

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN!

The Way For Most of Us. "Got married." That is the advice that the Rev. Father Muley of St. John's church, Pittston, Pa., recently gave to the young men of his congregation, says the Catholic Columbian. At least fifty young men of the parish, he said, ought to propose right away, and the young women asked to wed, he added, ought not to be backward about saying "Yes."

The same state of affairs exists in almost every congregation—there are young men who ought to get married, but who stay single, to their own harm and the injury of many others. God made marriage for the continuation of the human race. He fixed its limits. Within those limits passion should be confined. That is God's law. Marriage entered into for the purpose of saving one's soul by keeping from sin, of having a companion, of establishing a home, of rearing a family of children, is in accordance with the divine ordinance.

Christian marriage is one of the seven sacraments. As such it should be thought of. As such it should be entered upon.

When a young man has reached maturity, when he has no one dependent on him for support, when he has found a fairly permanent and remunerative employment, when he is fit and free to wed, then the sooner he gets married the better—provided, of course, that he marries in the fear of God, with a suitable wife, having the true faith.

Some young men postpone their nuptials until they have made and saved a lot of money—until they have a business of their own, until they have an income from investments so that they may keep their wives in the style that these have been used to in the homes of their fathers. Foolish delay! If the girls are fine characters they would sooner be wooed now and have the happiness of helping in the work of saving and making the home. Five years from now, ten years from now, may be too late. Time brings many changes. And who can count on having time! The man that will live if married, may die if he remains single; for marriage, properly regulated, is conducive to longevity. Get married!

Some men wait and wait, because they do not find any woman with whom they "fall in love." They expect a spasm of emotion. They look for an electric thrill. They respect their young women very well, respect them highly, and take delight in being in their society. But they think that this feeling of esteem and affection is not sufficient. They must love; and according to the novels they have read, to be in love they must experience an ecstasy of soul, an exaltation of sentiment, a day-dream of bliss. Nonsense, nonsense! Take the good daughter of a good mother, of about your own station in life, of about the same education, who is pious, amiable and healthy, whom you like and who likes you, and promise to make as good a husband as you possibly can; and get married in the morning with a Nuptial Mass, both of you going to holy Communion: do this, be mutually true to your vows, and the sacrament of matrimony will do the rest. Get married!

Marriage is God's way for most of us. It is our vocation. That way is for us salvation. In that way it is divine. Happy is the man who has early found his love, who keeps himself pure for her dear sake, who courts her with reverence, and who marries her worthily before the altar of God!

The Secret of His Strength of Character. McClure's Magazine sketch of a mayor (Mark Fagan) who is honest and fearless because he is a fervent Catholic has since given rise to much admiring newspaper comment everywhere. But, of course, non-Catholic editors cannot be expected to emphasize the most important lesson of Mark Fagan's life, the very kernel of the secret which Mr. Steffens wrung from him with such kindly mercifulness.

We mean his practice of frequent confession. It will be remembered that when the interviewer pressed him hard to reveal the secret of his strength of will he said: "I'm a Catholic, and I go to confession ever so often. I try to have less to confess each time, and I find that I have. Gradually, I am getting to be a better man." What a splendid, practical answer this is to the misinformed people who think and say that the confessional weakens character. We Catholics know that its effect is the diametrically opposite one, that it strengthens the character, which imparts that self-knowledge, which is the bed-rock of all moral strength. But the ignorant maligners of the confessional are deceived by bad Catholics who have never approached the holy tribunal in the proper disposition of humble contrition and by apostate priests who have abused this great sacrament for the ruin of souls. What a revelation Mark Fagan's experience must be to those well-meaning dupes especially when it is published by a non-Catholic in a secular magazine. What adds to the value of this revelation is the evident reluctance that accompanied it. As none of Mark Fagan's friends could account for his wonderful hold over the citizens of Jersey City, Mr. Steffens went to Mark himself. "I want to his home with him," he writes, "and I asked him questions. He squirmed, and it wasn't pleasant for me, but I had a theory I wanted to probe into the soul of a man, and maybe it is not fine to show what you see. It hurt Mark Fagan, that interview, and the report of it will hurt him more. But I am thinking of those of us who need to see what I saw when I looked in upon the soul of Mark Fagan."—North-West Review.

Don't brood. What's past is past. Live in the present. To day has its own blessings. Bask in the light of them.

The first way to advance the Catholic cause is for Catholics to live Catholic lives, and the second way is for them to make the Catholic religion known in its reasonableness and beauty to their non-Catholic neighbors.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

An Impressive Ceremony. Midnight Mass in Rome at Christmas is still the rule and the unveiling of the miraculous statue of the Holy Infant in the church of the Ara Coeli is the joy of the young and old, who crowd the side chapel of this famous Franciscan church where it reposes.

Here on the platform near "the Bambino's" altar, cooed the little children in the days succeeding Christmas to speak beautiful little verses and sermons, sentiments of love for the Christ Child. A very impressive ceremony it is for their parents and friends at least, and even the most indifferent is reminded of the words of Holy Writ: "Oz of the mouths of babes," etc.—Freeman's Journal.

St. Agnes. REV. HENRY A. BRANN, D. D.

This little girl was the rosetbud of Catholic society in the ages of Roman persecution. Except the Blessed Virgin there is no one, considering her age and her trials, more famous in the annals of the church, for heroic virtue. The greatest of the fathers of the Roman church, have written her eulogium. Saint Jerome in one of his letters says that her praise in his time resounded in all tongues, churches and nations. Saint Ambrose, Saint Augustine, and the Popes St. Damasus and Saint Gregory the Great, famous writers like Saint Martin of Tours, Venantius Fortunatus, and Maximus of Turin have written her paeany; and the poet, Prudentius has sung the praises of her virtues.

Although the acts of her glorious martyrdom are not authentic; and although ascribed to Saint Ambrose, the "History of her Sufferings" is of an other writer, yet the facts of her life and the manner of her death were all so notorious and her sanctity so universally recognized that the church conferred on her the special honor of being one of the few saints named in the Canon of the Mass and in the "Litanies of the Saints."

All records and traditions agree in stating that she was a child of remarkable beauty, the daughter of a wealthy Roman, and that she was always a Christian.

At the age of thirteen she refused an offer of marriage from a distinguished young Roman; because, as she told him, she had already pledged her heart and body to the holy love of Jesus Christ. Stung by her refusal, the young pagan, dominated by the hate and the last which paganism inspired, denounced her as a Christian to the prefect of the city, who used in vain every means to induce her to break her vow of purity and to consent to marry her pagan admirer. But vain were the inducements of wealth, honor, and human love, supplemented by terrible threats, among others that of sending her to a house of ill-fame. Nothing shows better the utter depravity of the pagans of the time than this threat, which was frequently carried out against Christian women during the ten early persecutions of the church. It was enforced in the case of Agnes.

There is no more sublime spectacle offered in history than that of this little virgin condemned by a Roman Judge, with the sanction of the by-standers and of Roman society, to an infamous life; and the answer of the fearless heroine with her beautiful eyes, in which the light of Christ's incomparable beauty shone, lifted to heaven; with her rosy little hands clasped in prayer, while from immaculate lips and mouth were uttered to her judge:

"If thou knowest the Lord Whom I serve thou wouldst not dare threaten me thus. I tell thee that my Lord will not allow me to worship thy idols, nor permit thee nor them to rob me of my virgin crown." Her prayer was rewarded; for an angel of God protected her, so that the vile man who tried to assault her was stricken blind and dead. She was then accused of high treason against the gods of the state and condemned to death by the sword.

She went cheerfully to the place of execution and by her youth, beauty, innocence and fortitude moved to tears some of the pagans who witnessed her virginity blushed into greater beauty when she dipped in the red blood of her martyrdom. She was put to death A. D. 304. Her body was buried by her parents on a place which they owned on the Nomentan Road, a short distance outside the walls of the city of Rome. Her grave became the center of the celebrated cemetery of Saint Agnes.

The church celebrates two feasts in her honor the 21st and the 28th of January, the former the day of her death, and the latter the day of her apparition after death to her parents.

The Greek church celebrates three feasts of Saint Agnes: one on the 14th, one on 21st of January, and the third on 5th of July. Her name as one of the greatest saints of the Roman church is found in the calendar of Rome and of Carthage. The Emperor Constantine, at the entreaty of his daughter, Constantia, built a beautiful basilica over her tomb. It is one of the most remarkable of the Roman churches; and in it on every 21st day of January her feast is celebrated with great solemnity. On this day and at this church are also blessed the lambs from whose wool palliums are made and then sent by the Popes to Archbishops.

As she appeared to her parents, according to the tradition on eight days after her death accompanied by a white lamb, medieval and modern art have frequently painted her with this symbol of innocence and purity. Every great city has a church in her honor. St. Agnes' church in New York has two very large authenticated relics of the saint.

Her cult is a favorite among little children, especially school girls, and in our parochial schools many of them strive to emulate her virtues. One such little girl is now dying on the Christmas eve within view of the place where I am writing. With flushed cheeks she lies in the throes of death, her rosary beside her in bed, and her constant prayer is: "Sweet St. Agnes, I love you and I want you to take me to heaven."

IF HE CANNOT CURE—HE KILLS.

Dr. Walter Kemper, of Milwaukee, said recently: "On one occasion in my practice as a physician I took upon myself the responsibility of putting a patient out of his misery, and I believe that God will justify the act."

That is to say, this doctor took the responsibility and killed his patient. The patient, evidently insane, had a letter written by his mother, in which she begged him to put her out of her misery. She was in great suffering and this doctor was called in, and he thus tells what he did. "What are you going to do?" I asked of the attending physician. "I think we had better inject morphine," he replied. "How much?" I asked. "About ten drops," he replied. "My—man, fill the syringe," I said. "I don't like to take the responsibility," he answered. "He gave me the syringe and the drug, and I relieved her of her intense suffering,"—That is, he killed her by injecting a dose of morphine that he knew would kill her.

This act was not only contrary to the law of God, but against the Criminal Law and the Medical Code of ethics for this last requires the physician to do all in his power to save life, to do nothing to kill. He committed a crime against the medical profession, which that profession should not delay to repudiate and condemn; and the civil law should deprive him of the right to practice medicine. The sick should avoid him as the convicted criminal would avoid the executioner.

He appeals to God for justification, but God says: "Thou shalt not kill." He does not say: "Thou shalt not kill except to relieve pain but, Thou shalt not kill." Agnes He says: "Whoso shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed; for man is made to the image of God."

This homicide further says: "The woman was a Roman Catholic, and the priest who had been called to see her, when I told him what I had done, said: 'Doctor, you did right.'"

We believe this misrepresents the priest. He might have appeared of rendering the patient insensible to pain by the use of a drug to suspend consciousness for a time, but that is a very different thing from relieving pain by taking life. No priest would take to a homicide, a poisoner: "You did right." A doctor who is ready to take the responsibility of poisoning his patient should not be permitted near the sickbed. Pain is bad, but a homicide is worse. The theory that a physician has the right to determine when would greatly reduce the business of the divorce courts.—New York Free man's Journal.

THE END OF MAN. In other days that our own it would have been folly to moot the question whether there is a final as well as an efficient cause for the existence of man. At present, however, causes have been related to the superstitions of the middle ages and things are explained by chance.

For the advocates of the chance doctrine we have no brief. Neither has any serious man. We believe, as the rest of men, that we exist for a purpose, that we exist for a special end, and that end is the honor and glory of God which we attain by saving our own souls.

Can we know, apart from divine revelation, that we were created for our own beatitude? Is there anything in ourselves or in the order of nature by which we may conclude that we live for a higher and happier world than our own?

It might seem that we are begging the question by assuming that everything exists for its own perfection. But this fact is made clear by a simple study of things about us. Do not even the plants and animals seek what is for their good? And why unless there is within them some impulse, given to them by a superior being, forcing them to tend to their own perfection?

There is in man, however, a stronger and nobler faculty which proves more clearly that we live for our own perfection. That faculty is the will. For in every movement of our lives we act only because we wish to obtain some good. It may be, and frequently it is the case, that the good we strive to obtain is only an apparent good; that is a good which perfects not the whole man but some particular appetite of faculty. Nevertheless we reach out for the object of our desire precisely because it is good. And this fact is sufficient to prove that our will, blindly as it were, is impelled to grasp for the good.

Not in the argument weakened because the will may sometimes embrace the lower in preference to the higher good. For we are not arguing about good objects, or good in the concrete sense. The point we are making is that the formal object of the will is the good, that the will must embrace good and only in as much as it is good, although in instances it may not embrace this or that particular good object.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the end of man is his own perfection, his own beatitude, he conceives it, when every desire of the human heart, when every desire, and when no longer engaged in struggling for the good the will may rest in the inalienable possession of it.

That good in which the heart will rest completely satisfied can be only the infinite good. For only the infinite good can fill every want of the human heart. That is why we can never rest satisfied with riches or pleasures in the present life. What we long for is a good that knows no limits, that is inexhaustible, that can meet our every desire. And only the all-good God Himself is infinite, inexhaustible and capable of making us happy forever.—Providence Visitor.

"NO FEAR OF HELL." President J. J. Gould Schurman, of Cornell University, delivered a remarkable address on the universal craze for wealth before the union meeting of the Associated Academic Principals of the State of New York. He said:

"If a visitor from Mars alighted on our continent he would hear the pulpits proclaim 'Glorify God'; but he would find it the general practice to 'Glorify Gold.'"

"Are we then in the twentieth century to revert to the barbarous worship of Mammon? Are Americans to renounce their Christian heritage? Are they to repudiate the law of righteousness? Are they to disclaim the Hellenic call to reason and beauty? Are they to spurn the dignity and glory of mankind in order to concentrate all their energies on the gratification of the instincts which which we possess in common with the brutes, and which, when excessively followed and satisfied, only leave us more complacently and more hopelessly brutish?"

It is a generation which has no fear of God before its eyes; it fears no hell; it fears nothing but the criminal court, the penitentiary and the scaffold. To escape the ugly avengers of civil society is its only categorical imperative, the only law with which its Sinai terrors.

"To get there and not get caught is its only Golden Rule. To 'get rich quick' the financiers of this age will rob the widow and the orphan, grind the faces of the poor, speculate in trust funds and purchase immunity by using other people's money to bribe legislators, judges and magistrates."

"And then we hear the praises of the poor boys who have become millionaires. O God, send us men of honor and integrity!"

BRILLIANT CATHOLIC JAP

WHO IS EDUCATING HIMSELF AT NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY. Yosabro F. Sugita, a young Japanese student who has been a pupil at St. Mary's Institute, Drayton, has gone to Notre Dame, Ind., to enter the university there.

Mr. Sugita is the son of a wealthy coal merchant in Japan. Disregarding his ample opportunities for a life of ease and luxury and the emoluments that accrue to a family prominent in the political and commercial life of his country, the son came to the United States to apply himself to the details of the Western civilization.

He entered St. Mary's institute where he remained until about two months ago. Diligence, perseverance and strict adherence to duty enabled him to overcome obstacles that to the average young man in his circumstances would have appeared insurmountable. He advanced with remarkable rapidity in his studies and was thus enabled to enter the Freshman class of Notre Dame University at the beginning of the second semester. In three years he will complete a course in political science with the ultimate object of fitting himself for diplomatic service.

Upon his graduation he will become attached to the office of the Japanese legation at Washington, and will remain in this country for several years, after which he will be eligible for foreign diplomatic service in the interests of his government.

Sugita is twenty years old, but precocious. He speaks English fluently and is also a brilliant French conversationalist. In bearing he is studious and thoughtful.

An interesting paragraph appeared lately in the Madras Mail in which mention is made of the first Englishman in India. Catholics should indeed be proud to learn that he was a Jesuit missionary—Thomas Stephens—who landed near Goa in 1579, and spent forty years of his life in spreading Catholic truth. He wrote a long and remarkable poem on Christianity in the Marathi dialect, forty verses in length.

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"With fills of mind and body the moralist is not directly concerned, but the mental and physical deterioration caused by cigarettes produces a corresponding moral degeneration by weakening the will and the capacity to resist evil. A man's moral fibre is only as strong as his will power, which is the backbone of morality. Weaken or destroy that, and you make man a prey to every allurements—a puppet in the hands of Satan. Strengthen it and man becomes a king, greater than he who matches a city."

The great master of the spiritual life St. Ignatius Loyola—makes the resolve to do right contingent upon strong conviction or clearness of mental vision; and if he lived in our era of nerve-destroying agencies he would with modern psychologists, point out one other condition—a sound and well-poised nervous system. Moral degenerates are always nervous wrecks, and a nervous breakdown means enfeebled will to resist its deadly influence upon the nerves and will, dulls the clear-cut vision of right and wrong, blunts the fine edge of moral accountability and weakens the moral resolve to do right at any cost. It is therefore, the foe of good morals and antagonistic to the development of the spiritual sense.

"With mind, body and will stunted the cigarette victim finds his power to resist temptation weakened, and must needs grow less honest, less truthful and less pure. A craving so abnormal naturally creates appetite for other and graver vices."

"Is it any wonder that good judges of character have no confidence in youths who smoke cigarettes?"

Doubtless one reason why so many good intentions fail to be realized is found in the fact that individuals rely too generously upon their own strength in place of invoking daily the blessing of God upon their efforts.

Good citizenship and rejection of the Ten Commandments are contradictions, for the laws of the country have their beginning in the laws of God.

No man is responsible for the salvation of his neighbor's soul. But if he be responsible for the loss of that soul he will be held accountable.

A PRIEST ON THE EVILS OF CIGARETTE SMOKING.

FATHER RIORDAN COMMENTS PROPOSED LEGISLATION IN MARYLAND. Baltimore, Md., January 29.—The evil effects of cigarette smoking by boys were graphically pictured in the course of a sermon preached yesterday by Rev. M. J. Riordan, of St. Charles church, Pikesville, the priest's remarks being based on bills that will come before the State Senate.

"Thoughtful persons will approve the proposed legislation of Annapolis for the suppression of cigarette smoking among boys," said Father Riordan. "To prohibit a thing because it is abused by the few is an unwarrantable interference with personal rights, but to suppress what is a curse to the many much is to be said in favor of the moderate use of tobacco by grown persons, medical science is unanimous in forbidding it for boys. Many of the foremost educators and physicians have declared the cigarette an insidious poison, sapping the mental and physical strength of our youth."

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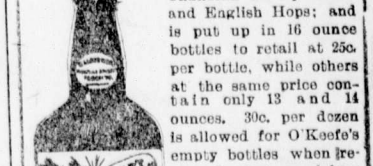
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