

In spite of his fatigue, the doctor followed the Mass with attention and devotion, and before the period of thanksgiving came, he offered a double prayer—one for the life that had been saved and the other for the temptation to avoid duty which he had resisted.

It was after 6 o'clock when he finally reached home. He staggered from weakness and want of rest. He scarcely had time to undress before he collapsed. The room and the furniture danced about him, and then came darkness and oblivion.

When he opened his eyes he found his wife bending over him.

"Isn't it time to get up?" he asked.

She smiled wanly.

"You have been very sick, John, but it's all right now. Dr. Howard who left only a short while ago, says that it was a nervous collapse. He says that nature has supplied the remedy—perfect rest."

"How long have I been in bed, Mary?" he asked.

"Two days," she replied.

He laughed.

"And the world has been going around for forty-eight hours without my knowing anything about it?"

"Yes," she replied brightly. "And good things have been happening, too. You have been made chief consulting surgeon at the Good Samaritan hospital. Isn't that a promotion?"

"Yes," he nodded gravely, "a decided promotion."

"And besides that," she went on, "everybody is talking about your wonderful triumph in saving the life of Levering's little boy."

"Oh, that was nothing at all," he said absently.

"Yes, it was," she retorted, with wifely devotion; "it was a wonderful thing—an extraordinary triumph and you know it."

He was sitting up by this time, and he put his arm on her shoulder and looked into her eyes and, as he did so, he thought of how he had overcome his inclination to avoid that call of duty.

"Yes, Mary," he said, with infinite tenderness in his tones, "you are right. It was a great triumph."—Derry Journal.

## "ARMS AND THE MAN"

Modern languages are not unlike the currency of a country, which, when it has become defaced or mutilated, is called in, and new bills or coins are issued.

Now and then we find a new word coined in the mint of human language which expresses either a new idea, or mayhap an old one which hitherto has received little attention. The word is called new because it has been seldom employed in human speech. Such a word, indicative of an old, a very old idea, and yet new to many people, is now on the lips of every one. We find the schoolboy and his sister using it, we hear college students debating the thoughts and ideas which it expresses; men's clubs and women's societies employ it as a topic of discussion; the lecturer on his rostrum, the family in the home; men, women, and children, the old and the young, everywhere, are fast making this word better known and more firmly established in our language.

Have you not already surmised to what word I refer? Then turn to your daily and weekly papers; read their glaring headlines. Look into their magazines and glance at the essays, the poems, and the editorials which fill their pages. Open any one of the comic sheets which lie upon our news stands and what do we find? In each and all of them the same subject—a source of admiration and applause to one, a cause of fear and dread apprehension to another.

This much used word is "preparedness." Preparedness to meet and cope with, victoriously any enemy on land or on sea that may dare to assail our flag and country.

And so men, leaders among their fellows, plan and plot, labor and strive, discuss, debate and argue, in order either to persuade men to adopt their views of the need of greater preparedness, or to dissuade their hearers from too great anxiety to add to our means of self-protection by increasing our war munitions and our army and naval defenses.

But all agree, no matter what their view, that we ought to be prepared; that it is a thoughtless, careless nation whose citizens have no concern for preparedness.

Have we Catholics realized as yet that we ought to be particularly interested in this word and the thought which it expresses? Interested, because with us the idea is not a new one. It is a very old one. In all ages, and from the dawn of reason in each of our children, our holy Mother, the Church, has taught us to be prepared. To be prepared to fight the battles of life, not alone in defense of our country, but also and above all, in defense of our immortal souls. Preparedness has ever been her watchword and her motto as she sends forth her sons and daughters under the banner of Jesus Christ to withstand the onslaughts of Satan and his lieutenants, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

Do we Catholics clearly realize that the proper nourishing, growth, and safeguarding of that priceless treasure, our Faith, absolutely demands of us a preparedness? Our faith is truly a gift which the good God has given us, not because of any desert of our own, but simply by reason of His boundless goodness. This gift may be likened to a sweet and delicate flower which God has planted in the garden of our soul, and which He wishes us to nourish

and safeguard so that it may increase and wax strong, until it becomes sturdy and vigorous in the sight of God and man.

How are we to accomplish all this? Let me tell you briefly. First of all, through keeping alive within our souls the grace of God, by means of His holy Sacraments; secondly, by knowing our faith, not in a vague, blind and indifferent manner, but with a clearly defined, intelligent knowledge or perception, which will enable us to give to all men a reason and explanation of the belief which we possess.

Men read and study, they ponder and meditate, they make all manner of sacrifices and difficult researches in order to be the better prepared to protect their country and earthly interests from any forces that may endanger them.

Are there no enemies that may arise against our Church and Faith?—for the one term includes the other. Is our faith with its eternal interests of less importance than our earthly concerns and possessions? Should we sit idly by and live our days wholly unconcerned as to our preparedness to meet our soul's most deadly enemies? And is it not beyond all cavil that such enemies are legion? And they are preparing, working, striving, now openly, again covertly, but always with the self-same end in view,—to rob us of our inheritance.

To do this they read and study, they write lengthy treatises, they use that modern disseminator of information, the printing press, to flood the reading world with a literature, which the one aim and purpose is to do away with those beliefs and sacred dogmas taught and held by holy Church and claimed by us to be our most valued treasures.

What, again I ask, are we doing to prepare ourselves and the rising generation to meet and overcome the dangers which are thus surging against us? Do we know our Catholic books, newspapers, and magazines? Or, are we compromisers of our Faith because of the lack of knowledge which could so easily be obtained? Do we encourage, and when needed, oblige our children to attend the Sunday-school and other Catholic schools where they may obtain proper instruction? What kind of books and reading matter do we allow in their possession?

All these are thoughts and questions we may well consider at this time when the watchword of the hour is preparedness. Yes, we all want a proper and sufficient preparedness for our country, but let us Catholics learn well and ever bear in mind that the Faith which is ours also demands and must have of us, as loyal sons and daughters of Holy Church, a holy and wise and ever vigilant preparedness.—S. S. in Sacred Heart Review.

## GENERAL INTENTION FOR MARCH

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

THE RELIGIOUS WELFARE OF OUR SOLDIERS

We shall have to wait till long after this war is over before we can see things in their true perspective. So many interests are in conflict; we are so prone to be carried away by our personal views and prejudices; so much is said, so frequently clouded our judgment, that years may elapse before a sane verdict can be passed on the events that are now taking place in Europe. But there are some matters connected with the war that are not so elusive and about which no reasonable mind can have two opinions. One of these, the one we are to keep in mind this month, is the influence the war is having on the lives of the soldiers. It is certain that being brought in the souls of thousands of men who are living like rabbits in their burrows in France and elsewhere. Wholesale conversions to the faith and to better lives are being recorded from the trenches and hospitals; men who neither knew God before the war, nor feared Him, have been turning to Him in the past eighteen months; and one has only to read the letters and despatches from the front published in the European newspapers, to be convinced that, in permitting this awful havoc, God has His own designs. Men may run counter to His plans as much as they please; but just when they think they have succeeded in overturning them, they learn what little use there is in opposing One Who is wiser and stronger and more far-seeing than they.

One instance of the folly of such men will suffice. Some years ago the Government of France, influenced by elements hostile to the Catholic Church, banished her priests from the Republic, reduced them to practical servitude, or least muzzled them so completely that their influence was practically gone. Religious teachers were driven from their schools, and a couple of generations of children—and this meant millions—were forced to grow up ignorant of their obligations to their Maker. And what was particularly distressing was that all this was done with premeditation, and in violation of the Church's well-known laws. The object the French Government had in view in promulgating the Law of 1889 was to drive God out of the hearts of Frenchmen, and in this it succeeded nearly too well. Millions

in France no longer felt the need of God, they lived as if there were, no God, and the intention of the legislators was that this state of affairs should continue. Laws were made to stem the tide of vocations to the priesthood, so that should Frenchmen desire later to turn to the practice of religion, there should be no one to teach it to them. All that atheistic skill could do was done to turn away from the Church a nation which had been its "eldest daughter," and with which its best and truest traditions had for centuries been inextricably linked. But just when the infidel French Government thought that it had attained its end, the present war came to upset its nefarious work. The very legislation passed by it to banish the Catholic clergy from its territory and to crush out vocations, by obliging candidates for the priesthood to do military service, recoiled upon it to its own confusion, served to augment the Church's power and influence, and unwittingly helped the cause of God. There are now twenty-thousand priests and seminarians, exclusive of military chaplains, in the French army working among the wounded in the trenches and at the hospital bases, bringing poor French soldiers back to the Church and preparing those who die to meet their Supreme Judge.

The other Powers at war have also felt obliged to consider the wants of the souls of their soldiers. The German and Austrian Governments have always had, even in time of peace, thoroughly organized departments devoted to the spiritual welfare of their men; needless to dwell on the efficiency of this service on the battlefields at the present time. The Italian army numbers, according to latest reports, from 17,000 to 19,000 members of the clergy; in its ranks, the British army on the continent is supplied with active and zealous chaplains; the Australian and Canadian contingents have theirs. In a word, so well has the Catholic Church supplied all the belligerents in the present war with spiritual aid that the envy of the other denominations has been excited. This should not surprise us. With their definite doctrines and the lack of positive methods for the souls, the promoters of the various forms of "Protestantism" could hardly hope to gain the confidence of men living and fighting in the presence of death, and who at that moment, above all moments, want the wheat and not the chaff. What soldiers dying on the battlefield look for is the strengthening action of the Catholic Church and her sacraments, with the graces and supreme consolations they bestow; and we can learn from letters from the front that many a man has already shown that he appreciated the sentiments of the Reformer who, as far back as the sixteenth century, asserted that, while Protestantism is an easy religion to live in, the Catholic religion is the easier one to die in.

The conduct of the Catholics and their priests in the trenches has impressed their fellow-soldiers of the other denominations so vividly that they could not help giving their impressions about it. A French Protestant, writing in the *Journal de Genève*, thus recognizes the excellent attitude of the soldier-priests: "They give good example to all; they never preach, they merely act; they inspire a deference that is unbounded; they do not fear death, because they are always in a fit state to die." "It is a pity," writes an officer, "that the Church of England cannot take a leaf out of the book of the Roman Church. In my last billet we had not been in it three days when the Roman priest came and asked what men in my company were Catholics. I gave him every facility to visit them, and I have given the men every facility to go to Mass. When I think of these Roman priests, ill-paid, ill-fed, poorly clad, going about there carrying out their Master's command, 'Preach the Gospel to every creature,' I wonder how the priests of the English church dare to be so self-satisfied." Another, commenting on the conduct of a Catholic chaplain in the Dardanelles: "Here, as usual, the Church of Rome reaps the fruit of her clear, dogmatic teaching. Roman Catholics can understand and admire their priest who, at the Lancashire landing, being wounded four times before ever he set foot on land, continued ministering to the dying till his head was blown off. And an Anglican chaplain, in his turn, gives testimony to the piety of the Catholic soldiers: 'A Roman Catholic soldier knows at once what to do; he asks you to get him a priest; he wants his Communion or to make his confession. He knows the Gospel of Christ; he understands about repentance, about grace, about the presence of the unseen army of saints and angels. Our poor Tommy, not from any fault of his own, but from the neglect, is quite unconscious of most of this reality.' The churches here are crammed day by day with Roman Catholics. They find time to pray, to make their confessions and Communions. Why not we?"

To Catholics all this is obvious; but beneath it all it is also obvious that God has His own designs. It is morally certain that there are numbers of the slain who have saved their souls, who would never have seen the face of God had they not participated in this war and witnessed its horrors. The presence of the dying everywhere around him, their wounds, their struggles, their agonies, must leave a vivid impression on the most callous soldier, and

the imminence of his own death in actual battle must suffice to show him how quickly he too may pass away, how small a thing he is in this Universe. "Being under shell fire," writes one soldier, "is an alarming thing, and if it does not stir up a heavy thrill within you, then you must be a dumb animal that cannot understand a thing that is going on around it." Look into the sky above you," writes another, "you feel hopeless; all around you the air is filled with the growing whine; it may burst in the end near you; it's that the case you won't hear the burst in all likelihood; the light will go out and you won't know what hit you." These are the critical moments that come to a man in the trenches. For the first time in his life perhaps, he sees eternity yawning before him: he has to make a radical decision; an act of faith, or hope, or love, or sorrow for the past, springs from his heart, awaiting its formula in living words. He yields to the inspiration, and utters some-thing that God certainly understands; this is the beginning of a poor soldier's conversion. And if unhappily a stray bit of shrapnel reaches him in a vital spot, and he feels that the supreme call has come at last for him, what more natural than to ask the chaplain near by to give him the benefit of his ministry? This spontaneous act means grace for the dying man; after its death it means salvation. Realize like these may not justify the war, but for all eternity the men who found their faith in God in the trenches and who died professing it, will thank Him for having permitted this conflagration. Those who survive the horrors of the present struggle, and they are going to be the greater number, will hardly ever be the same men again. Death and all that death means came too close to them not to have left on them life-long impressions. They may take occasion to boast of their feats on the battlefield, or to show their medals won in brilliant actions; but they will be indulging in mere surface talk; their experiences of the terrible war will always be before them, and deep down in their hearts they will be able to gauge the true value of the presence of these considerations one can see the Providence of God permitting ambitious rulers to try to accomplish their designs in order that He, in His turn, may the more easily accomplish His own, and thus draw good out of evil. War is undoubtedly a dreadful thing; it paralyzes civilization, brings tears and sorrow into millions of homes, wastes energies that should be used to make this world a better place to live in; but there is a greater evil than war, and that is the loss of souls redeemed by the Blood of Christ. To work for souls on the battlefield, therefore, is one of the noblest and highest duties that men could be engaged in at the present time, and it is a consolation to know that our Catholic chaplains and soldier-priests are doing their duty in the trenches and at the hospital bases. Several have already given up their lives in the accomplishment of their duty; the unflagging zeal and fatigue and dangers of those who remain is an inspiration to Catholics at home. All honor, then, to those worthy men who have been doing their share during the past eighteen months to keep up our traditions, to uphold the cause of the Cross and the honor of the Catholic Church. Obeying the wish of the Holy Father we can do nothing better during the present time than to assist them with our prayers so that they may be able to do their arduous work may be doubled; the Church will feel the effects for years to come. And let our members not forget to pray for those thousands who have already died in the present war. They have given up all in a cause they believed to be just; their patriotism is a brand of virtue that will undoubtedly be recognized by God. If war brings men closer to Him and makes them better Catholics, who will dare say that God is not drawing a great good out of this great evil?

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE WAR

### HEROISM OF PRIESTS AND NUNS

"The Priest on the Battlefield" is an Australian Catholic Truth Society's publication, written by the Rev. Father W. J. Lockington, S. J., and in the first chapter the author very truly points out that one of the most striking features of the present stupendous war is the changed attitude of the world towards the Catholic priest and his practice of his religion. No longer sneered at, religion is recognized as the foundation of the highest form of courage, enabling men to attain sublime heights of selfless bravery. On every side, says Father Lockington, men have turned in reverence to God—Russian, and Austrian, Belgian and German, French and English—and this is especially true of the children of Mother Church. And can it be wondered at that the Catholic soldier, in his piety and devotion, as well as in his heroism under fire, and his attachment to his soldierly duties, stand out above all denominations. It is not only that the Church of the Ages is the guardian of the whole Truth of God and the dispenser of His miraculous Sacramental gifts to mankind, and that the Catholic warrior has a spiritual strength and inspiration that belong to none other. He has, as well,

the example of a priesthood that in this hour of trial and crisis has truly won the wonder and the admiration of the civilized world. After seeing the Belgian priests in the firing line, an Irish soldier, who was a Protestant, declared: "Their religion is the religion for me, and I have put down my name as a Catholic." And he is not the only one who has put down his name, for we are told that conversions on the battle field are numbered by thousands. A French Protestant, writing of the strong revival of religious feeling in France, declares that "one of the elements of this reawakening is the presence in large numbers and the priests with the colors. And this is not without reckoning the deaths of priests as martyrs in their blood-stained cassocks." More testimony that priest-hood are everywhere comes from a correspondent of an English newspaper. He writes: "On the battle edge . . . a dying man . . . kneeling by a dying man, was a priest, holding one of his hands and administering Extreme Unction. On the very edge of every battle field I have seen these ministers of God. They move about throughout the fighting, calm and fearless, ready to help the doctors, or comfort the last moments of dying soldiers." We could go on quoting for a long time, without exhausting half the splendid testimonies which Father Lockington has collected, of how, in the trenches to-day, the priest stands by his people, a splendid figure, holding the Key of Eternity.

And, as a matter of course, the nurse, magnificent in civil life where- ever sickness or distress cry for succor, are not behind the priests for courage and helpfulness in the bloody zone of war. The story of Sister Julie is a classic, but, thank God, there are thousands of Sister Julies among these glorious daughters of Mother Church. Ever since the war began, correspondents have been chronicling their bravery under fire, their pluck in their burning convents, their work in the hospitals, and in the field, and their devotion, under the most trying circumstances, to the orphans and old folk dependent on them. Just as they have moved among the lepers of Molokai and Japan, or have risked death among the head-hunters of Papua and the South Sea Islands, so now bursting bomb and shrieking shell fall to keep them from their chosen path of duty. Decorated by President, Kaiser and King to-day, the war drove them from the cloister to carry on a mission that the non-Catholic world is compelled to contemplate with awe and reverence.

Catholics need not ask the secret of this sublime heroism and self-sacrifice of priest and nun. But we may ask ourselves: what does it mean to the civilized world? When the war is over, may we not expect to see the Church triumphant again in the nations that have wandered so far from God? Catholic priests and nuns on the battle field are not only bringing strangers into the True Fold; they are winning back the erring children of the Church in great battalions; they are even awakening the consciences of nations which have been sleeping through many unhappy years. May we not hope for a truly Catholic France? For we do not expect a revived Italy, so far as Catholicity is concerned? May we not see England rapidly returning to her ancient faith? In Germany and in Austria Catholicity must come out of the flame of war purer and stronger. Aye, in every Christian country we will see the Church more glorious than she was before the greatest war in history. Suffering cleanses the soul, and clean souls cannot contemplate the faith, the favor, the self-sacrifice and the serene fearlessness of our priests and nuns on the battle field, without seeing the Church with clearer eyes, without losing old prejudices, and without wishing to have that certainty which our Church holds out to her children.—Truth.

### A CHAPEL IN A TREE

There are many famous shrines dedicated to the mother of God, but few more ancient or more curious than the Chapel of Our Lady of Peace, in Alonville, Normandy. To those who are familiar with it and its history, an account of the same will be of more than passing interest. An oak under which the Druids offered their heathen rites, paying actually divine honors to it; a tree consecrated by the earliest apostles of Gaul to Jesus and Mary; a tree beneath whose shade William the Conqueror's Norman host before he led them to the conquest of England; a tree under which the returning warriors of the first Crusade told wondering crowds the story of their strange adventures in the Morning Land; a tree which time hallowed to form a crypt for a chapel in honor of Mary it still stands, revered by all hearts as their dearest monument. This venerable tree, the last of the chapel trees, is thirty-five feet round the trunk, and in spite of its centuries, each spring still robes it in green. The statue of Mary had dedicated it to her, so when ages ago time hollowed it out, and the people lined the hollow trunk with white marble and set up within this crypt an altar surrounded by a beautiful Madonna. A fight of stairs leads up to it; and above, amidst its still brilliant foliage, towers an iron cross.—Pittsburg Observer.



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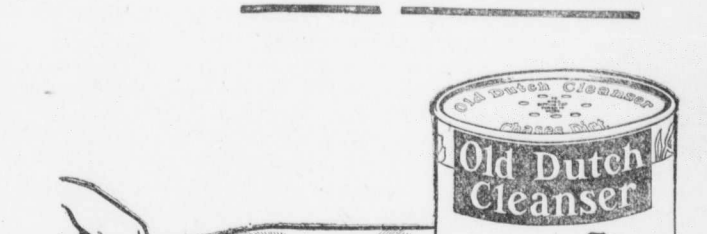
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