

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, NOV. 2, 1918

GO TO COMMUNION FOR ME AGAIN AND AGAIN—FOCH

Amongst the distinguished representatives of many nations, gathered in Baltimore to do honor to America's great Cardinal on the occasion of the golden jubilee of his episcopal consecration not the least notable was Monsignor Arthur Stapleton Barnes, M. A., Chaplain to the Catholics at England's famous seat of learning, the University of Cambridge.

Leaving the Army while still a young man he studied for the Anglican ministry and filled several important positions in the Established Church. Received into the Catholic Church by Cardinal Merry del Val in 1895 he studied in Rome and was ordained priest in 1898. He is the author of several scholarly works. So much for the man; now for his message.

Monsignor Barnes earnestly urged Cardinal Gibbons to appeal to the Catholic children of America to receive Communion for the intention of Marshal Foch and he told how the English Catholic children had done this when the dark clouds of doubt and danger lowered menacingly over England, France and the Allied cause. General Foch himself is a devout Catholic and daily, when a church is within reach, he spends a quiet hour in humble supplication before the Blessed Sacrament. When told of the Communion of the English children the Generalissimo of all the Allied armies wrote as follows to Monsignor Barnes:

"The act of faith which the children of Great Britain have made for my intention has profoundly touched me. Please express my gratitude to them and beg them to continue their prayers for the victory of our just cause."

That was the time, he it remembered, when things looked darkest. It was hard to suppress the growing conviction that Foch had failed. Envy and malice rejoiced even in France. For the Catholic Foch had enemies and malicious enemies in France. Only a dozen short years ago an anti-clerical Government spied upon military officers and black-listed those who sent their children to convent schools or allowed their wives to practice their religion. When Clemenceau, a nobler type of anti-clerical and a patriotic Frenchman who loved France, named the future Commander-in-Chief to the Ecole de Guerre, in 1906, Foch himself thought the appointment impossible. "You cannot know," he said to the Premier, "that not only my wife and daughters are Catholics but I am a practising Catholic myself, and my brother is a Jesuit priest." Astute politician that he was Clemenceau knew the possible consequences but he had the moral courage and the patriotism to do what he conceived to be in the best interests of France. Foch went to the Ecole de Guerre where he trained in military science the officers now serving under him; Clemenceau is Premier of France; and ex-Premier Caillaux, the anti-clerical political boss of France, is in prison awaiting trial for life on charges of high treason.

Yes, when General Foch, profoundly touched by the English children's act of faith, wrote to Monsignor Barnes, the times were dark and dangerous; and not the least danger was that enemies of his own household should succeed in discrediting and displacing Marshal Foch. He had not been given supreme command until England and France were on the jagged edge of the abyss. He could not work miracles; he would not be hurried into disaster by panic-stricken opinion; he was true to himself and was guided only

by his own military knowledge and experience. He bided his time and now his military genius and achievement will brighten forever the pages of history.

In this hour of his great triumph when the temptation to pride for lesser men might be irresistible General Foch, with faith as simple as a child's, as strong as St. Paul's, in touching humility writes again to Mgr. Barnes:

"I am still depending on the prayers of the children. Ask them to go to Communion for me again and again."

And this suggested another situation.

It was with a thrill of pride and a glow of the most heartfelt satisfaction that Catholics everywhere in Canada read the marvellously consoling letter which His Lordship Bishop Fallon wrote to all the Catholic papers describing the establishment and promotion of the Holy Name Society in the Canadian Corps in France. That letter should be distributed in hundreds of thousands. No one can read it without becoming a better member of the Holy Name Society and no member of the Holy Name Society but should read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it. What is eminently a matter for legitimate pride and congratulation is the unreserved approval and hearty co-operation of all the leading Canadian officers, including General Sir Arthur Currie himself in the establishment and promotion of the Holy Name Society amongst the Canadian troops, Catholic and Protestant. There is not a sentence not worthy of quotation. From the Special Brigade Order of Brigadier General Macbrien inviting all to study the Holy Name leaflet we take the following paragraphs:

"The object in calling this matter to the attention of the Brigade is to emphasize the importance of refraining from blasphemy and vile or indecent language, and to point out that there is a great necessity for the prayers of all that our cause may be victorious. Even the best soldiers gain strength from, and are better for, prayer."

"The object is to form a Society which, when formed, will be composed of thinking men who realize that morale is as vital to the success of an Army as proficiency in arms and plentiful munitions, and further that morale in its best sense, cannot be separated from religion."

So far as religious sentiment and orthodoxy are concerned, there is no Catholic who will not be in soul-felt agreement with what is here written by the reverent-minded Protestant soldier.

Speaking of the devout Catholic General Foch, Bishop Fallon's letter revealing the sturdy Christian faith of our own Canadian officers, Protestant though most of them be, came insistently to mind. And not without reason, for the religious sentiment of these Canadian officers are intimately related to that revealed by General Foch in his request for the children's Communion. Days of intercession set apart by the nations at war, the mid-day minute consecrated to silent prayer daily by the American Red Cross chapters, the exhortations to prayer and humility by some of the Protestant ministers, are all evidences of that spirit which Catholics must rejoice to see animating the people especially at the present time.

Prayer, as the Catechism teaches, is primarily and above all the elevation of the soul to God, to praise Him, to bless His holy name, to thank Him for all His benefits; prayer is union with God, the source of all strength and power and force. And Holy Communion is the elevation of the soul to God and union with Him when the God-man under the sacred species stoops down to us and gives Himself to be the very food of our souls. Holy Communion is the highest form of prayer. There should not be a day when tens of thousands of Communion are not offered for the great cause which holds the world in the throes of unprecedented struggle. Let the children especially receive Communion for this intention. There is a touching humility in the belief that in their innocence and freedom from the stains of sin the prayers of the little ones for whom Jesus has an especial love will be heard before all others. But let Communion for this intention be not confined to the children. Let Catholics one and all throughout the world take each to himself or herself Marshal Foch's urgent invitation:

"Go to Communion for me again and again."

And at such times let us include in an especial manner the gallant Cana-

dian officers and men who acknowledge, in the words of General Macbrien,

"the great necessity for the prayers of all that our cause may be victorious. Even the best soldiers gain strength from and are better for prayer."

THE VICTORY LOAN AND THRIFT

Commenting on the Bishops' urgent request that Catholics subscribe as far as their means will allow to the Victory Loan we have already pointed out that that way lies the clear path of patriotic duty. This duty is, of course, incumbent on all Canadians; but, like the Bishops, we are chiefly concerned with its fulfilment by Catholics. And there is not a doubt in the world that conscientious fulfilment of civic and patriotic duties by Catholics not only helps materially to promote the general welfare but redounds to the credit and advantage of religion as well. "Fear God, honor the king." In this favored land of our nativity where a free people govern themselves the best safeguard of our rights is a loyal performance of our duties.

Some one has defined patriotism as enlightened self interest; and, despite the cynical perversion of the good and fairly obvious sense, in its best sense the definition is fundamentally true. Enlightened self-interest and sordid selfishness are poles apart. To enlightened self-interest religion addresses itself every time it appeals to the individual to save his own soul, so without further apology, self-interest may be taken as a worthy and appropriate motive for subscribing to the Victory Loan.

One of the lessons which the War has borne in on the most sluggish intelligence is that under the easy going conditions of peaceful prosperity there was, on this continent especially, enormous economic waste. Out of what was ordinarily consumed or wasted on this side of the ocean we were able last year to spare hundreds of millions of bushels of wheat or pounds of flour to feed the heroic armies and no less heroic civilian populations of our gallant Allies in Europe. We are familiar with such statements; we accept them with a more or less vague understanding but as a rule without grasping their tremendous import and significance. Indeed, judging from the not infrequent comments, there are many doubting Thomases who regard the food restrictions, whether compulsory or voluntary, as trivial and futile. Let us examine the question. If every family—not every individual of the population of Canada and the United States—if every family saved one single pound of flour each week there would be a weekly saving of 25,000,000 pounds, which in a year would amount to 1,300,000,000 pounds; the substitution of a pound a week of another cereal for wheat flour would double this enormous total. So with bacon and beef and coal; savings have been effected which have changed the course of history, for without them the War had been lost.

All this has a direct and important bearing on the question under consideration. From the magnitude of national results we realize the importance of individual effort. For the stupendous result of Canadian and American economy in food is but the sum-total of individual saving. What is true of food is true of everything else. We have learned in a way that kindles the imagination that marvelous old truth—old but ever new—that the mighty ocean is composed of drops of water. A deeper realization of this truth and its application to our lives spells happiness and prosperity for the individual, the family, and the nation.

Subscribing to the Victory Loan will, in many cases, compel the practice of those little economies which constitute the difference between self-respecting thrift leading to independence, and that loose and vulgar extravagance which verges on dishonesty and leads to shiftless incompetence.

Ease and self-indulgence are the entrance to the way of perdition. There is no truth more clearly taught by Jesus Christ; those who would be His disciples must take up their cross daily and follow Him. There is no truth more intimately woven into the ideals and practices, into the very life of His Church. In the natural order, too, there is no success, no progress without self-denial. God is the author of nature and of grace. His ways in the supernatural order are a light to our feet in the order of nature.

Thrift brings its own reward in this life; but inasmuch as it means self-denial it should commend itself

to Christians and Catholics for higher reasons; and it is intimately related to God-imposed duties, duties as children, as husbands, as wives, as fathers and mothers. This is self-evident. A little honest examination of conscience, however, might make many a Catholic father and mother blush when they utter the familiar excuse for shirking their duty, for instance, in the matter of the education of their children or of their decent equipment for the battle of life. "They can't afford it." The excuse as a matter of fact is quite true after fifteen or twenty years of slipshod extravagance; it would not be true after twenty years of thrift. Buy a Victory Bond for the boy or girl, the toddler, the baby, and learn that it is possible to provide decently for your children; that being demonstrated the good work will go on.

The times are upon us when not only as individuals or as members of families but as citizens thrift has become an imperative duty. Here self-interest in the narrower sense and patriotism merge into enlightened self-interest, individual and national.

For over four years there has been an utterly unprecedented destruction of the world's capital; we have grown familiar with figures which are beyond the reach of the average intelligence; far and away beyond any experience in human history. These figures represent the mountains of debt under which the nations will stagger when the War is over. The wealth of England invested in an utterly unprecedented destruction of the world's capital; we have grown familiar with figures which are beyond the reach of the average intelligence; far and away beyond any experience in human history. These figures represent the mountains of debt under which the nations will stagger when the War is over. The wealth of England invested in an utterly unprecedented destruction of the world's capital; we have grown familiar with figures which are beyond the reach of the average intelligence; far and away beyond any experience in human history. 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