

The Padres' CORNER

ON BEING A PADRE
By W.F.B.

"Chaplains are rather useless social ornaments." That is a popular idea, and one which most of us have held, though some have had reason to change it.

The Service, despite all the kindness, interest, and concern of officers and N.C.O.s, cannot adapt itself to all human conditions and needs. There are always a few individuals made to suffer accidentally through situations and rules necessarily imposed by the circumstances of so vast an organization operating in many lands in time of war. Often it is possible for the Chaplain to discover such cases, and to do something to make life more bearable, and its injustices less bitter.

In wartime, with huge masses of men under training and in service, it is necessary, if there is to be discipline, order, and efficiency, that human considerations, friendships, and courtesies, be subordinated to the jobs which must be done. It is of the first importance that there be an officer on each station who is not bound by these limitations, who can mix easily and freely with all ranks and types of men and women, and, understanding the needs of all, can explain misunderstandings, and interpret people to one another.

There are many who, though they have good pals in the Service, have troubles and difficulties which they must discuss with somebody, and who feel that they can't talk them over with those with whom they live and work. To many of these the Padre is a confidential friend, ready to listen to any complaints, to try to advise about any problem, and to help to think out many a dilemma.

It is always the business of a Christian minister to be a teacher, and it may sometimes appear that a Chaplain neglects this side of his work. But there are some who

try, with little preaching or moralizing, to bring the light of Christian faith upon the questions and circumstances of airmen, and who think that such "teaching" may have more value than dry and dusty sermons.

The most difficult and delicate phase of a Padre's responsibilities, however, is to remind all ranks of the laws, the claims, the justice, and the love of God. He tries to do so through the Sunday services, but probably he does it just as often by a gentle, laughing hint; or by an explanation of the needs of the Service, or the responsibilities of an individual's position.

How can any man ever do such a job? None can, but a few can dare to try. And there are some important ways of doing it.

Padres try to understand all phases of the life and work of the Service. That is why they lurk quietly on the edge of conversations, why they are often turning up at unexpected places.

Padres try to know, individually and personally, as many officers and men as they can. It is obviously impossible to be intimate with everybody, but it is hoped that one can be known as open to all. And it is the aim of a Chaplain to be able to take as much time as necessary for each individual and his concerns. That is why he is left free from administrative responsibilities.

Being a Padre can be a very lonely job, and there are some who suffer from its loneliness. But it can, at the same time, be one of the happiest and richest jobs in the world. Part of that depends upon the Padre, but just as much upon the men he seeks to serve.

—RCAF—
YOUTH AND SUCCESS
By J.M.B.

It is a truism to state that the R.C.A.F. has drawn to the Colours the pick of the Canadian youth. The young men who have flocked to join its ranks have a clear understanding of the principles at stake. Flaunting death and with a splendid idealism, they stand ready for the great sacrifice that Right may prevail and that the world may be made better for others to live in it.

Youth is the exuberance of Life, conscious of its own strength; it is a contemptuous devil-may-care attitude in the face of difficulties, an unwavering assurance of overcoming any obstacle with a slight effort.

Youth is a Faith in the goodness of life in a World which asks only to be conquered; it is an undaunted Hope of a glorified tomorrow whose realization never seems doubtful, a Hope with a surprising aptitude to bloom even among ruins and almost on tombstones; it is a Love of all things which are noble and true.

Youth is all this and it also appears under a thousand-and-one other forms more fanciful, more lovely and perhaps also—more deceiving. Indeed, in order to be such a bright and beautiful form of life, youth must present itself with the forceful armour of intelligent, persevering Action and not with the graceful but vain cloak of Dream. How many are there not who are deceived by the dreams of a young man!

When asked his opinion as to what constituted a great life, a certain philosopher replied: "It is a dream of youth realized at maturity." True enough, provided it is explained that from youth to maturity a great career is prepared, made and confirmed only through sustained effort and uninterrupted action. Dreamers who lack the will-power and the energy to reach for the objects of their dreams never achieve anything. They only add to the number of the discontented, the envious and the misunderstood. Another kind of dreamer is he who, blind to his own

interests, refuses to accept the inevitable discipline imposed by social order and by divine and human laws, and, through pride or over-eager ambition, spoils his chances of success.

In a certain sense and to a certain degree it is true that one makes one's life. But Life itself is a symphony whose every note is essential to the beauty and perfection of the whole and every one of us has a part to play. What that part will be in the end we do not yet know; but the part we must play now we do know; and we must go on, faithful to our present duty, accomplishing our daily task to the best of our ability, earnest in our efforts to improve our work and ourselves along the lines of our calling. However humble that task may now be, there rests upon us a real responsibility to do it well. A man's responsibility is not measured by the apparent importance of his situation but by the obligation which binds him to his duty. In the R.C.A.F. every man, from Air-Marshall to AC2 is bound by the same obligation: to serve his King and Country to the utmost of his strength and ability within the limits of the task to which he is assigned.

Your present task may seem dull and irksome, devoid of glamour and pleasure. Men will perhaps judge it so: they are short-sighted. But you will always keep a right to their respect if you are patient and do it well, while your situation will not be improved by grumbling, negligence in your work or breaking the rules.

If you thus understand your responsibility and the beauty of Service, you will rise according to the talents which were given you and which you cannot make for yourself. A man deserves to rise above his fellow-men only inasmuch as he can see his responsibilities and can man enough courage to assume

—RCAF—

HE WALKED

"Perhaps you'll explain," said the female pigeon icily, "why you're two hours late for dinner."

"My dear, I was five miles away when I started homing," said her husband, "and it was such a nice evening that I thought I'd walk."

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