

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE NEW YEAR

The New Year is knocking at the door. It is about to enter. It brings its 365 days in a long array, to provide time for us.

What will young men do with 1917? Many of them have vague dreams, dim visions, of greatness—of wealth attained, of wonderful achievements, of vast power, of singular accomplishments, of wide reputation, of eternal fame. Let dreamers dream, but see this as a fact proven all around you, that as a man is to-day and is inclined to be so he is likely to become in the future years of his life.

To the rare exception is there an unusual fate. Most men follow the beaten path and have an ordinary lot. Life for most of us means a monotonous round of commonplace duties—eating, working, sleeping—ending in death.

What then? Is life uninteresting? Is life not worth while? Is it dull? Think of the end, the object, the purpose of it. We are here to get ready for heaven. We are not fit to live here now. We'd be out of place. We'd feel ill at ease there. We need to get rid of our baseness, of our selfishness, of our spiritual weakness. We need to know God and to love Him. We need His grace. We need holiness, purity, love, generosity and all the other virtues.

Is it trivial to have such a glorious destiny—an eternity with God in the court of heaven?

Is it trivial that the ordinary duties and the little trials of every-day life can help us to reach that perfection? Is it dull, this life that we lead in the sight of God, and in the unseen but not unfelt presence of the holy angels?

Is it low, poor, mean, base, uninteresting to be called to be saints and to be invited to be the chosen brethren of Jesus Christ?

If we put a divine motive back of our life and live it to God's will for us in it, we ennoble it and every part of it. Every moment of it becomes infinitely precious. Every act, performed from that motive, becomes divine and is freighted with everlasting merit that will have an eternal reward.

To live for Christ, with Christ, and by Christ, is not that a noble career, and a royal destiny? This is not a sermon. This is not idle talk. This is not visionary enthusiasm. This is a plain statement of a fact—that every Catholic young man can save his soul and get to heaven, if he will, and that that opportunity of sanctification and salvation is a destiny beyond the wilder fancies of dreamers of dreams of riches and rank and reputation in this world.

The way to holiness is straight and easy. Do your duty. Do the duty of every day thoroughly and for Christ's sake. Avoid sin. Do good. Practice virtue. Exercise the will in doing what is right, against the inclinations of the flesh, the seductions of the world, and the temptations of the devil. Practice self-denial. Pray often—an inspiration of the heart, a thought to Heaven, an exclamation of adoration and admiration of the Almighty. Read a page of a good book every night. Receive the sacraments frequently.

And so, day by day, step by step, with no marvellous performances, no striking change of circumstance, no prominent employment, but with a steady, uncommotion, faithful, progressive, persistent advance in virtue, in will-power, in devotion to suffer, in love, and in grace, the whole year will be sanctified and a record will be made that will be pleasant to remember on the Day of Judgment.—Catholic Columbian.

THE TRUE CONCEPTION OF LIFE

At the opening of the new year, the true conception which ought to be brought home to everyone is that man, made to the image of God, should be constantly getting stature, wisdom, and expansion and increasing in the higher elements of personality. The faculties which man possesses, must be ever fashioned, and thus lead him to the top of his possibilities. The trouble is that most people stand and wait for some outside influence or influences to drag them up to larger life or higher sphere or greater privileges, without laboring to develop what lies latent and inactive within them. They will not take advantage of the divers happenings around them to bring out their mental and moral aptitudes and qualities. They pass through many phases of existence, positive, negative, and neutral, without suffering their true inwardness to be unfolded. The consequence is that when the higher is at hand or the possibility offers, they have not been fitted to accept the one or profit by the other. He is the choice and favored who, when the opportunities come, is able to rise to the emergency because he has seen to it that every fact and moment has been allowed to affect his mind and soul and to test and strengthen their fibre and hardihood which make him equal to the demands of new responsibilities.—Baltimore Catholic Review.

THE RULE OF THREE

Three things to govern—temper, tongue, conduct. Three things to love—courage, gentleness, affection.

Three things to hate—cruelty, arrogance, ingratitude. Three things to wish for—health, friends, a cheerful spirit. Three things to avoid—idleness, loquacity, flippant jesting. Three things to fight for—honor, country, home. Three things to think about—life, death, eternity.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

KING FOR A NIGHT

In France long ago it was the custom to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany—the arrival of the Three Kings at the crib at Bethlehem—with all the joys merry-making which we associate with the birthday of the Christ Child.

One cold evening, before this feast, when the great castles throughout France were resounding with merriment, a little child was making his way alone towards Paris.

Great flakes of snow were swirled about by glacial blasts of winds, and fell upon the dark locks of the little traveler whose hood had been blown back off his shoulders. His eyes were wide with terror for he imagined what he was and what he expected to be, silhouettes and shadows of the trees on each side of the road. The play of the wind through the creaking branches of the dead trees seemed to him like the murmur of mocking voices.

Suddenly he heard behind him the clatter of horses' hoofs, the noise of a blundering wagon, loud voices, and then, the sharp report of a gun. The forests of those days were filled with highwaymen. Filled with terror the child struck off through the woods, and ran through the underbrush for some hours. Trembling, and bleeding from the sharp twigs, he found himself at last before a building surmounted by a cross; light was pouring out of brilliantly stained windows.

The deep voices of monks were chanting "Hail King of the World!" The child tried to open the door, but he could not; he struck at it with his little fists but they did not hear him. Repeating an act of contrition, for he felt so frozen with the cold and so starving with hunger that he did not believe he could live much longer, he staggered on. At last succumbing to fatigue, he fell prostrate across a doorstep, and he heard, far away as in a dream, songs and joyful laughter.

On this night, the count of the chateau, upon the doorstep of which the boy fell, had assembled his household and friends from near and far, to celebrate, with more than ordinary pomp, the feast of the Epiphany. The banquet, with its boar's head, its small stuffed pigs, its wines and desserts, was over. Then the master of ceremonies arose, and bade every one stand up, to hear his royal command. He said:

"Lords and Ladies! This feast is opportunity of sanctification and salvation is a destiny beyond the wilder fancies of dreamers of dreams of riches and rank and reputation in this world. The way to holiness is straight and easy. Do your duty. Do the duty of every day thoroughly and for Christ's sake. Avoid sin. Do good. Practice virtue. Exercise the will in doing what is right, against the inclinations of the flesh, the seductions of the world, and the temptations of the devil. Practice self-denial. Pray often—an inspiration of the heart, a thought to Heaven, an exclamation of adoration and admiration of the Almighty. Read a page of a good book every night. Receive the sacraments frequently. And so, day by day, step by step, with no marvellous performances, no striking change of circumstance, no prominent employment, but with a steady, uncommotion, faithful, progressive, persistent advance in virtue, in will-power, in devotion to suffer, in love, and in grace, the whole year will be sanctified and a record will be made that will be pleasant to remember on the Day of Judgment.—Catholic Columbian.

At first the child seemed to understand nothing. Then as they warmed him with a glass of wine, his senses returned to him. With much reverence, the master of ceremonies approached him and bowing said:

"Sir, we are your faithful courtiers. This is your court." Then he kissed the boy's hand as he would have the king's. The boy could believe neither his eyes nor his ears. Then with much simulation of respect, the master asked the boy who he was and what he expected to be. "My name," answered the child bravely "is Jacques Amyot. I am nine years old. I was born at Melun of parents so poor that they could no longer feed me. And so I have begun to walk to Paris, so that I may study there. My parish priest has already taught me many things."

Overcome with the courage of the lad, and delighted with his straightforward answer, the master of ceremonies took his own large velvet purse and went among the company saying:

"Come, lords and ladies of high degree, give lavishly to the child who wishes to educate himself." A great sum was collected. After playing a little while with the small, tired "king" they put him in a great four poster bed hung with tapestry. Clutching his heavy purse he fell fast asleep. But the next day before dawn he was up, and out of the great chateau, and again on his way to Paris.

Using his money carefully, he educated himself; he went to the College of France, and afterwards became a teacher. Later he was made Bishop of Auxerre, but never could he forget the night when he had been the child "king."—St. Paul Bulletin.

We may impart information to one another but we must acquire knowledge by ourselves.

NEW YEAR

Each year cometh with all his days. Some are shadowed and some are bright; He beckons us on until he stays, Kneeling with us 'neath Christmas night.

Kneeling under the stars that gem The holy sky, o'er the humble place, When the world's sweet Child, of Bethlehem Rested on Mary, full of grace.

Not only the Bethlehem in the East, But altar Bethlehem everywhere, When the Gloria of the first great feast Sings forth its gladness on the air.

Each year seemeth loath to go, And leave the joys of Christmas day; In lands of sun and in lands of snow, The year still longs awhile to stay.

A little while, 'tis hard to part From this Christ blessed here below,

Old year! and in thy aged heart I hear thee sing so sweet and low.

I song like this, but sweeter far, And yet as if with a human tone, Under the blessed Christmas star, And Thou descendest from Thy throne.

"A few more days and I am gone, The hours move swift and sure along; Yet still I fain would linger on In hearing of the Christmas song."

"How to Him Who rules all years; Thrice blessed in His high behest; Nor will He blame me if, with tears, I pass to my eternal rest."

"Ah, me! to altars every day I brought the sun and the holy Mass; The people came by my light to pray, While countless priests did onward pass."

"The words of the Holy Thursday night To one another from east to west; And the holy Host on the altar white Would take its little half-hour's rest."

"And every minute of every hour The Mass bell rang with its sound so sweet, While from shrine to shrine, with tireless power, And heaven's love, walked the nailed feet."

"I brought the hours for Angelus bells, And from a thousand temple towers They wound their sweet and blessed spell Around the hearts of all the hours."

"Every day has a day of grace For those who fain would make them so: I saw o'er the world in every place The wings of guardian angels glow."

"Men! could you hear the song I sing— But no, alas! it cannot be so! My heir that comes would only bring Blessings to bless you here below."

Seven days passed; the gray, old year Calls to his throne the coming heir; Falls from his eyes the last, sad tear, And lo! there is gladness everywhere.

Singing, I hear the whole world sing, Afar, afar, aloud, and low: "What to us will the New Year bring?" Ah! would that each of us might know!

Is it not truth? as old as true? List ye, singers, the while ye sing! Each year bringeth to each of you What each of you will have him bring.

The year that cometh is a king, With better gifts than the old year gave; If you place on his fingers the holy ring Of prayer, the king becomes your slave.

—ADRIAM J. RYAN

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SOME "INSIDE" FACTS

The most reasonable thing in the world is the Catholic Church, because it has no unreasonable doctrines.

The Catholic Church does not now, never has, and never will teach one, single, solitary truth contrary to human reason.

Nothing in the Catholic Church can be unreasonable, because God, who is the Author of the Church, is also the Author of human reason, and God cannot be self-contradictory.

There is not a single doctrine of the Catholic Church in which human reason can find a flaw.

If there were anything unreasonable in the Catholic Church, it would have been rejected centuries ago by the authorities of the Church.

The very fact that the doctrines of the Catholic Church continue to endure, unchanged and unchangeable, century after century, is, in itself, a strong argument for the entire reasonableness of those doctrines.

No one who thoroughly understands the doctrines of the Catholic Church can ever, by any possibility, object to them as being unreasonable any more than a person could object to the sun being unreasonable for shining for ages.

Human reason has its well defined limits. It is a sovereign within its own province, but it should not attempt to pass upon truths altogether outside its proper realm. Human reason, like the shoemaker, should stick to its last.

There are many things in the world entirely above the range of human reason, but these things are not contrary, therefore, to human reason, or repugnant to it.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is not opposed to human reason, although human reason cannot comprehend it, any more than electricity is opposed to human reason because human reason cannot comprehend it.

The mystery of the Incarnation is not contrary to human reason, any more than wireless telephony is contrary to human reason, for human reason is powerless to fully understand either of them.

The mystery of the Holy Eucharist is not against human reason, any more than the existence of the universe is against human reason, since Almighty God is the author of both the one and the other.

The Catholic Church possesses some of the greatest thinkers in the world, men in whom human reason has been pushed to its farthest limits. If there were any contradiction between human reason and faith they could not remain in the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is attracting to its fold year after year some of the greatest reasoners in the world. It is precisely because they exercise human reason upon the truths taught by the Catholic Church that they see those truths to be thoroughly in accord with human reason.

Human reason is supreme in the sphere of those things which can be judged by human reason. But human reason is powerless to judge of things above its reach, just as an aviator flying 10,000 feet in the air cannot mine, at that height, coal imbedded 10,000 feet in the earth.

The Catholic Church has nothing to fear from reasonable people, nor from people who use their human reason. The only enemies of the Catholic Church are unreasonable people, and those who refuse to use their human reason.—Rev. Thomas F. Coakley, D.D., in Our Sunday Visitor.

CHRIST'S GOSPEL AND THE TIMES

What a world of wisdom is encircled in the periods of our Divine Master. Every one of them has stood the test of the experience of ages and has proved perfect in counsel and practical results. Today they are as applicable to the needs of individuals, society and nations as they were, when twenty centuries ago, they came as "honey from the honey-comb" from the lips of Divinity. Take last Sunday's lesson:

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things will be added unto you." The great cause of all our mistakes and consequent misery is that we reverse the sacred dictum and begin at the wrong end of Christ's proposition—we seek ourselves. We put the car before the horse, and do worse than come to a standstill on Wisdom's royal thoroughfare.

We pit our own little knowledge against the infinite—our own little experience against Him Who made us and, since creation supposes perfect knowledge, knows us perfectly. Ignorant even of ourselves, for we go through life a mystery to self, we trust ourselves who for ourselves God who never broke one of the thousands of blessed assurances He has given.

Were we just to ourselves we would be just to God for we would have His light in our minds, His grace in our souls, the joy bells of hope ringing in the blessed mornings of our gracious day.

Christ our Lord thus gives the Catholic editor the best themes for an editorial for the facts of our modern day, to be properly estimated must be viewed under the light of His eternal principles that history confirms and science dare not and cannot contradict.

Despite all the sapient advice and command of the solicitous Christ what a sad travesty on His truth does the world present today where the fool lives to eat and vanity, forgetful of the eternal morrow, ridiculously struts to—the grave.—Catholic Columbian.

KINDNESS

St. Paul Bulletin "Dark is the day and the wind blows cold," quotes an exchange, but who cares if the heart is warm and the light of life shines in the soul?

Selfishness is a trait of even the best amongst the sons of men. In some persons selfishness blossoms forth in all its manifold repugnance, and it marks its possessor as one to be carefully shunned. Even in souls otherwise nobly endowed, selfishness usually finds lodgment. It shows itself by a lack of sufficient appreciation of the good qualities in others; by a want of tact in dealing with the less fortunate; by a callousness in failing to recognize the wounds that trouble so many among one's friends and intimates. Kindness is a quality, nay, a virtue, that should distinguish every person who loves the least claim to manhood or to womanhood. It is not sufficient to sympathize with the open suffering; it is necessary that kindness seek out the hidden recess of the heart, and

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There place the balm of its soothing influence. Many a heart that wears the wreath of gladness is inwardly pining for the healing tenderness of a kind word. Especially should kindness distinguish those upon whose shoulders the mantle of any kind of authority rests, for authority confers not only rights but corresponding obligations. Not the least of these obligations is the duty of infusing a spirit of kindness in those whom authority holds firm. Many persons are so irremediably conceited over the tinsel glitter of the brief authority with which they are clothed, that those about them suffer untold torments in endeavoring to fulfill their duty towards authority itself, despite the unpleasant form in which it appears. To every one may be applied the words of the late Eben Rexford:

"Many a heart is hungry, starving For a little word of love. Gilds the lofty peaks above. So the joy of those who hear it Sends a radiance down life's way; And the world is brighter, better, For the loving words we say."

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First Announcement

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"The Facts About Luther"

which will be ready for the market about October 1st, 1916. The work is written by the Rt. Rev. Mons. P. F. O'Hare, LL.D., who is well known as a writer and lecturer on Lutheranism. The object of the volume is to present the life of Luther in its different phases as outlined in the contents.

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