

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

PREPAREDNESS

Do you want employment? Prepare for it. Learn to do something that is needed and to do it well.

Do you want promotion? Prepare for it. Know your own task thoroughly, do it perfectly, and then study the task ahead of it. Watch the opportunities to practice the other work. Get ready to do it.

Do you want success? Prepare for it. Leave nothing undone to achieve it. See what are the obstacles that are in your way to it, and endeavor to remove them. Get ready for it.

Preparedness is the slogan of the hour in private as well as in public life.

The man who can do a thing, is likely to get a chance to do it. What can you do? What are you preparing to do?—Catholic Columbian.

SOUL CULTURE

Rev. Albert Muntch, in Our Sunday Visitor

Year after year we behold the phenomena of growth in nature round about us. There is a constant process of change in the world of vegetation. Man placed in the midst of this wonderful manifestation of life likewise grows and changes. He is subject to the same inevitable law.

But how often, alas, man grows only in body and mind in the progress of the years. For many there are who starve their souls, though there are so many opportunities held out to them for strengthening the life of the soul, for the practice of all kinds of virtue, for rising to the full stature of heroic sanctity. But thousands and thousands allow the treasure of sanctifying grace, which was infused into their souls in baptism, to remain unproductive as regards larger and more beautiful fruits of holiness.

And yet we have the direct and earnest invitation of our Divine Lord ever to increase in soul-power. This invitation means we should strive ever to become more fit for the eternal homeland of heaven. For does not the Saviour tell us "the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof."

So many of our youth, after they have left the Catholic school, do not develop the life of their soul upwards towards God. From their early Christian instruction they bring with them into the struggle of life a few hazy notions about their obligations towards God and their duties as members of Christ's Church. But there is no strength, there is no development of the soul during the years of adolescence in preparation for the spiritual combat which they must wage in order to remain faithful soldiers of the Lord Christ.

Now why this sad lack of spiritual strength and preparedness for the dark hour of conflict and temptation? One reason lies in the fact that the minds of these young people have been nurtured on the foolish principles taught by a world whose watchword is "get along." But this means merely a getting along in a material way. It means an accumulation of gold, the attainment of some empty honor, the arriving at social eminence. Their program is limited to money getting and to the securing of a competence. All else is considered secondary. And so gradually all the sturdy Christian principles implanted in earlier life, and all the teachings familiar to them in school days, are one by one cast overboard as useless ballast. The youth thinks that he has become emancipated.

Some there are who by holding fast to these worldly maxims may advance in worldly ways and "make their mark" in society. But how lone and desolate the interior life of their souls! They have not laid up power and resistance against the day of desolation. They have built themselves costly mansions and adorned them with precious ornaments which dazzle the eye, they are admiringly spoken of by their fellow-men. But yet they are to be pitied since they have accumulated none of those treasures which pass not away, and which the rust and the moth do not consume.

It behooves all of us not to neglect the life of the soul while we are fighting the battle of life and marching towards the grave through life's fitful fever. There is one beautiful and shining example proposed to all men, teaching them that while they are concerned with the things of Mammon they should not risk the interests of their precious souls. This example is given us by the Christchild Himself, who after He was found in the temple, went down to Nazareth, and there increased in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men. Here we have a model of soul culture. By increasing in this way, Christ wrought the greatest work ever undertaken by man—the redemption of the world. Can we not, therefore, highly resolve that while reaching out for things that pass away we starve not, nor jeopardize the interests of the immortal soul.

Practise to make God thy last thought at night when thou sleepest and thy first thought when thou wakest; so shall thy fancy be sanctified in the night, and thy understanding be rectified in the day; so shall thy rest be peaceful and thy labors prosperous.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

GOOD MANNERS HELP A LOT

A merchant who returned from England just before the war broke out has been voluble ever since on the manners of the children he happened to meet abroad. Apparently American parents and schools do not lay on good manners the emphasis that they receive abroad. Yet good manners, like the gold at the foundation of all money are current the world over. Emerson noted this:

"Give a boy dress and accomplishments and you give him the mastery of palaces and fortunes wherever he goes. He has not the trouble to earn or own them; they solicit him to enter and possess."

"All your Greek," Chesterfield wrote to his son, "can never advance you from secretary to envoy or from envoy to ambassador, but your address, your air, your manner, if good, may."

"The difference between a well-bred and ill-bred man is this," Samuel Johnson said, "one immediately attracts your attention, the other your aversion. You love one until you find reason to hate him; you hate the other until you find reason to love him."

Civility, polished manners, mean much to a youth in his first position. He may think nothing of them, or he may think that they are not noticed, but they are his atmosphere, his magic cloak, never invisible to the seeing eyes about him. They sometimes give him a "pull" that money, talent or name do not furnish. And the beauty of them is that they are free as the air. Anyone may cultivate good manners by taking thought.—Intermountain Catholic.

THE DISINTERESTED BOY

It was just at night. The sun had set, and the curtains of the night were fast hanging themselves over hill-top and valley, and the lonely wood and the busy village. While the night winds were beginning to sweep through the trees, lights were here and there peeping through the windows to tell that though the wind was cold and blustering without, there might be peace and comfort within.

At this hour Mr. Bradley passed through a little village among the hills of New Hampshire, and urging his horse forward as the night became darker, took his way along the main road toward the next town, where he intended to pass the night. As he passed the last house in the village he thought he heard some one call; but supposing it might be some boy shouting to his fellow, he thought but little of it. He heard the call again and again, and at last on hearing the call repeated several times in succession, it occurred to him that some one might want to speak to him, and he slackened the pace of his horse, and looked behind the chaise to see if he could discover who was calling after him.

"Stop, sir, stop," said a little boy, who was standing with all his might to overtake him.

Mr. Bradley stopped his horse, and a little boy of eight or ten years of age, came up, the blood almost ready to burst from his face, and panting at every breath.

"Well, my little fellow, what do you wish for?" asked Mr. Bradley.

"You are losing your trunk, sir," answered the boy, as soon as he could speak.

"And so you have run all this way to tell me of it, my good boy?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Bradley jumped out of his chaise, and saw that his trunk, which was strapped underneath his carriage, was unfastened at one end, so that a sudden jolt might have loosened it altogether, and he would have lost it; without knowing where it had gone.

"You are very kind, my little lad," said the gentleman, "to take all this trouble; you have saved me from losing my trunk, and I feel much obliged to you."

"You are welcome," answered the boy.

"And now are you tall enough to hold my horse, while I fasten my trunk as it should be?" asked Mr. Bradley.

"Oh, yes, sir," said the boy, stepping up, and taking hold of the bridle.

He held the horse until Mr. Bradley was ready to start, and then he said "good-night, sir," and was walking away.

"Stop a moment," said Mr. Bradley, taking a twenty-five cent piece from his pocket: "here is a piece of money to pay you for your trouble, and I feel very grateful to you besides."

"No, sir," said the boy, drawing himself up, erect, and looking the gentleman full in the face, "do you think I would take the money for such a thing as that?"

"Ah," said Mr. Bradley, as he related the story to me, "I saw by his look that he had run from a half to three quarters of a mile, for the sake of doing a kindness to a stranger, and not for the hope of pay; and I could not find it in my heart to urge him to take the money, for I knew that the thought of having done a good act was a greater reward than money could have been. So I bade him 'good-night,' and he ran towards his home, while I gave the whip to my horse and rode briskly on; but I often think of that journey to New Hampshire, and the noble-hearted boy who lived among its hills."—Our Sunday Visitor.

Faithfulness and constancy mean something more than doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves.

TWO ROADS IN LIFE

The road which leads to virtue seems at first rude, rugged, difficult and steep; however, when once fairly started in the road, one perceives how beautiful and even it is, how easy and pleasant, how much more agreeable than the other road which leads to vice, and to which men crowd in such numbers because it is near at hand.—Hesiod, quoted by St. Basil.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR MAY

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

THE HOLY ROSARY

The war in Europe had undoubtedly something to do with the choice of the General Intention for the present month. The need of prayer to move the Heart of God, in order to make Him intervene and send peace again among the nations, is absolutely felt, and our Holy Father, wishing to enlist the whole Catholic world in the crusade, naturally turns to the prayer which all may recite, namely, the time-honored Rosary of our Lady. The high esteem in which His Holiness holds the Rosary is plainly shown in the document which he published shortly after his elevation to the sovereign pontificate. "As a messenger of piety and of consolation to individuals, to families, and to society," he writes, "we have always highly valued the mystic crown which Christian people, in inspired words of veneration and affection, place every day upon the royal head of the Mother of God." It is its universal character of collective and domestic prayer, more pronounced than in other forms of prayer, that appealed to the Holy Father and made him choose it as the one best suited for the times in which we live, when all classes and conditions of men are asked to storm heaven for the restoration of peace.

The Rosary has been in common use among the faithful since the thirteenth century. It was popularized by Saint Dominic, who, according to a pious tradition, received it from the hands of our Lady herself as the weapon with which he was to triumph over the Albigensian heresy. This tradition does not mean that Saint Dominic was the first to introduce this method of prayer, but it seems historically correct to say that he gave the Rosary its present form, and the saint is cited in different pontifical bulls as the one who established the practice.

To understand in a general way the order and method employed in this form of prayer, we must distinguish between the full Rosary of Saint Dominic and the shorter one, so familiar to us all. The full Rosary is also called the "Psalter of Mary," because it contains the same number of Hail Marys as there are psalms in the Bible. This number was chosen by Saint Dominic so that the faithful who could not recite the Psalter might replace it by the Rosary. The one hundred and fifty Hail Marys form fifteen decades which are said in honor of the fifteen principal mysteries of the life of Mary and her Divine Son.

The mysteries of the Rosary follow each other practically in the order of the feasts of the liturgical year. If we examine these facts we shall distinguish three series which we may name "joyful," "sorrowful," and "glorious," according to the character of the mysteries and the time of the year in which we recall them. The joyful period extends from Advent to Septuagesima; the sorrowful, from Septuagesima to Easter; and from Easter to Advent, the glorious. One may see the same order of mysteries in the full Rosary of our Lady.

The short Rosary,—"or 'the beads,'" as it is more familiarly known—is one-third the length of the full one, and is recited in honor of one series of mysteries at a time. It comprises the five decades of Hail Marys which we say when we hold in our hand the chain on which the fifty beads are engrained. To this shorter Rosary a crucifix and other beads are attached precisely to honor the Persons of the Holy Trinity. While this addition is not essential, it is a kind of introduction or preparation for the better recital of the short Rosary.

This rather superficial explanation helps us at least to understand how great is the homage we pay to our Lady when we offer her the tribute of these prayers. The Rosary honors Mary because it offers her a crown of mystical roses bound together by the golden chain of the mysteries of the Redemption. If we wish further to understand and appreciate the excellence of this form of prayer we have merely to see what the Infallible Church and her visible Head think of it. In bulls and briefs, forty-five Popes have urged the faithful in Christ to recite the Rosary. Two of our most recent Pontiffs, Leo XIII. and Pius X., were especially prominent in this crusade, one of them proclaiming that the Rosary is "the remedy for our evils and the beginning of all our good."

"If you will have peace in your families and in your nations," exclaimed the fatherly Pius X., "say your beads together in your homes. The Rosary is the summing up of the Gospel; it brings peace to all who are devoted to it. Of all prayers it is the most beautiful and the richest in graces; it is the prayer which is most acceptable to the blessed Virgin Mary. Love your Rosary; say it every day with devotion; this is my last wish I leave you so that you may remember me."

The Church, on her side, calls this prayer the "Most Holy Rosary" and makes the expression a title of glory for our Blessed Lady by addressing her in her own litany as "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary." The Church has instituted a feast in honor of the Rosary, which is the glorification of the prayer itself and highest recommendation it could receive in the Christian world. She has also permitted the foundation of Rosary confraternities and has enriched them with many precious indulgences as further proof of the high value she attaches to this form of prayer. After these testimonies it would be hardly necessary to look for further motives to make us love the Rosary. However, we may reflect on the intrinsic excellence of this prayer, inasmuch as it is agreeable to God and His Holy Mother; it instructs the faithful; it is easy and consoling and powerful; and it is fruitful in results.

The Rosary is agreeable to God and to Mary beyond all expression, for the reason that it is composed of prayers the most holy and the most perfect than can be offered in sight of Heaven, the Lord's Prayer, the Angelical Salutation and the Doxology. The constant repetition of these prayers, far from diminishing their value, helps rather to enhance it, by inspiring greater fervor in those who use the Rosary and by rendering their piety more solid. What augments the excellence of the Rosary in the sight of God is the circumstance that it recalls the sublime mysteries of our holy faith and the events treating of our redemption, all of which should be the ordinary subjects of our meditations. Besides, what need have we of further proof that the Rosary is agreeable to Mary than the fact of Lourdes? We must not forget that when she came down from Heaven and appeared to the little peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, in the Pyrenees, she held a Rosary in her hand.

The Rosary is an instructive prayer. During the recital the faithful are going over leisurely and without effort the great mysteries which are the summary of our holy religion. We find ourselves contemplating the fifteen most dramatic and most impressive scenes in human history, scenes which not merely reveal the truths of our faith, but at the same time present to our admiration the privileges of our Lord and His Blessed Mother and the splendid examples of their virtues. The great feasts celebrated by the Church also pass before our eyes, one after the other, and help us to enter into the spirit of the liturgical year, so that our personal piety may harmonize with the solemnity of the celebrations.

The Rosary is as easy to recite as it is consoling; it is not necessary to be able to read or write, nor is a book required, nor need one's work be interrupted. It is the prayer suited to all conditions and all ages. The learned and the ignorant, travellers, the sick, the deaf and dumb and blind, the just and the sinner—all will find the Rosary the prayer suited for them. And is it not a consolation to be able at all times, in sickness or in health, in daylight or in darkness, to speak to Mary, "our life, our sweetness and our hope," to crave the intercession of her who is the "Consoler of the afflicted?" Many pious Catholics are not satisfied with one daily recital of the beads; they say the full Rosary, sometimes repeating it, so easy and so consoling is the practice.

What need be said now of the results of the practice? It was through the fervent recital of the Rosary that Saint Dominic and his followers triumphed over a heresy which began to ravage France in his age. It was with the same powerful weapon that Christian armies overcame the Turks several hundred years later. Needless to enumerate the instances so frequent in church annals. Suffice it to say, the Rosary has, in past ages been a bulwark in defence of the Church; it has helped hundreds of millions of Catholics to hold their gift of faith; it has preserved them from dangers to soul and body. Even beyond the grave the influence of the Rosary is felt; for it assuages the sufferings of the souls in Purgatory.

It would be impossible to count the number of those who have distinguished themselves in the service of God and His Church who always held the Rosary in the highest esteem. Who has not in mind the classic example of the holy old lay brother Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez, whose fingers had grown callous through the constant graining of his beads? Pius V., Francis Xavier, Charles Borromeo, Vincent Ferrer, Francis of Sales, John Berchmans, Peter Claver, and thousands of other saints, were not merely faithful to the daily recital of the beads, but they urged others to adopt the same holy practice. Our present Pontiff Benedict XV., who considers the Rosary "the most beautiful flower of human piety, and a fruitful source of heavenly graces," also asks the children throughout the world to be faithful to this holy practice as a means to meet the needs of the Church and the world and the welfare of individual souls.

The sadness of the present hour, the weakness of the spiritual life among millions, the necessity of bringing back to convulsed nations the benefits of peace, the great need of divine clemency, all call for some united effort in prayer. No prayer is more suitable than the Rosary. The daily recital of it is a holy

practice, one that will draw down many graces on those who shall have acquired the habit. Let all our members, therefore, be assiduous in raising their arms in prayer

to our Blessed Mother and in asking her intercession; Mary will know how to respond; she will not be outdone in generosity.

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

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SIR THOMAS WHITE, Minister of Finance.

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LET US NOT WASTE OUR LABOUR—

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