

the circumstances of training, education, natural dispositions, and so on, only the lesser number would profit by a retreat. A mission is a general clean-up in a parish. It does a world of good and it is needed; but it does not call for so great a wrench as a three-days' absence from family and business, nor does it give opportunities for so much reflection, so much self-examination. A retreat is not exclusive for sinners as such, but for good people as well. The end in view is not precisely to reclaim a man from a sinful life, although this end is certainly not excluded, but rather to impart a deeper appreciation of the Catholic faith which he possesses, to bring home to him all that this gift of the true faith means, to give him a lively sense of his responsibility. A retreat cultivates a spirit of zeal in a man, and makes him ask himself in all seriousness: "What am I doing with my life? The years are passing; what have I done so far? Can't I do something more than I am doing. What influences have I as a Catholic layman on people around me? A Lay Retreat is more personal, more radical; it penetrates more deeply into the soul. The methods employed are more specific, purified, and more lasting results are worked for. The instructions given in a retreat are linked together more closely, they are dovetailed one into the other more intimately, forming a logical, methodical and practical system of treating souls, one adapted to the comprehension of those who make a retreat. During the three days a man is taken in hand and enlightened, purified, strengthened, molded, he is made to feel clearly the sense of eternity and his own responsibility. The great truths of time and eternity are brought home to him so vividly that he can touch them, as it were, feel them, see them staring him in the face.

To illustrate what I mean. Only a few weeks ago the planet Mars was hovering near us. Let us suppose that a rocket had been established between Mars and the earth. As a result of this communication, the Martians learned that we earth-dwellers possess a very useful thing called fire, useful in many ways, and they decided to acquire some knowledge of it. A delegate was sent down, presented his credentials to the Mayor of Toronto, explained the reason of his visit, and was referred to the professor of chemistry over in St. Michael's or at the University. There he was given a book on chemistry, out of which he learned that fire is an element that carbonizes, reduces fuel to ashes, that at the same time it emits light and heat and so on. So far so good. A few experiments, coupled with the knowledge acquired from the book of chemistry has taught the Martian what fire is, and he might have gone back to his planet quite satisfied with the result of his visit. He knows academically what fire is and what it can do. But it just happened during the last experiment he made he burned one of his fingers. This accident, small in itself, taught him more about fire than the book of chemistry did. He learned something about fire in a new kind of way. He became in person acquainted with fire. His knowledge became more intense. He could then go back to Mars with a more vivid knowledge of the thing he was sent to learn something about.

Let us now make the application. There are two ways of seizing a truth, even a religious truth. There is the cold, hazy, indolent, faraway, indefinite, speculative way which leaves truth not fully grasped, easily forgotten afterwards, and not very much regretted. This is the way we are prone to receive it from the printed page or from the pulpit. There is a second way. There is the more intense knowledge of a truth which comes home to a man when he gets closer to life's realities, when he finds himself face to face with them, and realizes in a new kind of way how important they are. He is startled in a way he never experienced before. We read all about the Japanese earthquake, even its minutest details; but we have not the same kind of knowledge of it as a man who was present at the catastrophe. During the War we read the despatches from Flanders. We read the very thrilling description of the slaughter that was going on over there, but this prose often left us apathetic. But talk with a soldier who was in a battle and he will soon show us how little we know about war. Why? Because he will speak with a more intense knowledge of the horrors of war. It is this kind of knowledge that a retreat brings home to the mind and heart of a layman, and he is more vividly impressed.

We are living in an age of materialism and indifference; there is a cold wave rolling over the world which is liable to affect the faith of everybody. We read a book we listen to a demagogue, so rapid is the one and so blatant the other that even Catholics are often caught napping, and sometimes they are even heard asking, what is truth? where is it to be found? what does it all mean? A retreat brings all the answers quickly and vividly home to a man. He soon learns what truth is; where it is to be found; how it is to be applied to his life. All this appeals to his Catholic intelligence; he appreciates the discovery; his eyes are opened, and this is one reason

for the spread of the Lay Retreat Movement. There is a second reason. Nowadays our laity, no matter how strong their faith or how good their intentions, are so deeply engrossed in business and professional life that they are apt to forget Catholic truths, and the applications of these truths to life. Too many of our own people are apt to think that wealth and honors and pleasures are the only things worth seeking. They mistake the means for the end. In precisely good faith they linger on the steps and imagine they are within the mansion. Modern conditions of life and modern methods of social and economic activity are so absorbing, so satisfying to the soul that the sense of the supernatural fades quietly, imperceptibly away until, oftentimes it is almost eliminated. Here it is where the heart as well as the mind fails to grasp essentials. The remedy is to take a few days now and then to provide the soul with a fresh stock of spiritual energy.

When one is asked to explain the Lay Retreat Movement, he may point to the tactics of two merchants. One man is careless, his books are poorly kept, he never takes stock; he does not know just where he stands; that merchant is heading for the bankruptcy court. On the contrary, a shrewd business man, one who has his commercial interests at heart, will once a year at least, pull down his blinds, lock his doors, and proceed to take an inventory of the goods on his shelves. He opens his books, reckons up what his debtors owe him and what he owes his creditors. He takes one sum from the other, and to the remainder adds the value of his stock. He then knows just how he stands before the world. Similar conditions may be met in the spiritual world, the world of the soul. A man who values his soul will now and then take stock to see how he stands with his Maker.

Another example to show the importance of this Lay Retreat Movement. Our clergy, our religious orders of men, our numerous sisterhoods, have all cast-iron clauses in their laws and constitutions ordering annual retreats; that is to say, periods during which they may recoup themselves and get back some of the spiritual energy lost in the activities and the distractions of the previous year. Now if these classes of citizens, notwithstanding the lives of retirement they lead, and notwithstanding all the spiritual helps that are provided for them, have recourse once a year to some method of augmenting their spiritual strength to meet their needs arising out of contact with the world, who will say that our tens of thousands—our hundreds of thousands—of lay men and women, living in the glare of all worldliness, do not also need something similar? And who will dare say they will not profit by it, once the Lay Retreat Movement becomes better known and once retreat facilities are provided? The practical common-sense and the clear-sighted intelligence of our Catholic laity may be trusted to appreciate this new movement; and, in fact, experience is showing that they do appreciate it in every land where retreat houses have been established.

To the question—How are these retreats made and in what do they consist?—we may answer. They usually take up three days, with four instructions a day—a short course in ascetic theology, as it were—from Thursday evening until Monday morning, and this is the reason why they are also called Week-End Retreats. Three whole days are devoted to meditating on the great truths of religion. These truths and their applications are put before men in a practical way, and it is remarkable how they appeal to men in retreat. They may have been reading them for years or hearing them for years in pulpits and elsewhere; but whether it be that while in retreat they are living in a different atmosphere, or whether—which is more probable—there is a very special grace attached to these days of silence and solitude, the great truths and their applications come home to them with a new and extraordinary vividness, just as a newer and more intense knowledge of fire came home to the Martian who burned his finger.

If we try to analyze this special grace, it would seem to consist in this, that to save one's soul it does not suffice to know, one must also do; that it is not enough to have a speculative knowledge of the Catholic religion and its dogmas, but that these dogmas must be reduced to practice; that henceforth the retreatant must apply them in a practical way to his daily life; or in the words of a modern writer, "allow the dogmas of his faith to flower in his soul."

Or let us put it in another way. Just as it dawned upon a college student that the study of mathematics or the study of grammar is not undertaken for the mere pleasure of these studies, but rather for the purpose of applying them to his accounting or to his language; so it seems to dawn on a man in retreat, sometimes in a very striking way, equivalent almost to a revelation, that it does not suffice to know one's religion but that one must live up to it in the affairs of life. With this new light still beaming on him, dazzling him even, he makes a more minute examination of his life and conduct, sees what must be

improved upon, carves out new rules for himself, and then resolves to observe them through thick and thin. This is the fruit of a three days' Lay Retreat, and the experience of many years show that the light received remains vivid not merely for months but for years, that the resolutions taken are not, like pie-crusts, easily broken, so that immense profit comes not merely to the individual himself, but also to society in general, of which he is a unit. We can see at once the benefit that the Lay Retreat Movement can bring both to the Church and to the nation. The presence of a couple of thousand men who go through these exercises yearly is bound to have an enormous influence on the community in which they live. They form an élite. Their intense Catholicism, their strong convictions, their love of truth, single them out as leaders in every cause in which the Church is interested. Their attachment to the Church will urge them, in all charity, to exercise their zeal for the advancement of God's kingdom on earth.

PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT AND RESULTS SO FAR

There is no use going back many years for statistics. In Europe and South America retreats for the laity are no new thing. In South America, especially, tens of thousands of lay men and women make their retreats every year and have been doing so for many a long day. Coming to the activities of more recent times, I know that various religious Orders specializing in this work have quite a number of houses in full operation both in Europe and America. I can speak only of work in the Order I belong to, because I happen to know a little more about it. The figures at hand date back four years. At the beginning of 1921, the Jesuits had eighty-six houses in full activity in various parts of the world. During the year 1921, 148,680 men made week-end retreats under their direction. The work is spreading so rapidly that this number has undoubtedly augmented in the past three years, and it does not include Canada. In the Province of Quebec the Lay Retreat Movement was begun fifteen years ago, in 1909. The Jesuits have five houses, three open all the year round and two others open during the summer months. During the past four years those houses have given retreats to 7,400 men. To these must be added the retreats given at Loyola College during the past three summers. A number of which is 390, giving a total of 7,800. The number of men alone who have made the week-end collective retreats in the Province of Quebec in the past fifteen years is 28,572.

I have fewer details about the Retreat Movement among our Catholic women in Canada. However, I have been able to glean something. There are houses given over exclusively to retreats for women in Three Rivers, Quebec, Clletie, Rimouski and two in Montreal. In Ottawa and Sherbrooke the convents are open for retreats for women during the midsummer holidays. Here are the figures for 1923 for Montreal alone: Convent of Mary Reparatrice, 780; Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, 659; Villa St. Joseph, 438;—making a total of 1,797 Catholic laywomen who in 1923 spent three days in solitude and silence.

The variety of retreatants and the classes to which they belong may interest my hearers. During the summer of 1924, at the two retreat houses of Cartierville and Boucherville, houses exclusively reserved for this work near Montreal, the following groups of laymen are making the retreats: commercial travellers (four groups), Franciscan Order of the Holy Order of Foresters, school teachers, dentists, conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, notaries, grocers, judges, lawyers, architects, railway employees, insurance agents, farmers, practising physicians, printers, business men, firemen, bank clerks, medical students, policemen, besides miscellaneous groups brought together from various parishes. In the United States the work is being pushed on with great energy. In New York, Boston, St. Louis, Santa Clara, in California and the South, are equipped with retreat houses. England, France, Spain, Belgium and other European countries have also their retreat houses. In 1913 there were 82 houses in Germany. The War played havoc with the work in that country, but it is getting on its feet again. In 1924, there are 68 houses in operation in Germany. Let us say a word about Holland, lately brought into prominence on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress, and of the results that may be expected from the movement in a country of mixed population. At present there are in Holland twelve retreat houses for laymen and three for women. They are all more or less diocesan; that is, they are founded for a certain number of parishes or for a whole diocese. Now what have been the results of these retreats in Holland? In a recent number of the London Universe, a correspondent writes, "Many people might wonder how it was that a nation, which they have always been told was so Protestant, should suddenly appear before the world welcoming so intensely Catholic a meeting as the International Eucharistic Congress. Moreover, they were told that the Church was making astonishing and rapid progress there and that conversions

were numerous. It may not be generally known," he continues, "that the retreat movement begun in Holland later than in England, has made most magnificent advances. In 1923, while in Great Britain the number of those making the retreats was reckoned at some five thousand women and well under three thousand men, in Holland the total was over thirty-two thousand, and of this total the men exceeded those women by two thousand or more." And the writer concludes in words worth pondering over: "this is the real spiritual force which is making Holland one of the Catholic centers of Europe."

What the movement is doing in a mixed country like Holland it could also do in Canada once it were organized, and we may ask in closing what should be the ultimate result of the Lay Retreat Movement in Canada. The formation of an enlightened and zealous laity, an élite remarkable for its intense Catholic life, would be a wonderful asset for the Church in this country. Out of the Lay Retreat Movement would spring other works of zeal. The Catholic Labor Syndicates of the Province of Quebec are the offspring of Lay Retreats. The Catholic Association of Commercial Travellers, now 300 strong, and the tower of strength in the old Province, the Catholic Railway Employees Association, the League for Sunday Observance, the Catholic Young Men's Association, conference of St. Vincent de Paul, parish spirit and parochial works, all have drawn strength from the Movement.

As a result of Lay Retreats, men rise to any situation that may confront them, and of weighing the responsibilities entailed, than by making week-end retreats. Once housed in our various dioceses, are in our large cities, once the movement takes root we shall see what is now being seen in other countries, and results will be produced that will certainly benefit the Church in this Dominion.

Let the Catholic Truth Society bring out its publications and spread them in hundreds of thousands through the length and breadth of the land; let the slogan be "a rack in every church vestibule in Canada." We know what the C. T. S. literature is doing in enlightening the masses in England and Scotland—but let the Lay Retreat Movement come to its aid; this movement will aid the C. T. S. enormously by moving men to act and by creating an apostolic élite. The combination is called for; one fits into the other. The Church in Canada will certainly see the results.

Friday, Oct. 17.—St. Hedwige, was the wife of Henry, Duke of Silesia and the mother of his six children. She led a life humble and austere amidst the pomp of royalty. She was noted for her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. After the death of her husband she retired to the Cistercian convent of Trebnitz where she lived in obedience to one of her own daughters who was Abbess. Saturday, Oct. 18.—St. Luke, was a physician at Antioch who was converted by St. Paul. He is best known as the historian of the New Testament. He was the faithful companion of St. Paul to the end and died a martyr's death in Achaia.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Sunday, Oct. 12.—St. Wilfred, Bishop, was born about 634 and was trained by the Celtic monks at Lindisfarne in the peculiar rites and usages of the British Church. Even as a boy he longed for perfect conformity in discipline as in doctrine with the Holy See and after a trip to Rome he founded a strictly Roman monastery at Ripon under the rule of St. Benedict. In 664 he was made Bishop of Lindisfarne and five years later was transferred to York. He finally succeeded in establishing a vigorous Catholic discipline modelled and dependent on Rome.

Monday, Oct. 13.—St. Edward the Confessor, was unexpectedly raised to the throne of England at the age of forty. On the throne, the virtues of his earlier years, simplicity, gentleness and angelic purity shone with a new brightness. Although he married to satisfy his nobles and people, he preserved perfect chastity. His reign of twenty-four years was one of almost unbroken peace, the country grew prosperous and ruined churches were rebuilt. The weak lived secure and for ages afterward men spoke of the "laws of the good St. Edward." Westminster Abbey was his last work. He died in 1066.

Tuesday, Oct. 14.—St. Callistus, Pope and martyr, was entrusted by Pope Zephyrinus with the rule of the clergy and set in authority over the cemeteries of the Christians in Rome. When Zephyrinus died, Callistus, according to the usages of the time, succeeded to the Apostolic See. During the persecution under the Emperor Severus, St. Callistus was driven to take shelter in the poor and populous quarters of the city and was finally martyred in 223.

Wednesday, Oct. 15.—St. Teresa, when a child of seven years ran away from her home at Avila in Spain, in the hope of being martyred by the Moors. When she was brought back she said "I want to see God, and I must die before I can see Him." Some years later she became a Carmelite nun. She was called to reform her Order but in doing so only acted under obedience to her confessors. She died in 1582.

Thursday, Oct. 16.—St. Gall, Abbot, was born in Ireland soon after the middle of the sixth century of pious and noble parents. He accompanied St. Columban to England and later into France. When they were driven from their monastery by King Theodoric, St. Gall settled near the Lake of Constance where he converted many to the Faith. He resisted efforts to make him Bishop of Constance and died in the year 646.

Friday, Oct. 17.—St. Hedwige, was the wife of Henry, Duke of Silesia and the mother of his six children. She led a life humble

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and austere amidst the pomp of royalty. She was noted for her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. After the death of her husband she retired to the Cistercian convent of Trebnitz where she lived in obedience to one of her own daughters who was Abbess. Saturday, Oct. 18.—St. Luke, was a physician at Antioch who was converted by St. Paul. He is best known as the historian of the New Testament. He was the faithful companion of St. Paul to the end and died a martyr's death in Achaia.

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