suggest many useful pamphlets that should be written. A greater circulation of those already in existence is desirable. A Catholic library bureau would greatly aid both these projects.

Such a bureau could also enlist the services of able writers in preparing articles on Catholic subjects for the secular papers and magazines. It frequently happens that an attack more or less open is made on the Church in the secular magazines or papers. An answer is immediately forthcoming in our Catholic press. But who reads it? It reaches a limited number of our own people, but is unheard of by the world of non-Catholics who have read the attack in the secular press. Moreover, I submit that we should not forever continue to place ourselves in a merely apologetic, excusing, or defensive attitude. While not being offensively aggressive, should we not endeavor occasionally to secure a sympathetic hearing from our separated and estranged brethren by articles calculated to inform the non-Catholic public on Catholic teaching, practices, and endeavors? The world outside the Church is not maliciously antagonistic to us. Its opposition is due to misconceptions of the Church and her ambitions. We need to reach the non-Catholic world, and the most effective means by which it can be reached is the secular press.

8. THE CATHOLIC PRESS

The children of the world are wiser in their way than the children of light. Certainly, there is no comparison between the secular and the religious press, as regards the interest of the reading matter which each provides. The Catholic press has begun to imitate the secular press with its central news associations and bureaus for syndicated articles. Such associations and bureaus could raise the tone and heighten the interest of our weeklies. Up to the present time, the Hierarchy has taken no concerted action on behalf of the Catholic press. In view of the immense influence for good which a popular press could have on our people, it is worthy of inquiry whether we cannot come to its aid.

9. LEGISLATION

There are many signs of increasing hostility to the Church and of a desire to translate this hostility into legislation, whether national or State. We have hardly had any policy at all in regard to such matters and frequently have only realized the intentions of our enemies when the hostile laws were already enacted. The very success and growing success of the Church will make our enemies double their hatred and their cunning. Most of the legislation enacted in the past, ever, is passed without any thought of injuring us. What means should we take to know proposed measures of legislation and to prevent, if possible, what is harmful? If we take any step in this direction, although all Protestant churches have representatives in Washington as all interests have, except ourselves, the cry will be raised that the Church is in politics; but that cry has been heard all our lives and in all generations back to the Sanhedrin that condemned Christ. It is a matter, however, which we must carefully consider and upon which the Hierarchy will desire a report.

10. CATHOLIC BUREAU

It is evident, at any rate, that the General Committee on Catholic Interests and Affairs will need headquarters and clerical assistance; otherwise it would be unable to realize the purpose of its creation. Steps should be taken before long to establish such a bureau.

11. FINANCES

Evidently, too, the plan of action which I have outlined postulates a generous financial support. Our expenses, however, in the campaign for funds during the last two years should make us realize, as we have never done before, our possibilities. I am bound to say, however, that I have not yet attained the confidence of some members of the Hierarchy in our ability to raise millions. At our meeting one distinguished Archbishop suggested raising a million dollars for the Holy Father. Another Bishop suggests four millions annually for all Catholic purposes, and still another would set the mark at five millions. I am sure at any rate, dear Bishops, that the Hierarchy would welcome the judgment which your own experience in the United War Work campaign would lead you to form.

The foregoing plan, I must admit, is a very comprehensive one and furnishes almost enough matter of thought for a Plenary Council. It is a plan that perhaps cannot soon be realized in all its scope, yet I have thought it worth while to sketch the outline in full. Some of the ideas may be realized soon and others may be seen now which will sprout and bear fruit only after many years. I rely on your excellent practical judgment to select for our program the most urgent matters and the most promising ideas, and I trust that when the Hierarchy meets next our General Committee on Catholic Interests and Affairs will be able to present a workable plan of important things that ought soon to be accomplished.

I remain, my dear Bishops, Faithfully yours in Christ, J. CARDINAL GIBBONS, Chairman.

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WINDOWS ALIGHT IN CONNAUGHT

We had had a crowded ten days of it, Ex-Governor Dunne of Illinois, Mr. M. J. Ryan and I, and I rather think we had all come to the conclusion that the possibilities of emotion had been exhausted. And then, one evening near the end of our visit, our train, en route for Galway, pulled out of Athlone just as the long Irish twilight merged into darkness. Suddenly we saw a bonfire at a little distance from the train, then another and another, and yet others. Then we noticed that all along the way every house had a light in one window. We noticed, too, that where the train crossed a road there were torches, sometimes two or three, sometimes a dozen. At the stations there were crowds with torches. And always the light shining in the window. So it continued across the breadth of Connaught until we came to Galway town, well past midnight, where great numbers met us. We had all of us tried to grasp the meaning of that silent welcome, and to understand what was in the hearts of the Connaught people when they lit the fires on the hill-sides as we Americans bearing a message of hope passed by. Surely it only could have been meant to convey to us that the sacred fire was still burning in the hearts of the people after all these thousand years of darkness, to assure us that aspirations inextinguishable were ready to burst into flame. "A thousand years are as yesterday."

I think we had, at an earlier moment, some promotion of the feeling to be awakened in us by the lights in the windows in Connaught. It was at the meeting of the Dail Eireann specially called to receive us. I have had a good deal of experience of elected legislative bodies in my time, and I am proud to say I have never been in the presence of a body whose membership impressed me more highly. My colleague, Mr. Ryan, in the eloquent speech of the morning, insisted that a very happy comparison between this National Assembly of Ireland and the Congress of the American Colonies which declared the independence of the United States. In point of personal qualities, capacity for leadership, sublimated patriotism, eloquence, prudence and application to the business in hand, the Irish body has nothing to suffer from comparison. And the proceedings of the Assembly, except during that part which was devoted to our reception, were conducted in the Irish language. It will probably take us some time yet to realize the full significance of this astonishing fact. But something of that significance was revealed in the course of the week that followed, for I noticed that everywhere we went we were presented in Irish, and that the people seemed to understand. We used to come upon groups of small children, who were called in Irish. We saw for ourselves that the young children from families of culture and comfort were being sent to Donegal because there they would hear nothing but Irish. Brief as was our stay, there was no mistaking the intimacy of the relation between this spread of the old Irish culture and the outpouring of the old Irish spirit. We met in Dublin a delightful raconteur, who explained to us how impossible the position had become. "If you walk unobtrusively in the streets you are arrested for being drunk; if you walk upright and steadily, you are arrested for drilling." And I must say I am not surprised at the mystification which this comment revealed. In Cork we were followed by a long procession, probably 3,000 men, all so far as could be seen, just plain civilians forming part of an ordinary street crowd. Suddenly one of my colleagues in the carriage with me said: "Listen," and I listened. The street crowd was walking absolutely in step, the clack, clack, clack, in perfect marching time, resounding from the pavement. Not a man of the 3,000 could have been arrested for anything—but drilling. And this is going on all over. The Irish nation is undergoing voluntary military discipline.

In such circumstances it becomes a matter of the highest importance to estimate the quality of the national leadership. I would not like to exaggerate, but I do think that Mr. De Valera revealed in the course of my intercourse with him, the possession of the attributes of leadership in as high a degree as I have found them in any public man of my time. Of his associates, and those whom I had the best opportunity to study were Mr. Griffith and Mr. Brugha, (Burgess as he was before he went back to the Irish form) I cannot imagine better or more efficient

support than that which they give their leader. There are others, now numbered by hundreds, of such amazing activity and such keen intelligence that I do not see how anyone who seeks to impose upon Ireland a government from outside can hope to succeed while they are there. And back of these are the people. In one of our motor trips we had to stop for a meal in Dundalk. Within half an hour there gathered a larger audience demanding speeches than I had ever seen except in New York, in a presidential campaign, with a candidate billed to speak. A few hours later, when we were, we supposed, to drive quietly through Drogheda, the streets were quite impassable for people. Everywhere it was manifest that the confidence in Mr. De Valera was of an order which men yielded to genuine leadership only. The foreign Government knows with what they have to count. The police often are not bad fellows, and they are always good fellows, and they are always ready to confront. Not once, but many times we learned that, realizing their helplessness, they appealed to the local Irish leaders not to let anything untoward happen for which they, of course, would be punished. They were always accommodated. A still more striking manifestation was given at the end of the Mansion House episode. When things looked threatening, and it was decided to remove the troops that had been sent there to bar our way, Mr. De Valera was requested to ask the crowd to keep order. He did so, and actually cleared a passage through which the troops could march quietly of the scene. Among what might be called his remoter lieutenants there is a spirit of daring that strikes one as amazing. Half an hour after the soldiers were gone, the three men for whom they had been looking for hours were moving about in front of the Mansion House, shaking hands with hundreds of their friends. Surely such things can only happen where one people try to govern another and find the task inherently impossible.

There is another side to the picture. We had the rare good fortune to meet with Irish men and women in their lighter hours. They know and practice the graces of life. For two hours I have listened to parlor talk which has not once sunk to the inanities of gossip about neighbors, chatter about clothes, or comment on the doings of servants. Never an unkind word, never a word that is courteous, considerate, complimentary upon all manner of interests and events, during which time flies all too quickly. In this field men and women are alike. It is going to mean a great deal to Ireland to have the women vote as well as the men.

There was a surprise for me in another quarter. I thought I knew something about the labor movement, and I am still rather bewildered that I met in Ireland the three most interesting men in this branch of social endeavor I have ever seen.

We derived great satisfaction, I need hardly add, from our interviews with Cardinal Legue, Archbishop Walsh, Harly and Gilmartin, Bishops Fogarty, MacRory and others of the episcopal and priestly leaders of Ireland. Exultation there may be and is amongst the youth of Ireland in presence of—as they have been taught, especially from our country—the accomplishment of their country's destiny. But let it not be thought, at least we can never think so, after what we have seen with our eyes, that the qualities of mature judgment and sober vision which church produces such spiritual leadership of the quality now present.

Of minor incidents of the visit there were so many that memory cannot group them. But I find myself thinking of the day there was handed us at Castlebar a souvenir of the coming of the French. There was a priest there who had tried to calm the young people. The French came, and went, and afterwards the priest was hanged from a tree. Wood from that tree brought by a charming old lady is included in the memento to our visit. And at another station, after one of those meetings of which each day witnessed an interminable procession, another old lady gave us, all bound round in woolen strains of orange and white and green, a nosegay in which were a bit of shamrock with roots still in the turf, a sprig of forget-me-not, and some blooms of primrose; primrose, I believe, for hope.—Frank P. Walsh, Irish-American Delegate to the Peace Conference, in America.

HAWTHORNE ENVIED US

"I have always envied Catholics their faith in that sweet, sacred Virgin Mother, who stands between them and the Devil, intercepting somewhat of His awful splendor, and permitting His love to stream upon the worshipper more intelligibly to human comprehension through the medium of a woman's tenderness."—Nathaniel Hawthorne. This attempt to explain Catholic devotion to the Mother of God shows the sympathetic attitude of Hawthorne, whose daughter, Mrs. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, afterwards entered the Church, and in her widowhood joined the Dominican Order. Mother Alphonsa Lathrop, O. S. D., founded the Servants of Relief, and two free cancer hospitals, one in New York City and one at Rosary Hill, Hawthorne, N. Y.—Honor Walsh, in Catholic Standard and Times.

We never regret kind acts, but often grieve over unkind and unloving ones, when friends who have passed away can feel our love no more.

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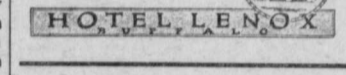
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