

About this book . . .

The author of this book, who is Auxiliary Bishop of Malines, is a well-known authority on the subject of Catholic Action. Bishop Suenens regards the term 'missionary' as applying not merely to those countries where there are missions in the strict sense of the word, but as a universal characteristic of the Church solemnly charged by Christ to 'Go, teach all nations . . .'

Speaking with the full authority of his office, the author writes with a clarity and a simplicity which all will understand. He does not shrink from analysing the state of affairs not only in pagan countries, or among those who have become separated from the Church, but also in those countries which have always been Catholic. The picture is far from encouraging. It demands a tremendous effort of the apostolate and one which is of extreme urgency. He is fully aware of the many sincere objections and excuses which are made by priests and laity alike and which are, very often, an unconscious means of evading any extra personal effort. He is equally alive to the arguments based on the fact that it is no use preaching the Gospel until a better state of social affairs has been attained. And the Bishop knows quite well that a mere enthusiasm for apostolic work is not enough in itself and that great problems of training and instruction remain to be faced and solved.

Not everyone will agree with the author's analysis, or with his suggestions and conclusions, but every priest and layman who has at heart a desire for a greater and better world and for a more effective apostolate of the Church in the world will find in this book plenty of material for reflection, encouragement to think anew the problems that must be faced, a stimulus to nobler and wider activity and, underlying it all, the author's confidence in the ever deepening spiritual and mystical conception of the Church's apostolate.

In the words of Cardinal Montini, Archbishop of Milan, who contributes a Preface to this edition, 'This is a disturbing and a courageous book . . . but fundamentally it is an optimistic book . . . a book to be read. . . .'

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THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE Mgr. Suenens

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NEWMAN

Mgr. Suenens
Preface by CARDINAL MONTINI

By the same author

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THEOLOGY OF THE APOSTOLATE OF
THE LEGION OF MARY

EDEL QUINN: A HEROINE OF THE APOSTOLATE

THE RIGHT VIEW OF MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE

by

The Right Reverend
LEON-JOSEPH SUENENS
Bishop Auxiliary of Malines

With a Preface by
HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL MONTINI
Archbishop of Milan

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PREFACE

I AM indeed fortunate to be able to introduce this book. Someone else could do it much better than I can, but since I am unable to let slip any occasion of announcing the Kingdom of God, it appears to me that I must accept the invitation which I have received to present to the public, and particularly to the Catholic laity, this new work of the distinguished Auxiliary Bishop of Malines, Monsignor Suenens. The author's name alone, indeed, would make a preface unnecessary, on account of the high position that he occupies, of the ministry which he exercises in the largest diocese in the world, and of the fame that his other writings have brought him. But, when all is said and done, *utile per inutile non vitiatur*, what is unnecessary does not spoil what is useful.

The theme of this book is so important that it cannot leave unaffected anyone who has at heart a love of the Church, or is conscious of the spiritual crisis in the world, or who follows attentively the developments of the defects and the conquests of the Catholic faith in our time. This theme is presented to us in its impressive simplicity and grandeur: it is the dramatic presentation of the Church Militant in contemporary history.

The scene is a spectacular one, in which wide and profound views combine to emphasize the intense interest of that decisive struggle. The nerve centre of this battlefield is no doubt the history of our own time, but all round it there is an age-old tradition, today shaken and strained to breaking-point; there is civilization, subjected to a mighty trial, which will decide whether it is to be Christian or merely human; there is culture, advancing philosophical theories and seeking to deduce from them new and powerful ideas which will govern the world; there is the whole of society, fluid and

fluctuating like a storm-tossed sea, troubled by the most diverse and contradictory currents. The hour appears to be apocalyptic, and indeed it is so. The central figure is Christ suffering in His Church, amid the legalized tortures of persecution, the cursings of His enemies, the desertion of His disciples, of whom only a few remain faithful in their suffering and are animated by an unconquerable love. At the very moment at which it seems to be the most disproved, the prophecy of Christ is being accomplished: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto myself." (John 12. 32).

For the drama has two aspects: on the one hand there is civilized society deserting Christ; on the other the Church, who by the vitality of her apostolate endeavours to bring the world back to Him.

It is with the second and positive aspect of the question that this book deals, not so much by outlining schemes of the progress achieved or by drawing up statistics of successes attained as rather by proclaiming the duty which is incumbent upon anyone who calls himself a Catholic, the duty to work for the defence and spread of the truth, and by pointing out some of the chief criteria of such work which, for the writer, is work of a missionary kind.

The book begins by calling for a general mobilization of all the children of the Church for the purpose of making good her losses, defending her positions, of recovering her scattered members and of winning new ones. The Church is entering a dynamic phase in her history, her whole organism is being set in motion in order to increase her apostolic efficiency. This immense effort, far from exhausting the Mystical Body of Christ, reinvigorates it, rejuvenates it, and causes it to flower anew. But the effort must be tremendous and complete: it covers the whole of the Church's traditional heritage of institutes which work under her jurisdiction; it attempts

to rouse them, to make them reflect on their function, to make them consider the real end for which they were created, adapting themselves to the spiritual needs of our age; it reforms and modernizes them and gives them efficiency. It takes issue boldly and vehemently with those elements which are already active in the Church, the hierarchy, the clergy, religious men and women, and tries to make them as alert and apt for the work of the apostolate as they possibly can be. But the greatest and most remarkable effort is being put forward today by those members of the Church who, in past times, were passive rather than active, namely, the laity. And this is the new note which is struck: the laity are also called upon to collaborate in the work of the apostolate; the command of the Popes of our age, the cry of modern saints, the voice of the lay forerunners and guides of this great movement, like a powerful force penetrate the Christian body, still sound but inert; they lift it up, disturb it, in order to transform it. Is not every Christian a soldier of Christ? The hour for positive action has sounded: what is to be thought of anyone who would linger, passive and sluggish, deploring the evils of our day, and taking pleasure in criticizing those of their brothers who show a more generous goodwill than they do?

The eminent author of this book knows this problem intimately, and, among the objections to the theme which he propounds, he chooses the most specious, the one most regrettably notorious, the objection formulated by Montuclard: that at the sight of whole populations almost entirely lost to the Christian faith, discouragement gets the upper hand; to attempt evangelization seems not only useless but a mockery of the material needs of a worn-out and starving world. We must first, they say, deliver these people from their material wretchedness, and that at once—and only afterwards preach the Gospel to them. When that

“afterwards” will come, cannot be foreseen. This would mean abandoning the religious apostolate and distrusting its many-sided efficacious force; it would mean the reversal of our sense of values and of no longer believing in the primacy of spiritual things. Mgr. Suenens gives a magnificent reply to these temptations which, whilst due to the agony of a weary and vanquished missionary, cannot hold out against the ruthless logic of the Gospel.

This is a disturbing and a courageous book, because it springs from a close observation of the existing weaknesses of the Christian community: but fundamentally it is an optimistic book. After awakening a sense of collective responsibility, it examines in a restrained and judicious spirit various methods of action in the modern apostolate. With a clear vision and a vigorous style, the writer marshals all his arguments to one conclusion, namely, the necessity, the possibility of that energy which, springing from love, can alone bring forth within the Church a new spirit of a missionary apostolate and thus save the world. This is a book to be read.

✠ JOHN BAPTIST CARDINAL MONTINI
Archbishop of Milan

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INTRODUCTION

The whole Church must set itself in a state of missionary activity.

CARDINAL FELTIN

THE growing dechristianization of the masses, which so many recent studies have emphasized, has set the problem of the apostolate in the foreground of current thought. It is no longer only in lands beyond the sea, but at home in countries called Christian, that the question calls for an answer: how are we to reach the neo-pagans that surround us? How shall we carry the message of Christ to that multitude of unbelievers, of indifferent souls, of "half-baptized" Christians?

The problem is one that moves deeply, and with good reason, not alone the clergy, but the laity also, as the recent controversy concerning the experiment of the priest workers has shown. This awakened consciousness of responsibility is in itself a mark of progress, of revival. "To be at ease is to be unsafe," said Newman.

Men are seeking for a solution of the problem, because they feel that it is growing ever more widespread and that all efforts should be pooled in order to resolve it.

In the history of the Church we have reached a new phase, that of a general mobilization of all Christians. Pius XI, and after him Pius XII, have repeated again and again how urgent and how necessary is the universal duty of the apostolate.

We must take note, however, that the Popes did not create this obligation; they recalled it with unequalled persistence, seeking to rouse minds grown tepid, to awaken Catholic consciences. The Church is apostolic by her very nature. As Canon Dondeyne truly wrote:

The Church is in essence a missionary body. She continues and extends the apostolic community, instituted by Christ to announce the message. She is sprung from the Word of God and is at the service of that Word. She is the new Israel, carrying on and renewing the mission of the chosen people for the salvation of the world. The Biblical concept of election is not synonymous with sinecure; it is inseparable from the idea of a mission and a ministry; that is to say that the divine election, while creating a special intimacy with God, implies the idea of a vocation, a call, and consequently of responsibility before God. By baptism and faith the Christian becomes a member of the apostolic community, he enters into the intentions of God for the world, he is called to open his heart to the salvific Will of God with regard to sinful humanity; for this reason his prayer must be henceforth: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done." In short, to belong to the Church of Christ constitutes at once a grace and a responsibility, and creates for every Christian the duty of collaborating in the edification of the Church, in both senses of the word "edify."¹

The Popes merely invite us to translate into action our fundamental vocation "to become what we are," that is, to draw a logical conclusion from the consequences of our baptism. This was what His Eminence Cardinal Feltrin wished to recall, when he quoted the words set at the head of these pages and which they seek to echo: "The whole Church must set itself in a state of missionary activity." These words are full of meaning. They must be taken literally, as marching orders. Each of us, priest, religious, layman, must take them to heart and draw his conclusions. They oblige us to revise our conception of the apostolate in all its stages. They are true for the individual soul, from which they call for an examination of conscience; they are

¹ *Fondements théologiques du laïc missionnaire*, in *Echanges*, June 1954, pp. 10-11.

true for an institution, which must be judged and considered afresh in their light. They raise a question of organization, of "conditioning." They repeat to us without evasion that the Church in this world is a militant Church.

There are ways of life that may suit peace times, but are not suitable for a state of war. The Church wishes Christians, everywhere and in every rank, to take an active part in the evangelization of the world. This is, more than ever, the hour for a radiating, apostolic, missionary Christian faith. It is the hour for the organization of all Christian forces in a direct religious apostolate, commensurate with the need.

When we speak of a direct apostolate, we unite here under one head all forms of the apostolate. The apostolate, whether general or specialized, is fundamentally the same in its nature, and that is sufficient for our present plan.

A certain widely-circulated form of pastoral literature has spread the idea that the hour for a direct apostolate among the dechristianized masses has gone by, or rather has not yet come. It is the fundamental thesis of a book, *Les événements et la foi*, by M. Montuclard. The ideas expressed in this book represent the views of a group, *Jeunesse d'Église* (Youth in the Church), and in varying degrees have gained wide acceptance. We shall return later to a consideration of these ideas.

In direct opposition to this extreme position, which was condemned by the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops of France (October 1952) and by the Holy See (the book was put on the Index March 16, 1953), we would wish to begin by defining the authentic meaning of the term evangelization, and its connotation for human nature.

We shall then show the need for a direct religious apostolate, as it is seen in the lives of Christ and the apostles, whose example today as ever is a law for Christians.

We generally use the term "apostolic" as synonymous with

“missionary” in its wide sense. This latter attribute implies more particularly the nature of action directed outwards, towards those who do not come to us of their own accord, towards the dechristianized or non-Christian masses; whereas the term “apostolic” includes also action exercised among practising Catholics. We leave out of consideration the controversies that have arisen over the canonical meaning of the term “missionary.” As Fr. Dewailly, O.P., points out, the New Testament knows but one form of apostolate, the “Mission.” The two terms “Apostolate” and “Mission” are there treated as identical in meaning: they both signify “a sending”; so that the expression “missionary apostolate” appears tautological. We are not excluding the work *ad intra*, but our attention is centred primarily *ad extra*. The “missionary” vocation proper to every Christian has in it something of the vocation of Abraham, to whom the Lord gave the command: “Go forth out of thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee” (Acts 7. 3). We too are called upon to leave our familiar surroundings and go to the masses which have grown more and more alien to us: that is the land which God shows us. The reader of these pages must continually bear in mind this primary consideration.

This apostolic duty laid on all is seen besides to be a communal duty, a task to be accomplished jointly by priests, religious and laity. It is for the priest and his immediate auxiliaries—religious men and women, brothers, members of secular institutions, souls dedicated to God—to stimulate and organize the laity for apostolic work. We shall lay stress on the need for unity in that collaboration. The worth of an army may be gauged from the quality of its officers. There are no bad soldiers, said Napoleon—and he may be supposed to have known—there are only bad officers.

But one who wishes to lead others to action must have

been trained himself in a practical and concrete way, with this end in view. Our final chapters will be pedagogical and will deal with the need, the methods and the advantages of such a direct initiation into the apostolate.

We have concentrated our attention upon the Church as a missionary body. Need it be said that this is not the only aspect of the Church? She has a part to play, both on the vertical plane in her relations with God, and on the horizontal plane in her relations with men. To lift men to God and to bring God to men are two aspects of her mission which complete one another and are equally necessary. We may distinguish the Church in a state of missionary activity from the Church at prayer or in sacramental action. An apostolate which should fail to recognize the fundamental place of the interior life of personal or communal prayer, of humility founded on an entire dependence on God, would be empty of all substance and doomed from the outset to failure.

The action of which we shall speak is not to be confused in any way with a shallow restlessness, touching only the surface of our lives: it loses all meaning if it is deprived of its soul. That “soul of all apostolic work” of which we have spoken in *Theology of the Apostolate*, we assume to be always present, vivifying from within every effort for the glory of God. *Narrabo nomen tuum fratribus meis, in medio Ecclesiae laudabo Te.* “I will declare thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the Church will I praise thee,” cries the Psalmist, showing in these words that mission and prayer are united. By bringing to men the message of God, we raise up worshippers to Him: the apostolate leads to worship, as worship leads to the apostolate, by a normal consequence. It is important never to forget the strength of that bond.

We must add that to organize the Church in a state of missionary activity is a vast problem with many aspects. It goes without saying that this exposition of the direct organ-

ized apostolate is as fully applicable in the family and social sphere as on the individual plane. A Christian is at once a person and a member of many groups: the apostolate must satisfy each of these various exigencies and adapt its teaching to their character. We do not pretend to deal exhaustively with the subject: we wish merely to draw attention to some of the major problems on which all efficacious action depends and which are perhaps insufficiently emphasized in current pastoral writing. These pages are intended to awaken in all Catholics a keener consciousness of our individual missionary duty. To those who, by their vocation, are leaders of their brothers they seek to give a more intrepid determination to organize for action—not only with all their hearts, but also with all their understanding—the latent and too often uncultivated spiritual energies of the faithful laity. May the Holy Ghost grant us to be, each in the place appointed to him, docile to His inspiration and to His renewing power: *Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur et renovabis faciem terrae!*

CHAPTER ONE

THE WORLD TO BE EVANGELIZED

Et quid mundo tam periculosum quam non recepisse Christum?

What greater peril is there for the world than not to receive Christ?

ST. HILARY

IN the Lord's Prayer, we say daily to God: "Thy Kingdom come." The world exists for that end alone. Hence one question is all-important in the history of mankind: what stage has been reached by this reign of God here below? How is it with the evangelization of the world, confided by Christ to His Church for all time? We cannot ignore that crucial question.

The reply may be expressed in a few figures.

Twenty centuries after the coming of Christ, the earth is peopled by 2,440 million human beings; of these, 472 million are Catholics, that is, roughly, 20 per cent. The non-Catholics amount to nearly 2,000 million.

That figure, as we know, haunted the nights of His Holiness Pius XI.

So much for the present day.

With regard to the future, we must take one fact into account: Catholic births amount to 5.4 million annually, while the non-Catholic world increases by 22.3 million during the same period, which means that, for one Catholic born, four non-Catholics are added to the population of the earth. To complete the calculation it should be noted that the population of the earth has increased fourfold in the last three centuries, and is increasing continually. Such is the rate of progress for the future.

But perhaps the Catholic "bloc" is rich in vitality and the power of expansion?

Let us consider the Catholic total again: roughly 500 million; and examine it lucidly and with courage.

This figure includes countries which are nominally Catholic: Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Latin America. The religious situation of these countries may be painted on a Rembrandtesque canvas, with contrasting light and shade. We do not contest the luminous aspects of the picture, rich in hope, especially among the *élite*: we merely say that there are dark shadows too. Some recent studies on the practice of religion in those countries invite reflection. Even without considering the result of these enquiries, anyone may have ocular proof of the progress of materialism, of laicism, of religious indifference, of the relaxation of the moral code.

These facts all force us to the conclusion that an immense apostolic effort is urgently necessary if we are willing to obey the order of Christ and announce the Gospel to every creature. For it is indeed an order and it must be obeyed; therefore it can be obeyed, for God does not command us to do the impossible. It goes without saying that this order of the Master's does not interfere with the liberty of those who accept or refuse the Message. God's command is "to go," "to preach the Gospel," "to teach all nations," "to knock at the door." He does not state precisely how often, or to what extent, men will receive the Message.

If, after twenty centuries of Christianity, the situation is what it is today, the fault is not God's: God has not failed men; it is men who have failed God. We have not given our measure, "good measure and pressed down," of human collaboration with His indefectible and faithful grace. The figures cited above show that Christians have not understood the need and the extent of their duty to be active apostles.

They have not realized that it is their part, with God's grace, to set the world on fire.

An enquiry recently made to discover the degree of apostolic zeal among Catholics revealed the following facts: 72 per cent of those questioned admitted that they had never tried to bring a convert into the Church; only 28 per cent said they had tried and—curious to relate—with success in seventeen cases. This throws a striking light, both on a state of widespread inertia, and on the possibility of success at the first serious effort. The sin of omission on the part of a clear majority of Catholics calls for an examination of our conscience, an examination all the more strict that such a want of apostolic dynamism is not found elsewhere. To judge ourselves adequately, there is nothing so useful as the play of contrast. Let us consider for a moment how things are outside the Church's frontiers.

A GLANCE AT THE COMMUNIST WORLD

A gigantic struggle is in progress between the Church and irreligion or anti-religion, disseminated chiefly by Communism—between the Church, universal by divine right, and atheistic Communism, which exercises control over 800 million men, a third of the human race, and, among these, nearly 70 million Catholics. How does the enemy wage this war? How does he train his fighting men? How is this "Islam of the twentieth century" spread through the world? It is true that the methods of the Christian apostolate cannot be compared, as though on one plane, with the technique of conquest employed by the Communists, which knows no law but utilitarianism. In any case, the mystery of the contest between liberty and grace makes it impossible to conceive of the apostolate as a profane technique; there is a world of difference between the supernatural Christian

apostolate, vivified by the grace of Redemption, and the conquering force of the militant Marxist. But the comparison is possible under some human aspects. For grace, as we know, does not destroy nature; it calls for man's collaboration, for effort and courage and ingenuity and initiative, in the psychological sense. That we depend on the promises of Almighty God gives us no right to fold our arms and offer only mediocre and routine service. From this point of view we can and should compare forces and methods of action. *Fas est ab hoste doceri.*

It is easy to draw up a list of the evil ways of Communism, to denounce its fundamental inhumanity, its contempt for genuine liberty, its concentration camps, its systems and its tortures. All that is only too true and must be said. But there is a more urgent duty to perform: that of penetrating the reason for its influence and the key to its success. Communism arouses in millions of its followers a faith, a fanaticism, which are not merely factitious. Doubtless—and to forget this would be to distort the comparison—the success of Communism is due in great measure to the material destitution of the masses, which is still so heartrending, particularly in the under-developed countries, where the population exists in sub-human conditions. Hunger, which racks nearly 60 per cent of the world's inhabitants, is in itself a cause of social upheaval. Communism has behind it too the drive of totalitarian governments and unscrupulous propaganda: these are trump cards which no Christian can use. Nevertheless we must recognize that it undoubtedly relies on constructive factors as well. Communism has a quality of asceticism, a mystical teaching, a spirit of complete sacrifice for the cause, which His Holiness Pius XII emphasized in his message for Christmas 1954, and which in part explains its attraction. There is in it an immense power of persuasion and indoctrination, which it would be dangerous to belittle

and the secret of which we ought to penetrate. See at close quarters what is happening in China: all the expelled missionaries tell us that the Communists aim at getting hold of each individual soul and converting it to a new vision of the world. Read the remarkable book of Fr. Dufay, *Red Star versus the Cross*,¹ and grasp how important are the stakes and how efficient the methods of working. Children receive detailed instruction and training. They begin at the age of six with a daily lesson in politics. Older children are prepared for the "Apostolate" by study and progressive training in an active assimilation of the new ideas.

The adults too go through a sort of Communistic catechumenate. As soon as they have been trained, these new converts set off in pairs for the most distant villages, in order to pass on the faith they have received. At the end of two or three weeks, they have to report on their mission, after which they are assigned new tasks. They have even been told that they must hate their father and mother, if the cause may be served thereby, and that a man's life is of no account when the happiness of humanity is in question. Innumerable messengers are sent to disseminate Communism, step by step, and at all times, by mixing with the crowd in the streets, the markets, the trains, on the roadside, in the cafés. They are trained to indoctrinate others and are always on duty, with the one aim of transforming the mentality that surrounds them, of fashioning men of the new type. A Belgian Scheut missionary, Fr. Schijns, former rector of the Verbiest Academy in Peking, stated recently that a people's commissar was given charge of the political and philosophical education of seven persons. This veritable "brain washing," carried on continuously and in measured doses, is in the hands of agents who utilize every means of influence to

¹ Translated into English by Douglas Hyde (Paternoster Publications, 26 Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.7).

bring the "message of freedom" to even the most illiterate; all things—the Press, the screen, the radio—every device is made use of for this conquest of minds and hearts. Notwithstanding the complete indifference to moral considerations in the methods adopted, the result of this tremendous activity is not to be denied: opinions which were imposed by force in the beginning end by spreading, and by being accepted as unquestionable facts. The leaders, methodically trained with the sole aim of mobilizing the masses in the service of the community, have succeeded only too well. No one can deny the persuasive dynamism of the Communist "Apostolate."

A GLANCE AT THE RELIGIOUS SECTS

One might also study the "apostolic" methods of organizations like the "Moral Rearmament" group that we have described elsewhere. The dynamic force exerted, the personal abnegation which is at the base of this vast enterprise aimed at "transforming the world," the regard for others and the anxiety to influence them directly manifested by its adepts, are in themselves forces of positive value, despite the reserve with which their doctrinal message must be viewed. In a still more general way, an enquiry into the innumerable religious sects which multiply before our eyes reveals an astonishingly alert "apostolic" sense. The recent studies of Fr. Chéry, O.P., on the Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Friends of Man, the Pentecostists, the Mormons, etc., are most suggestive.¹ To cite only Jehovah's Witnesses, the writer tells us that this body is divided into three sections,

¹ See *L'offensive des sectes*, "Rencontres" series, Editions du Cerf, 1954. Extracts from this book may be found in *Documentation Catholique*, 1953, pp. 403-432. See also M. Benoît Lavand, O.P., *Sectes modernes et foi catholique*, "Les Religions" series, Aubier, 1954; Maurice Colinon, *Faux Prophètes et sectes d'aujourd'hui*, "Présences" series, Plon, 1953.

according to the extent of their apostolate: the Servants, who undertake apostolic work as far as their circumstances allow, the Pioneers, who are required *ex professo* to devote a considerable time to it, and finally, the Special Pioneers, who are practically full-time workers. They are operating today in 125 countries and number half a million Pioneers. We cannot enter into detail for each sect. Suffice it to say that the enquiry concerning the practice of apostolic activity alluded to above, and which revealed a grave neglect on the part of Catholics, showed that, on the Protestant side, 59 per cent stated that they had tried to make converts, with an average success of 43 per cent. We may believe that these figures are accurate, judging by the success of the sects we see at work. The contrast is significant.

TWO ATTITUDES

All this zeal displayed outside the Church or on its borders appeals for very shame to the apostolic spirit of the faithful of the One Church. The world is hungry for God and is dying for want of knowing its Saviour.

The sight of the dechristianization or of the non-conversion of the world may result in two attitudes, both equally defeatist. One may simply do as the majority are tempted to do and practise the policy of the ostrich: close one's eyes, absorb oneself in a narrow personal sphere—the parish or a special spiritual work—allow oneself to be hypnotized by a few consoling statistics, and leave the multitude that surrounds us everywhere to drift aimlessly, on the pretext that its fate does not concern us. That is defeatism by omission or unconscious blindness, by conservative and apathetic narrow-mindedness.

One may also—and this is another form of defeatism, inspired by a more generous and therefore less widespread

spirit, but vitiated by a naturalistic viewpoint—go towards the multitude with hands outstretched, but not bearing the Gospel, because one wishes to offer them first the immediate temporal solution of the problems that beset their lives. Such is the attitude of those who say that we must attempt the conversion of the world, not from above, but from below, by accepting the “dialectic of history,” and engaging in a purely human activity, on the chance of being able to turn it some day towards God.

On the threshold of this book we meet these two defeatist attitudes.

The next chapter will show, contradicting the naturalistic surrender, that the salvation of the world is a supernatural work of grace, but one that goes to the very heart of man and of civilization.

Chapter three will say, in opposition to the timid and conservative type of defeatism, that the salvation of the world is in our hands, that the duty of a direct religious apostolate, carried to the very heart of the masses, is more than ever a burning question of the day, and that we must dare to undertake and organize it, even at the risk of destroying the peace of so-called practising Catholics, if they are to escape the famous words of reproach addressed by Cardinal Pie to his contemporaries: “Prudence is everywhere, and before long courage will be nowhere. We shall die of wisdom, you’ll see.”

We are living again today the scene of the multitude in the desert which the Gospel describes. At sight of the hungry multitude which had followed Christ, the disciples, yielding to that same defeatist spirit, said to Jesus: “Master, the hour is now past; send away the multitudes, that going into the towns they may buy themselves victuals,” and Christ replied to those words of helplessness and lassitude with an order that holds good for all times and for all troubles: “They

have no need to go: Give you them to eat.” That bread of life, the Gospel, we still are called upon to bring to the world. Like the Apostles, we must fill every outstretched hand with that bread from God. In the measure in which each of us repeats the Apostles’ action, we can make our own the cry that escaped the Heart of Christ: “I have compassion on the multitudes.” Our duty as Christians requires no less of us.

CHAPTER TWO

TO HUMANIZE OR TO EVANGELIZE?

Quod Deus conjunxit homo non separet.

What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

ST. MATTHEW 19. 6

THE GOSPEL SET ASIDE?

THE soundings and comparisons of the preceding chapter had no other aim than to awaken in us a clear consciousness of our urgent and acute responsibilities. Catholics who draw the conclusion from what we have said that any effort to evangelize the people is doomed to end in failure are yielding to a spirit of defeatism, inspired by a purely naturalistic philosophy. Such is, alas, the practical conclusion reached by the adherents of that school of pastoral action called *Jeunesse d'Église* (Youth of the Church) and inspired by Montuclard. At sight of the neo-pagan masses this writer declares that in their present state they are unconvertible, and that the work of evangelizing them must be postponed till better times, perhaps two or three generations hence. Meanwhile the most urgent work must be taken in hand and men must be freed from all fetters that bind them; the crushing social system that causes them to live at a sub-human level must be changed, the atmosphere must be made respirable for those victims of capitalism. When this social revolution has been achieved, the hour will strike for the evangelization of the masses—not before. A warning issued by the Archbishop of Paris sums up this current of thought as follows:

Because of the present condition of the working classes,

which makes the task of christianizing them a difficult one, it is proposed to Christians to undertake the work in two successive phases: first, liberation, and only after that, evangelization. The first phase is independent of Christian standards.

Here is how this theory is expressed in the manifesto of the above-mentioned school: *Les événements et la foi*:

I do not know of course when and how Christ will come to the workers' world and to the new society which will develop from it. It will certainly be only after a very gradual evolution, the secret of which will doubtless remain hidden with God for a long time and we Christians of today can only strive not to obstruct it. Our age has been called the age of John the Baptist—and that is a true description . . .¹

The reference to the Precursor, who himself preached conversion and announced the coming of Christ, might create an illusion about the real bearing of these lines. There is no question here of a John the Baptist crying "in the wilderness," but crying nevertheless. No, the proposed plan is to dim the light of the Gospel message. The author continues, leaving no room for doubt:

What are we to do then? There is only one attitude possible and honest: that is silence, a long silence—a silence that will last for years—and a sharing in every detail of daily life, in every struggle and in the latent culture of our working population, so often unintentionally deceived by us. We have even given up the idea of converting them, because such an intention would rouse their suspicions and because we ourselves might not be able to keep it pure. As a result of the education we have received, such an intention would surely lead us to underestimate the true importance of the liberation of the workers, and this it is essential to bring about first of all.²

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

² pp. 39-60.

Having expressed his regret at this state of affairs, which he deplures, but thinks incurable at the present stage, Montuclard continues:

We do not think religion can be made to blossom from rotteness, so for the present we have no other aim than to work in co-operation with all men of good will for the prevention of war, and towards the coming of a society built on foundations more reasonable and more human. And then, and only then, will it be possible to attack rightly the religious problem.¹

And he concludes:

To safeguard the hope of spreading the Gospel in the future, it is indispensable to seek no immediate apostolic result which might confirm, in the minds of militants of the workers' movement, the too common objection that religion can only exist in undeveloped consciences.²

This unequivocal statement can have but one meaning: the Gospel is to be silenced for the time being. The theme, moreover, is not preached by the school referred to alone. It may be found widely diffused under divers more attenuated forms, in reports of congresses and in the pages of current reviews.

These same principles of pastoral action inspire the opinion that there is a more pressing need than to attack men's personal sins; the sin to be fought against—with purely human weapons, it may be noted—is it not, first of all, the collective sin of society against the poor? While awaiting the reforms which will be the fruit of social revolutions and of laws, it is useless to speak to the world's outcasts about prayer, about heaven and the rest: they will not listen to you. Speak to them of justice, labour with them to obtain indispensable reforms, and then Christianity will have some

¹ p. 61.

² p. 62.

meaning for them. Then, but only then. . . . This is the language of a pastoral philosophy that claims to be realist and that can be summed up in the slogan: "You must humanize first and evangelize afterwards."

TRUE CHRISTIANITY AND MUTILATED CHRISTIANITY

These terms, "first" and "afterwards," imply a divorce between evangelization on the one hand and humanization on the other. Such an assumption distorts the whole problem at the outset. For us, to evangelize and to humanize are identical terms, on condition that an authentic evangelization or christianization is meant. For the term christianization may actually, though wrongly, be equivocal in meaning.

In the eyes of too many "practising" Catholics, a Christian life is reduced, alas! to a few religious exercises: Sunday Mass, Easter Communion, abstinence on Friday; and observing some commandments, particularly the sixth, on which attention is concentrated, as if the duty of justice, for instance, were not as binding as that of chastity. Such a niggardly Christianity is a caricature of the religion of Christ, which embraces every department of man's life, and claims to penetrate it through and through. One of the chief merits of our age has been to recall that Christ is not alone the life of the soul, but the life of the whole man, and that nothing is independent of His action, be it family or professional life, civic or economic activities, national or international interests, the laws of marriage or of education, men's leisure hours, the Press, the cinema, the radio, television or the application of nuclear energy. To restrict Christianity to a few pious exercises, however important, is to mutilate it. It is not hard to understand how, at sight of certain starved and fossilized Christian lives, an unbeliever

—and particularly a Communist—should accuse us of disregarding and belittling the value of human effort, and the concern for progress and for social justice. It is not Christianity that he should blame, but rather the Christian who, false to his religion, yet shelters under its name. Even though the expectation of eternal bliss is at the heart of Christian hope, it must not serve as a pretext for shirking temporal problems, for excusing indolence, and for escaping from the laborious search for a solution. A Christian who should take refuge in the thought of heaven in order to avoid working to make a better world, would insult Christ. It is true that the *quid hoc ad aeternitatem*, the referring all to eternity, which is an integral part of Christian life, marks temporal things definitely as being only of relative moment. But relative does not signify unimportant, still less negligible; to place a thing in its proper perspective is not to dismiss it altogether, to reckon its degree of consequence is not to belittle it. No eschatological hope can justify inaction or serve as an alibi: far from being an opiate to lull men to sleep, according to a well-known and hateful dictum, it is the stimulus that makes them give the full measure of their effort, *dum tempus habetis*, while there is still time. One is not a Christian only on Sundays at church, but every day of the week and all through the day, by observing all the commandments, which are not to be reduced to the first or the sixth. We must include them all, the *whole* of the Gospel in the *whole* of life.

And we must not be content with the negative aspect of the law: "thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not speak ill of thy neighbour, thou shalt not steal. . . ." For besides the evil to be avoided, there is the immense volume of good to be accomplished. A negatively good conscience is not enough. There are sins of omission, there is a want of love that is criminal. If in the hour of triumph of the liberal school of economy, Christians had been keenly conscious of their

positive social duties in regard to "undeserved poverty," the social problem would never have arisen. And if only yesterday Communism in its early stages had found itself faced with vigorous Christianity, contemporary history would have taken a different course. The Orthodox writer, Nicholas Berdyaeff, recognizes this truth in some poignant lines:

Bolshevism has grown up in Russia and has been victorious there, because I am what I am, because there was not in me a real spiritual force—the force of a faith capable of moving mountains. Bolshevism is my sin, my fault. It is a trial sent to me. The sufferings that Bolshevism has inflicted on me are for the expiation of my fault, my sin, of our common fault, our common sin. All men are responsible for all men.¹

Far from inviting us to abandon the world by making no effort to solve its problems, Christianity lays it as a duty on every baptized person not merely to follow in the wake of other men, but to take the initiative in all works of human progress. Everyone must serve that end to the widest extent of his natural talents, and on leaders falls the duty of providing the means by which he will serve. Conditions being equal, the Christian, according to the measure of his faithfulness to God, will be a better workman, a better doctor, a better artist, a better statesman, than the unbeliever. Through respect for his baptism, it is his duty to fight with all his might against penury and pauperism, unemployment and sickness, social and racial injustice, and to promote a Christian social order which will favour the full development of human personality. All that is human belongs by right to us. His Holiness Pius XII, speaking in turn to shepherds and jurists, to midwives and diplomatists, to miners and

¹ *The End of Our Time* (London, Sheed and Ward, 1933), translated by Donald Attwater, p. 134.

astronomers, to artists and railway-men, gives a luminous illustration of this universality and this humanity of the Church.

There can be no ambiguity about the meaning of authentic Christianity if we establish correctly the relations between grace and nature and maintain the rigorous *identity* claimed by the Church when she affirms that to evangelize and to humanize are equivalent terms.

TRUE AND FALSE HUMANIZATION

It would not be right, however, to exaggerate in the opposite sense and adopt a kind of temporal messianism. We must recognize—and faith vouches for it—that this world is still in fact under the empire of Satan. “Every creature,” says St. Paul, “groaneth and travaileth waiting for the adoption of the sons of God.” We are members of a Church that struggles and suffers: the mystery of the Redemption, continued in her, is a prolongation of the Master’s Passion. “Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world,” says Pascal. These words should be a background to all our reflections. The effects of original sin continue to be shown in the actual sins of men and, although we must fight unremittingly and without weakening against all the powers of evil, we know that complete victory will not be given to us here below. Total success will never be ours. Temporal bliss is beyond our reach; since the fall, the earthly paradise is finally closed to men. Illusion has no place here. Christ came to bring a hope and a joy to men, but He gives it in the midst of the passing triumph of evil. The Kingdom of God, while in the world and at the heart of it, is not of the world: it obeys other laws than those of the world. The Christian paradox cannot be expressed in terms of exaggerated simplicity; it combines the prospect of life after death, which

lifts us from the earth and makes us raise our eyes to heaven, with the lesson of the Incarnation, which teaches us to take upon ourselves in the sweat of our brow the immediate temporal happiness of men.

Truth is indeed a balance between extremes and a synthesis of the complementary aspects of a question. This was shown in a marked manner at the second world meeting of the oecumenical Council which brought together, at Evanston in the summer of 1954, representatives of the religions outside the Catholic Church claiming to be of Christ. The conference, which had actually chosen as its theme “Christ the Hope of the World,” oscillated continually between hope centred on this world and the expectation of the world to come. So true is it that our state as creatures, already blessed in our hope of salvation, but still only travelling towards heaven, is a complicated state.

And this lesson of incarnation which is one of the panels of the diptych, can never be dissociated from the mystery of the Redemption. The Incarnation, in the mind of the Church, is a redemptive incarnation. The partisans of the theory which postpones to happier times a direct religious apostolate like to claim, as their justification, what they call the law of incarnation. We must first, they say, become one with humanity, take our place in the human drama and the rhythm of history. We must “incarnate” and then save. As Mgr. Guerry, Archbishop of Cambrai, very justly pointed out in his notes rectifying some points made by the workers’ Catholic Action in France, this attitude comes from forgetting that the mystery proposed to us Christians for our communion and participation is the mystery of a redemptive incarnation.

To separate the Incarnation from the Redemption [he writes] is to distort God’s plan and to mutilate the work of Christ. The Word was made Flesh. He came into

the world to *save* the world. He became Man. He lived among men, to redeem them in His crucified Flesh. Incarnation is for Redemption. Is it not in great part because the plenitude of this mystery has been forgotten that deviations and errors have crept in which have been in danger, these last few years, of causing the true mission of Catholic Action to be lost sight of? By a distorted interpretation of the Incarnation, some sought so eagerly to be one with humanity that they were submerged in it . . . they slipped unconsciously into a naturalistic humanism . . . they were tempted to confuse the Christian's apostolic mission with an engagement in the service of the world for the refashioning of the temporal structure of human society . . . temporal efficiency became the standard of action and they ended by confusing Catholic Action with secular action and by losing sight of the true rôle of Catholic Action.¹

Let us say in conclusion that the Redemption in Christian teaching is primarily the individual and immediate redemption of men's souls; the incarnation or humanization initiated by it will take place too, but in its own time, at its own rate of progress, slowly and step by step. It is useful to note the contrast in the twofold rhythm, so as to throw light on the question and better to grasp the twofold development.

THE TWOFOLD RHYTHM

It is important indeed to understand the two different rates of progress which mark religious activity, according as it is considered in itself or in its temporal effects, i.e. its incarnation.

The neglect of this distinction would seem to be the cause of the conflicting trends. To the school which preaches

¹ *La Documentation Catholique*, Nov. 15, 1953, column 1455.

"social service first," it is not right to oppose the doctrine of "religious apostolate first," as if the two duties were to be considered on the one plane, and classified in order of time. But we must emphasize definitely the immediate or rapid nature of the christianization of men, contrasted with the slow movement of humanization. This is due not to the will of men but to the nature of things. A child is baptized: immediately grace floods his soul; if he dies on the evening of his baptism, he is fixed for all eternity as a full-grown Christian: he has received in one outpouring the plenitude of Christ. Such is the action of grace, interpreting the impatient love of God. But to grow up, to learn, to become a man, that child will require many years, according to the normal play of human factors. A man receives Holy Communion: a single host received with faith is sufficient to produce the immediate sacramental effect. But on the human plane, a gradual assimilation of varied food is required for nourishment. A sinner is converted: his discovery of God or his conversion may have taken place in a flash. "See how you have become someone all at once," cries Claudel. Repentance works a transformation from sin to grace in one impulse, but to repair the harm done or to struggle successfully against rooted habits may take a lifetime.

These examples show that, when Christ takes possession of a man, the supernatural influence will act instantaneously, but the effect of that influence on his whole being and on the sphere in which he moves will follow a slow progression, ever retarded by the combined play of natural factors, personal and social.

Our Lord Himself compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a measure of leaven which is mixed with three measures of flour and causes the dough to rise. When we have fully appreciated the slow nature of this process, which is due, not to God, but to normal secondary causes, we need not

fear to emphasize the necessary link between the evangelization and the humanization of the world. The unequal rate of progress of the two movements will no longer disconcert us and we shall better perceive their profound harmony. A typical example is afforded by the suppression of slavery. When Christ said to men: "Love one another as I have loved you," a spiritual revolution was accomplished, a mortal blow was struck at slavery, Christ was seen to be the greatest social reformer of all time. But many centuries had to go by before the transformation of social institutions would lead to the suppression of slavery, so deeply is the work of humanization rooted in the play of human factors, which are slow by their very nature.

It is easy to understand too that, if every Christian is to take his part in the work of improving the world, each one's share will vary greatly according to his human powers, while the spiritual apostolate is within reach of a child, of a cripple, of the poorest beggar, all of whom can and must take on themselves the care of their brother's soul. They can always repeat spiritually the action of St. Peter and St. John on behalf of the man lame from birth, who lay at the gate of the Temple. This man expected to receive some alms from them. Peter said to him, "Silver and gold I have none: but what I have I give thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk." Like Peter every Christian can take his neighbour by the hand and help him to rise. The immediate effect of a spiritual act is here vividly shown. St. Peter does not despise gold or silver, he simply says he is sorry that he has none. But by setting this man on his feet, he is giving him a chance of recovering a fuller human life. This is a picture of the apostolic Christian, however bereft he may be of this world's goods: by giving spiritual aid to his brother and helping him to rise, he opens the way to a human development which will continue at its own rate,

according to the action of natural factors and to their varied play.

EFFECTIVENESS PROPER TO THE RELIGIOUS APOSTOLATE

The law of the twofold progressive movement emphasizes the effectiveness proper to the religious apostolate and its independence of economic or political laws. This does not mean that sociological developments have no reaction on apostolic work itself. A particular reform in the structure of society, a particular law, a particular current of thought, may help or hinder greatly the chance of religious extension. This reason alone should make Christians take part in the social or political conflict, with a view to bringing social conditions into conformity with the plan of God. It is not only a civic duty, it is clearly an apostolic duty also. For the same reason the Church must be able to depend both on the individual apostolate of each of her members, and on the active participation of the laity in the Catholic Action organizations which influence society and public opinion. The need for a specialized form of Catholic Action is rooted in the social nature of men and in the influence of institutions on the individual. While not identical, the two rates of progress, of evangelization and humanization, are essentially concomitant. The error in the theory of the "two stages" is that it reverses the order of the work to be done and postpones preaching the Gospel till social justice is satisfied. If the two activities are to be concurrent, we must not claim precedence for one. Granted that political, social and intellectual action is indispensable, the conclusion does not follow that it is the necessary prelude to direct religious teaching. Some try to justify this opinion by quoting the classical adage: "*Nihil in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu*" ("Nothing enters the mind but through the senses") and drawing the conclusion

by analogy that the introduction to a true religious apostolate must necessarily be some form of social work. This is fallacious reasoning and the adage requires to be modified if we are to grasp its real bearing. Leibniz gave the statement a happy conclusion by saying that "nothing enters the mind but through the senses, except understanding itself" ("*Nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu nisi ipse intellectus*"). As the understanding does not depend on the senses for its existence, so the religious apostolate has a power of its own, an efficiency, an intrinsic value. *Verbum Dei non est alligatum*. Truth has an inherent force of persuasion: a virtue goes out from it which is due to its very nature. We must pursue at the same time the secular and the spiritual task, without seeking to subordinate the latter to the former.

Every man has this double mission to carry out, each part of it indispensable, for the earthly city and the Church have both to be built. To minimize the secular duty on the pretext that it is not directly religious would be a harmful simplification; to exaggerate it by requiring the work of humanization to precede the preaching of Christianity would be a perilous deviation from the truth.

Furthermore, if this humanist proposal were bound to precede christianization, it would not be a mere stage or temporary halt in the work; it would become a final aim. Man has need of the bread of truth, just as he requires to breathe, and he will attach himself to some philosophy of life, to some "ism" which satisfies his craving. When Christianity finally comes to him, it will be too late, the place will have been occupied. If to christianize is to humanize, the contrary is not true. Experience leaves us in no doubt of this: while it is difficult for a man to practise virtue without at least a minimum of this world's goods, on the other hand wealth has an uncertain value; that is, it may be a source of good or of evil to us, according to the use we make

of it. Humanization of itself, divorced from Christianity, is not synonymous with peace or inward joy, and does not necessarily bring about the practice of the virtues.

It is the Christian's duty to promote the progress of humanity and of civilization in all departments of life, as it is his duty to work for the extension of God's Kingdom. But he must realize that these two imperative duties are subject to their separate laws, which are independent of each other. The Church has never ceased to emphasize the peculiar virtue of the religious apostolate. Her history is a living commentary on it. Recent statements made by the hierarchy have once more recalled it.

Dealing with Montuclard's doctrine of the two phases—allied in part to the problem of the priest-worker—Mgr. de Provençère, Archbishop of Aix, wrote in a pastoral letter:

Some have thought that the priestly apostolate among the workers is entirely ineffectual as long as capitalist society has not been overthrown. . . . It is quite otherwise. The Church's mission to evangelize must be independent of economic and political forces: she bears within herself "the showing of the spirit and power" (I Cor. 2. 4).

Mgr. Richaud, Archbishop of Bordeaux, wrote in his turn:

The work of preaching the Gospel cannot be put in the background, to wait until certain changes have been made in society. The Apostles of the early ages . . . did not teach slaves to rise up against their masters, but they set before the world the far more fruitful idea of the dignity of all men called to live as children of God. As Pius XI wrote on the occasion of the social study week in Versailles: "The Church does not preach the Gospel by civilizing men, but she civilizes men by preaching the Gospel."

We may add, by letting the Gospel set its mark on civili-

zation, in accordance with the law of the twofold rate of progress.

His Holiness Pius XII also issued a warning against the naturalistic attitude implied in the phrase "humanize before christianizing." Speaking to members of Italian Catholic Action, he said on Whit-Sunday, 1951:

The growth of religious life implies a certain modicum of healthy economic and social conditions. But this does not justify the conclusion that the Church must begin by setting aside her religious mission and seeking before all else the relief of poverty in the world. If the Church has always worked to defend and promote justice, she has from the time of the Apostles carried out her mission of sanctification of souls and of interior conversion, even in the face of very grave social abuses, while fighting against those evils; for she is convinced that the best means of obtaining the amendment that she desires are the forces of religion and Christian principles.

THE CONTRARY EXPERIMENT

The last line of the Pope's message quoted above introduces an additional argument against the doctrine with which we have found fault, for it treats the question from an opposite angle, and declares that the poverty of the masses is primarily due to moral and religious causes. That poverty was brought about by the egoism or the thoughtlessness of those who saw the economic question from a materialistic, unchristian viewpoint. While economic and social conditions have contributed to the dechristianization of the masses, the contrary also is true: economic progress has worked to the disadvantage of men, because of the dechristianization of society.

Christ is the life of men and to turn from Him is a mortal

danger for the world. An analysis of social conditions which goes to the root of the ills of society in order to counteract them, must discover that root in man's denial of God. The supreme misfortune from which we are suffering does not reside in institutions or in material objects; it is in us, in our will, in our soul. The greatest evil is not in any economic or political system, its name is sin. Sin is the cause of all the social ills which recur continually under every system of government. If we fail to strike at sin, we may attack injustice and vary its effects; we shall not suppress it. Let us not be misled by a fallacious illustration. "To save poisoned fish," they say, "you must begin by changing the water in the pond." But to compare is not to prove, and here the suggested analogy has no force. The water, the framework of life, is quite distinct and separable from the fish. The same is not true of men and of the institutions which form the framework of their lives. Moreover it is the fish themselves in great part that affect the condition of the water, and poison or cleanse it, according to their own state. It is man who makes the laws of social existence and they have largely the same value as he has himself: *quid leges sine moribus?* (What are laws without manners?) That being so, the complement of the proverb must be accepted too: *Quid mores sine legibus?* (What are manners without laws?) for the influence of the milieu is undeniable, and anything that tends to make it healthy is precious for man, who is ever the victim of his gregarious instinct and of mass influence.

The anti-social nature of sin can hardly be exaggerated. A man who commits sin shakes the foundations of the society in which he lives. Sloth, cupidity, egoism, heap up ruins, for they make a man turn away from serving the common good and concentrate on himself. Sin is a sign of refusal, a betrayal of the community spirit, a crime against love, which sooner or later will bring about class hatred or race-hatred or

enmity between nations; it undermines the work of humanizing men, however it may be glossed over and disguised.

Thus it is on the natural plane. Faith tells us, moreover, that, when a man sins, he disturbs the whole of society, and when he rises again, he heals it, because the grace of Christ then flows more freely through the Mystical Body. A man at enmity with God bears fruits of death. A man at enmity with God—that is, a sinner—not an ignorant man; not ignorance, but sin, is the real evil. God's action is not hindered by ignorance, it is by sin. Sin draws after it a train of misery and sorrow. Ignorance or poverty is compatible with joy, but sin casts a gloom over the world. It creates anguish and despair. A pseudo-civilization which denies God—such as atheistic Communism or the materialism of the wealth-possessing class—can only bring misfortune, disunion, sorrow, with or without the atom bomb. Every sin strengthens the power of Satan in the world. Man will not overcome Satan by hydrogen; the spirit of evil can be finally vanquished and turned back only by the Spirit of God. The drama of life is an internal drama, acted in men's consciences, and it always leaves its mark on events. Sin, nihilist in its nature, shakes the world to its very foundations, while the grace of God regenerates it and raises man, individual and social, to the highest point of perfection. This is the first law of Christian sociology. Fr. Daniélou, S.J., has written most truly:

The Marxist effort is superficial; it does not go down into the real depths of human misery. Certainly we must fight against social distress, but it is only the echo of another much graver and more deep-set trouble: sin, death, Satan; and that is the captivity from which we are delivered by Jesus Christ and by Him alone. The lesson of history, say the Marxists, is that men must be freed—and in that we agree with them; but we add that Jesus

Christ alone, and those who continue His work, can free them,¹

on condition that those who continue His work actively apply the fruits of the Redemption.

Any sociological study which seeks ultimate causes will come up, willingly or not, against man's attitude to God. Proudhon was more discerning than some Christians when he recognized that, at the root of every political problem, there is a problem of applied theology. The stability of a building depends on its foundation and its keystone. And God is the origin and the end of man and of society. The man who denies God repeats the action of Samson and brings down the edifice around him. It is not possible to build up humanity first and then give it to God, as one might first erect a building, and afterwards decide on the use to which it shall be put. If the stones of society are to hold together, they must be buttressed on God. It is an illusion to believe that human society can stand independent of the Creator.

Hans Andersen tells the story of a spider which, after spinning a beautiful web, thought to free itself from the thread which fastened it to the branch, and snapped the seemingly unnecessary link. The result was that the web fell to pieces, because its centre and heart had been torn out. It is the same for human society centred on God. Adhesion to God brings about social cohesion; the vertical line is essential to the stability of the cross threads. We should be careful not to transfer to the *real* order of existence that notion of "pure nature" which is valid only in the logical order of ideas. True, a natural order *could* have existed as such, but *in fact* the only real order is a supernatural one.

¹ *Essai sur le mystère de l'histoire*, p. 83 and chaps. 5 and 6 (Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1953).

In actual reality things get their consistency by the fundamental reference of human nature in its entirety to the supernatural order. "*Omnia vestra sunt, vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei.* All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

This belonging to God is at the very heart of our being, not an accidental dependence; it gives man his crowning individuality. Let us never forget that, if grace cannot act without nature, it will perfect nature, elevate it and restore it to its original beauty, since, as the Church teaches, without grace man is not able to observe fully or permanently even the natural law. Man left to himself cannot live a full human life. The Christian faith perfects his nature, that is, it gives him strength and health to develop according to the powers and within the limitations of his nature. None is more human than Christ, and nothing is more harmful to man than a refusal to know Him.

Thus are the Master's words proved true once again: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Justice, and the rest will be added unto you."

The world is sick unto death of its atheism and its want of faith—that is the tragedy of our time. It is not true, as is sometimes said, that men cannot organize a world without God. But what is true is that a world without God can only end by being a world hostile to men. We have reached that stage today. Since men have ceased to know God, they have more and more to be defended against one another—*homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf to man). The depths of inhumanity marked by the sinister symbol of the concentration camps show the extent to which the world is thrown off its axis, has lost its centre of cohesion and unity. We can understand today in blood and tears the words of Louis Veuillot: "When the insolence of man has obstinately rejected God, the direst fate that can overtake man is to get his way:

when man is abandoned to man, we may understand what is meant by the wrath of God." If we could doubt that the world is to be humanized by Christ, the contrary experiment, shown us in our poor paganized world which has turned away from Him, would suffice to open our eyes.

UNION IS NECESSARY

In concluding this doctrinal discussion, we must examine our consciences. It is patent that the doctrine of the two stages is false, but the tragedy which inspired it still remains an unsolved problem. That tragedy is the difference between Christianity as it is in itself, and Christianity as it appears in our lives. If that contrast did not exist, the problem would never have arisen, for there could have been no opposition in actual fact between the christianization and the humanization of the world. It is not Christianity that is at fault, but our failure to show in our lives the religion of Christ. We have not lived our faith to its final consequences for society and for the community, we have not translated it into action in the organizing of society and the life of men. We have not carried our logical belief to its right conclusion. Great is the contrast between the Christian and practical ordering of religious life and the too frequent vagueness of the directions given to the laity, struggling to fulfil their duties to society. Communism for its part tries to impose by force and by every possible means the supremacy of the common good and of social service, which our monks and nuns practise freely in their restricted sphere, for supernatural motives. It is very true that the methods employed by Communism are corrupt: the disregard of grace brings with it a disregard of nature and, in the end, an inhuman system of government. But the principle of the supremacy of the common good over individual good is a sane one,

wherever it is expressed, and is part of the heritage of Christianity. It is our right to assert that principle and to direct Christian education towards its application to social institutions.

We have to apply in every detail of our lives the demands of Christianity. We must train our young people to recognize this. For it is useless to accuse this generation of sins of omission. One does not blame a child for being unable to read; it is the parents and teachers who must be held responsible, because they did not encourage him and, if necessary, compel him to learn, by an intelligent discipline. Between inhuman dictatorship and neglect of direction, there is room for a wholesome social pressure which will develop a sense of duty and support human weakness. It is right for the state, by means of taxes, to compel citizens to perform their duty towards the needy; it is right for a master to impose a rule which will ensure the general good. It is right too that the Church should take her children by the hand and guide them towards the fulfilment of their highest duties to their brothers. If they have a Christian faith fully applied to life, practical, lived all through the day, throwing its light on all problems, men will not be tempted to neglect its assistance in working to humanize the world, and will realize that Christ alone is the salvation and hope of humanity. That is the only faith that can save from blame those of whom Péguy said: "Because they are not of man they think they are of God; because they love no one they think they love God." To have pure hands it must never be forgotten that one must first of all have hands.

CHAPTER THREE

NECESSITY OF A DIRECT APOSTOLATE

Non enim possumus quae vidimus et audivimus non loqui.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

ST. PETER (Acts 4. 20)

WE have shown that a true Christian faith goes to the very heart of human nature; a disembodied apostolate is no more possible than a disembodied Christian faith. But just as the body may be influenced by the soul and the soul by the body, there are two ways of setting about the apostolate. The first way, the direct religious apostolate, proceeds from the supernatural to the natural, the second, the indirect apostolate, proceeds from the natural to the supernatural.

A religious apostolate cut off from life is inconceivable, as is a social apostolate not based on religion. Man is an individual and any action having man for its object must obey the law of unity. There can be no sub-dividing of the ultimate end; only the immediate plan of work will be varied, according as the apostolate is undertaken in the first instance from above or from below, through the soul or through the body. If it starts from on high, from the supernatural, it is essential that it come down into everyday life; if it begins from below, from the social aspect, it must rise and become united with the religious aim. A share of the direct apostolate belongs to all indirect apostolates.

Whatever be his field of action, every Christian is called upon therefore to take part in the work of spreading Christianity. Moreover, in the supernatural order, which is the only true historical order, there is no section of the work

which may be called profane, in the pagan or laicizing sense of the word; all is governed by the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of working out the full christianization of the world. Union between men or classes, social justice or international peace, all this is the work of the Holy Spirit, who makes use of men as His instruments. The words of the Master, "Without me you can do nothing," are true both for individuals and for social groups. The Christian is under the influence of the Holy Spirit, not only when he carries out a direct religious mission, but also when he performs the more tangible tasks of a profane and temporal order.

There is a most suggestive story in the Acts of the Apostles, describing the election of the seven deacons: "The number of the disciples increasing," St. Luke tells in Chapter 6, "there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

We are shown here a picture of conflicting interests, a question of the distribution of material goods. There is nothing more prosaic and humdrum than this problem of social justice. It could be settled, one would think, with a minimum of practical common sense, of tact and of arithmetic. How will the Apostles deal with this thorny and urgent question? Their attitude will show us their practical understanding of God's mysterious dealings with men. They called together the multitude of the disciples and said to them, "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

Let us examine these words. How did they determine their choice? What did they look for before all else? Men filled with the Holy Ghost. In their eyes, the fullness of the Divine Spirit was an indispensable condition for the success

of a humble temporal task. Dependence on the Holy Ghost is the key to success in such a mission. The Holy Ghost must find instruments that will be pliant and docile in His hands, if that service at the tables is to be carried out in its plenitude. It was thus indeed that these first disciples understood the matter. St. Luke continues: "The saying was liked by all the multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch."

This passage applies even more to tasks of higher value.

We may see from this example that Christian action is one in its aim, while being diverse in the methods of work—and that all things work together for the one end of the growth of the Mystical Body. Bearing in mind this picture of internal unity and harmony, it will be well for us to emphasize in this chapter the burning importance at the present time of the religious apostolate and the superlative necessity for its being practised by all.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

Our Lord has said: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and the rest shall be added unto you," and He Himself was the first to put His words into practice. The supremacy of the direct religious apostolate stands out in striking relief in our Saviour's life. If He fed the hungry multitude in the desert and won souls by a miracle in the material order, we must not forget that He had won them first of all by His message. The multitude had followed Him to the desert and for three days had been receiving from Him the bread of the Word of God, before He gave them the miraculous earthly food. This supremacy of spiritual things always marks the Master's approach to men. The

public life of Our Lord, viewed as a whole, appears dedicated before all else to a direct religious apostolate which is the source of all the rest. His words are concerned with the Kingdom of God on earth or in heaven, the beatitudes, sin, hell, the commandments or the evangelical counsels, faith in Him and in His Father, charity and justice to our neighbour, the promise of the Holy Ghost, the meaning of prayer, adoration of God in spirit and in truth. He knew that His words were spirit and life for men, for society, for the world, and that any who accepted and practised them would inaugurate a new reign of human brotherhood and of material service.

Again, how can one fail to be struck by the all-important place taken in the life of Jesus by His direct and intimate contact with His Apostles? Before His time had come to save the world by the cross of Calvary, all the Master's attention was concentrated on the Twelve. Choosing His Apostles, training them slowly, patiently, unwearingly, pouring His soul into theirs, this was the dominating work of His three years' public life. With what care He prepared them!

"Calling together the twelve Apostles," St. Luke tells us, "Jesus sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick, and He said to them: Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor scrip, nor bread, nor money, neither have two coats. . . . And going out, they went about through the towns preaching the Gospel"—and penance, as St. Mark notes—"and healing everywhere" (9. 1-6). This is indeed the direct religious apostolate.

The Master's concern to form His disciples is an example that should not be lost on us. He shows the path to be followed by those who continue His work. They too must gather round them fellow-workers whom they will prepare for their mission. We may confine ourselves to noting here

that Christ's whole life was an apostolate of direct religious contact with men.

One example in a thousand will serve as an illustration. It is the meeting with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well, a true prototype of an apostolic conversation, showing us how to reach souls and to capture them. The Master begins by begging a favour: to be given a little water. This introduction has a wonderful psychological value; it strikes a very human note at the start, putting the speaker in a position of self-chosen inferiority. And the favour requested is not without a special meaning: He asks for water. That water which will not quench thirst is the symbol He will make use of as the conversation proceeds, to announce the Kingdom of God, the fountain of water springing up into life eternal. This page of the Gospel should be carefully read; it contains an unforgettable practical lesson. And the woman's action too is full of meaning for us. She did not keep her wonder and joy to herself, but "left her water pot and went her way into the city," where she invited her fellow-townsmen to go out to the Master and meet Him, as she had done. It was the spontaneous act of a convert who, when she has found the Lord, knows instinctively that she must go and share her discovery with her brethren.

It may be suggested that Christ was able to transmit His divine message by this direct contact, because the men of His time had a taste for religious things, a spiritual eagerness unknown in our age. But we must not delude ourselves in this matter. The world of Christ's time was fundamentally similar to our own; Satan is ever the same, and sin varies only in its modes. Evil belongs to all ages, yet the Master could say to His contemporaries, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and the rest shall be added unto you." We have no right to deny the Master's words, by declaring that we must first attend to the "rest," in order

that one day—some think three or four generations hence—the Kingdom of God may be preached to men. And we may remark by the way that this suggested delay of three or four generations is purely arbitrary: one might just as well foresee a stay of twenty generations, or more simply still, give up all hope. For indeed on the human plane no guarantee of success is afforded us: when once faith has given way before the initial “impossibility” there is no reason to expect that later on there will be a level passage, leading imperceptibly from human welfare into the Kingdom of God. Such a passage does not exist, and would be the negation of the immediate action of grace. *Oportet nasci demuo*. The Christian faith will always be a new birth, a complete break, an entry into a “new world.” Neither have we the right to equate that “justice of God” of which Jesus speaks with our human justice, however necessary it may be. The justice of God is based on the rights of God, which are expressed in the first petitions of the Our Father. God must be glorified, hallowed, obeyed, loved above all things. From that justice the other will derive. Once God has been recognized as the Father of men, that truth will be the foundation, the noblest inspiration and the highest standard of human brotherhood. But the scale of values cannot be inverted.

Christ insists on the supremacy of God, because He knows that the interests of the kingdom of this world will always spontaneously excite men’s passionate interest. With His unwearying call of “*Sursum corda*,” He invites them to lift their hearts heavenwards, as a fountain of water springs up from the earth, the better to fertilize it in falling again. His commandments are directed towards the good of this world, even though they speak only of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the same love of men that makes Jesus condemn those who refuse bread to the hungry (Matt. 25. 41) or

commit adultery (Matt. 5. 27–32) and those who deny Him before men (Matt. 10. 33).

Jesus brought salvation to the world from above, not from below. He, more than all social reformers, revolutionized family, social and political conditions, but He did it as with leaven hidden in the mass of human nature and transforming it slowly from within, by raising it. To accomplish that revolution, Christ willed to bring to men a purely religious message and He made use of one weapon only, the word. *Fides ex auditu*. The faith he asks for is our adherence to that word of life. *Verba autem mea spiritus et vita sunt*. “The words I have spoken to you,” He says, “are spirit and life.” And those words endure. “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” He said too, “but my words shall not pass away.” Such is the promise of Christ, the eternal Word of God. The religion that claims Him as its author must be a religion of the Word—of the Word which generates action in us and is the source of reforms in human society.

EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLES

It was thus, after the death of Jesus, that the disciples understood their task. They were to be servants of the Word. *Nos vero orationi et ministerio Verbi instantes erimus*. Speaking to the assembled disciples, the Twelve said: “It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. . . . We will give ourselves continually to God and to the ministry of the word.” This was the statement of a principle. They did not seek to know whether the world was ready to hear them: their part was to obey an order and go to the world as faithful messengers; that was enough for them. No sooner had St. Paul discovered the Lord on the road to Damascus than we find him with the Apostles “coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and dealing confidently in the name of

the Lord." That was indeed *credidi, propter quod locutus sum*, "I have believed, therefore I have spoken." From the very day of his conversion, and for a considerable time as a mere layman, before the imposition of hands that would ordain him for his priestly mission, he exercised this apostolic activity.

See him in his dealings with the men of his time. The world that he went to was no more ready than ours to receive the message of Christ. Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians, Thessalonians, Philippians, they had no wish to hear him. The Rome that he addressed was not a chosen or a welcoming land for the Jew who came to speak to it "of one Jesus deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (Acts 25. 19). It would have been a practical device for him to pose as a social reformer, for his immediate introduction to that world. Abuses were plentiful in the decadent society with its slave labour, and he might have written a very different letter from the one he sent to Philemon when returning the slave Onesimus to him. No, the people of Rome were not ready to hear him, any more than the crowd of curious onlookers gathered at the Agora in Athens. Paul gives us a picture of them that leaves no room for illusion: "filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness: full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity: whisperers, detractors, hateful to God . . . without affection, without fidelity, without mercy" (Rom. 1. 29-32). That was the world to which he went and in going he chose no indirect road. It is sometimes said that the pagan world was more open-minded than the neo-pagan, disillusioned world of our day, and that the message of Christ had the shock of novelty for it. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest this: the reception that St. Paul got at the forum of Athens—and it was a typical one—was the reception afforded by world-weary folk who had seen a good

number of prophets come and go and who, with sceptical and derisive tolerance, threw open their Pantheon to all the gods. No, the atmosphere was not more favourable than ours; the divine seed had to be sown in a stony, hostile soil; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, a folly to the Gentiles, such was then the Christian message. Such is it still today. It is the work of faith to revolutionize and humanize the world; and that faith is the same yesterday as today.

The Acts show us the faith of the Apostles and of their helpers actively at work.

When the Apostles were thrown into prison by the Sadducees and set free at night by an angel, what did the heavenly messenger say to them? Did he give them a lesson of prudence and diplomatic caution, an invitation to be silent and await better times? Nothing of the sort. "Go, he said, and standing speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." "Who, having heard this," says Holy Scripture, "early in the morning, entered into the temple and taught" (Acts 5. 19-21).

Nothing would stop them.

And here are Peter and John, brought before the Sanhedrin and "threatened that they should speak no more in this name to any man." Their answer sprang from their hearts on the very instant: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4. 17-21). *Non possumus non loqui*. The same reply will be repeated unwearyingly throughout the course of history, at every decisive hour when the Church finds herself faced with a supreme choice. The Apostles carried out the ministry of the word at all times and in all places. We are shown "the word of God preached everywhere," and it was through their multiple contacts, in the streets, in the houses, in the synagogues, that the work of evangelization and consequently of humanization spread from place to place. There was no timidity, no fear of

giving annoyance in the Apostles' attitude. Not without effect did St. Paul urge Timothy: "*Insta, opportune, importune, argue, obsecra*—be instant in season, out of season." What a treatise of pastoral action, valid for all time, are these Acts of the Apostles, and how closely they should be studied, to find in them the meaning of the true apostolate in all its original vigour!

In order to get a picture painted in glowing, vivid colours of this method of action, we have but to re-read the moving story of Philip's meeting with the eunuch, the treasurer of the Ethiopian queen (Acts 8. 26-40). "Go near and join thyself to this chariot," the Spirit said to St. Philip: it was an invitation to make direct contact.

Philip running thither, the Scripture tells us, heard the Ethiopian reading the prophet Isaias and said to him: "Thinkst thou that thou understandest what thou readest?" That is the eternal question. Dost thou understand what thou seekest, dost thou know what is the key to happiness, the meaning of thy life and of thy soul? Those are the questions everyone bringing the Gospel message must ask in some way, when opening a conversation with a passing stranger. He will not always meet a man so humbly disposed to hear him. He will have to create opportunities, to seek favourable encounters, to do everything so that he may be invited to "come up and sit" with the stranger. But he will always have to imitate Philip's action. "Then Philip opening his mouth and beginning at this scripture, preached unto him Jesus." The law of the direct religious apostolate is in those lines: one must learn to "open one's mouth," discover from what passage one may start to make contact and "preach Jesus," that is, transmit the wonderful news of the Lord's revelation, the key to men's happiness, even temporal. Such is the lesson of the Acts.

WHAT OF OURSELVES?

We must honestly examine our conscience in the light of the Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles. Have we the courage to continue the great apostolic tradition frankly and courageously and to go to our fellow-men in the name of the Lord, that we may give them what we have, to make them happy? Have we faith in that name, or do we expect to save the world by means of wealth or power, or by the weight of numbers or the silent testimony of example? Dare we walk on the waters, or even, more modestly, dare we go and seek Christ in the soul of our neighbour? We are so steeped in the prevailing liberal and neutral atmosphere that, to some of us, the direct apostolate seems a want of proper reserve, an attack on the dignity of the human person. Doubtless the conversion of a soul is a mystery of liberty and grace. There must be tact and above all humility. It is quite right to protest against all "proselytism," conceived of as a duel of pride, with victor, vanquished, and a table of spoils drawn up. It is obvious that consent extracted by violence or surprise has no meaning: one cannot force consciences or violate human liberty. But in rejecting such action many have gone to the opposite extreme; in pleading for the necessary discretion they sometimes go so far as to say that we must not try to "convert" men, but must be satisfied to be the discreet, silent, passive witnesses of a supernatural action which will take possession of souls by its own power and without our aid, by the wise and slow play of divine grace.

That is overstating the case. It has been repeated too often that God respects man's liberty and that we should take example by His reserve. True, God does not force consciences; but does He forbear to plead, to knock at the door of the heart, to shed light on men's minds, to attach

His grace to life's incidents, to act within the soul by the innumerable delicate touches of which He alone knows the secret? "*Sto ad ostium et pulso*: I stand at the door . . . and knock." Such is the Scriptural figure. Does He not also capture some souls by a sudden lightning attack and change their dispositions by an exceptional onrush of grace? And after all, that human liberty which some would prize above truth itself, that liberty shackled by passion or ignorance, by prejudice or human respect, a liberty which is the prey of so many adverse influences, are we not giving it back to men when we free them from those bonds and counteract those influences? When we preach truth, are we not clearing the way for true liberty? Does not the apostle work to fulfil over again the words of the Master: "The truth shall make you free"?

THE MYSTICAL PLEA

It sometimes happens that the necessity for a direct religious apostolate is misunderstood or minimized, on the plea that the spiritual life is of first importance. There can be no question of underestimating the contemplative vocation, which keeps a high tension current of apostolic fervour in constant supply to the Church. The contemplative life may be lived in ways that vary with the ages. In the early times it was hidden in the Egyptian Thebaid or in some wild spot where monasteries, set up far from the world, ensured a life of quiet. Today the Church welcomes new ways of living that same life, in crowded cities, or on the high road. The brotherhoods of Charles de Foucauld, for example, dwelling in some workers' quarters and sanctifying it by their silent presence and their long hours of adoration centred about the Tabernacle, express the same ideal in a new form. The manner is of slight importance, if the contemplative life itself is provided for. But such vocations are

very high and very rare: their exceptional nature must be emphasized, for there is more than one kind of silence; and we may argue too readily from the silence of a life absorbed in prayer, and take refuge in a silence that is mere emptiness, escapism and a shirking of the active apostolate.

Bearing this distinction in mind, we can never overestimate the supreme worth of those lives dedicated wholly to contemplation. Monasteries are the high places where the Spirit breathes, where treasures of grace are heaped up. Like glaciers which, from their solitary heights, feed the streams that swell rivers and fertilize the earth, these souls whose profession is prayer bring to their brothers in the plains below an incomparable spiritual power. But that divine power must be stored, as the waters of a reservoir are stored; electric standards and cables must form a network over the whole country, and carry to the remotest cottage the energy which becomes the source of light and heat. We, the dwellers on the plain, are the transmitters of this divine current. It is for us to pass it on from one stage to the next, until it reaches every soul. Such is the harmony of God's plan; for Him active and contemplative lives are never isolated; they are branched one upon the other and willed thus.

We must guard against treating as contrary, ways of life that God has made complementary. Scripture abounds in seeming paradoxes: we are told to honour our father and our mother and Jesus invites us to hate them if we wish to follow Him: He orders us to pray in secret and again to let our light shine before men; He promises us a peace that the world cannot give and He proclaims that He has come to bring, not peace, but the sword. Behind the formulae that contradict one another we must seek superior harmonies.

It is the same with the active and the contemplative life: far from excluding, they need each other, and draw life from the same source. The same love inspires the silence of the

monk and the speech of the apostle; leads the one to the desert and the other to the heart of the multitude; urges us to serve only God, whether apart from men or in working for them. Christ asked of His Father not to withdraw His Apostles from the world, but to keep them from sin; He did not choose for them a life of pure contemplation, but an apostolic life, which implies a union of contemplation and prayer. Prayer is to action what the soul is to the body: it gives it life and energy. Its triumph is that it transforms action into an embodied and tangible prayer; prayer, which vivifies action, sweeps our whole being, physical and spiritual, into a concrete act of the love of God. Our words, our actions, our work, our weariness, are thus a prayer.

Prayer, the communion of the soul with God, participates in the mystery of the Eucharistic Communion, which unites us at once to Christ and to our brothers. For Communion, as the name implies, is not only a union with Jesus, but a "communion." It is a social act by which we unite ourselves one to the other, an outstanding act of human brotherhood. The Communion rail is a banqueting table, spread by the Church for all her children, that she may draw them close together. "For we being many," says St. Paul, "are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread" (I Cor. 10. 17).

And all tradition echoes his words, which St. John Damascene elaborates thus: "We communicate with one another and we become united. Since we share the same bread, we become the body and the blood of Christ and we become members of one another, of one body with Christ." The social life of the Church is indissolubly bound up with the Eucharistic Communion.

In the same way, apostolic action is one with prayer and draws from it all its hidden efficacy. The Church calls men to the Blessed Eucharist, not that each individually may receive grace, but for the growth of the whole Mystical

Body and the salvation of the world. The value of our thanksgiving is measured, not alone by the fervour of our internal converse with Christ, but also by the translation into our life of the great communal act which has been accomplished in us. Prayer, like all communion with God, must show its fruits in action. To claim exemption from action because of one's devotion to prayer is to misunderstand the place of prayer, which must normally flow into action. To exalt the silent apostolate of example and to declare that prayer alone is sufficient without communal action is cutting down a budding tree before it has flowered. It is as though we could say perfunctorily to God, "Thy Kingdom come," and not translate this petition into dynamic action in the apostolate.

God asks us for both prayer and action: Catholic prayer, that is universal prayer, and action as ample and as resolute as our prayer. *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, we are taught: prayer expresses in words what we must believe; *lex orandi, lex agendi* would be as true: prayer must be transformed into apostolic action. "The things I pray for, dear Lord," said St. Thomas More, "give me grace to labour for." That grace will preserve us from the subtle temptation to a quietist super-spirituality.

THE PLEA OF OUR DUTY IN LIFE

It happens also that the demands of life, the duties of our state in society, are brought forward as an excuse for disregarding our obligation to practise the religious apostolate. A definite proposal to do so is met with some pretext which recalls the answer of the guests invited to the wedding feast: "I have bought a farm and I must needs go out and see it—I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to try them—I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come." The

refusal on the plea that the duties of our state are all-important cuts short all argument. It is an attitude that should be looked into carefully, for, if the objection is valid, it puts an end to the general call to all baptized Christians, and the appeal made by the Popes would lose its force. Doubtless the obligation to take part in the apostolate which is inherent in our character as Christians does not necessarily imply participation in the strictly organized apostolate. But whatever be the mode of work undertaken, our baptism imposes it as an obligation that must be fitted in with the other duties of our state. St. John Chrysostom explained this imperative necessity to the Christians of his day:

Nothing shows more indifference than a Christian who cares not for the salvation of others. . . . If the leaven being mixed up with the flour did not change the whole into its own nature, would such a thing be leaven? Say not: It is impossible for me to induce others; for if thou art a Christian it is impossible but that it should be so . . . the thing is part of the very nature of a Christian. . . . For it is easier for the sun not to give heat, not to shine, than for the Christian not to send forth light.¹

And again:

I cannot believe in the salvation of one who does not work for the salvation of his neighbour.²

That is a pure echo of Christian tradition.

But what exactly is meant by the duty of our state in life?

It is unquestionably a holy thing, since it represents something that God has willed for us, but we must see it where it is and not elsewhere, and wherever it is, not only in a particular place. Many people consider as part of their duty

¹ St. John Chrysostom, *In Acta Apost.*, hom. 20, No. 4; *P.G.*, 60, 162-3.

² St. John Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio*, lib. 3, No. 10; *P.G.*, 48, 686.

occupations and interests which have but a remote connection with it. Then, when they have amplified and exaggerated that duty to the utmost, they use it as a convenient screen against anything that incommodes them or calls for a sacrifice: "I have no time: My business first." In actual truth, the screen serves to hide a goodly show of laziness, of selfishness, of human respect or of love of money. For that is indeed one of the main obstacles: men wish to make money, as much as possible and as quickly as possible, and there is no time for anything else. "You cannot serve God and Mammon," Our Lord has said. We must bravely give up the service of Mammon and be willing to earn less, in order to free ourselves from certain impediments and to keep some time available for the missionary apostolate.

The very Christians who in one direction exaggerate beyond rightful measure what they call the "duty of their state in life" narrow it down and reduce it strangely in another. They refuse to see that there are several duties of one's state in life, for the very good reason that there are several states in life. Besides a man's duty to his family, his professional duty, his civic duty, there is another to which they give little thought, it is the supernatural duty, the obligation of a Christian. For to be a Christian, a child of God, a member of Jesus Christ, is also a "state in life," and what a state! The first of all, and the highest, and also the only necessary one, for all the others derive from it. *Unum est necessarium* (One thing is necessary), as Jesus said to Martha, the over-busy cook who had eyes for nothing but her kitchen.

This state of being a Christian logically entails duties, the chief of which is to love God with all our might and to love our fellow-men as ourselves. But can we at the same time love God and take no interest in His Kingdom? Can we love our fellow-men and view with indifference their spiritual and

moral distress? On these considerations is founded the duty of the apostolate. It is a duty for all ages and all professions, for every walk in life, not excepting religious of both sexes. It is a consequence of our baptism, which placed us in the happy "state" of being members of Jesus Christ.

Let us then be careful to guard against setting aside the apostolate in the name of our duty in life: it would be a serious error as well as a fault. In point of fact it is doing away with one duty in life, that of the Christian, for the benefit of another, that of the head of a family or that of a workman. Have we not something better to do than pit one of these duties against another? We must unite and reconcile them by co-ordinating them. Let the less important responsibilities, which are connected more closely with the world and its interests, take up less room in our lives and leave the place of honour to that other duty, which rises so high above them, both by its origin and by its destiny.

If it were admissible to use the plea of one's duty in life as a shield against the Pontifical encyclicals, the Popes' declarations concerning the great obligation of the lay apostolate would have been a useless gesture; for how many Christians are to be found who have not the care of a house, a family or a profession? And in which supra-terrestrial regions did the Popes expect to recruit the pacific army of the modern apostolate on which they depended for the rebuilding of a Christian world?

THE INTELLECTUAL PLEA

Prayer and our duty in life are not the only excuses invoked to provide an alibi: too often Christians put forward as a plea the very demands of religious action, which, they say, requires a high intellectual training, within reach only of an *élite*. It is another argument for the shirking of responsi-

bility, this time on the plea of incompetence. The answer is that the ordinary apostolate to be undertaken by the majority of Christians is founded on faith rather than learning. There is a place and a time for the highly educated Christian and he will have his part to play in answering intellectual enquirers; but most often it will be the radiation of a genuine and earnest faith, blossoming into charity, which will act as the instrument of grace and will find a way into the hearts of men. Daily experience many times repeated enforces the lesson of theology, that faith does not come to us as the conclusion of a syllogism; and it shows the power of persuasion residing in a soul closely united to Christ. Numberless examples could be adduced. Christianity is not an esoteric religion; it is the common food of the wise and of children. Jesus thanked His Father for throwing open the Kingdom of Heaven to loyal and humble hearts. Children can be wonderful instruments of grace and those who resemble them are especially dear to God and especially fruitful in action.

In a world where the most elementary truths of the Christian faith are unknown or but dimly apprehended, the ordinary Catholic, normally instructed in the faith, can radiate such a flood of light. Let him not hesitate to go to his brothers who are astray in the darkness and show them where to find those who can enlighten them. Let him not be stopped by the fear of seeming to preach or to instruct others: there is a tone which none can mistake and which will soon make others feel that our message is not our own and that we too must "allow truth to do with us what it will," in Brunetière's words. No one has the right to stand aside on the pretext that he has but one talent and prefers to bury it in the earth. Each must give the full measure of the grace that is in him.

That the intellectuals should co-operate in the common

we can appreciate the tragic importance of certain facts. In that world of Catholic tradition, Protestantism has increased from 700,000 members in 1925 to 4,500,000 today. And when we remember that that Catholic continent has today only 30,000 priests, double the number of the Belgian clergy for twenty times the number of souls to be ministered to; when we realize the work accomplished by the Quito radio which, financed by fifty sects from the United States, covers with its propaganda the whole of Latin America; when we hear that 16,000 Protestant clergymen are working there and that their activities represent, according to one historian, "the greatest modern success of the Reforming movement since the seventeenth century"—it is only too easy to guess what the future holds in store, unless some tremendous shock brings about a change in the spiritual outlook of these peoples.¹

To this must be added the Communist action in those same countries, chosen lands of Marxist propaganda. Is it known that there has been opened at Prague a red "seminary" which is today training 750 young South Americans to bring to their native lands the gospel of the new age? Will Communism conquer those multitudes which can be saved now only by a Christian faith lived in its entirety? Shall we find before it is too late—for the problem is a race against time—Christians who will be ready to initiate the necessary social transformation by "living" the Gospel to its utmost consequences on the temporal plane? And if we cast a glance over the immense regions dominated by Islam, how shall we fail to recognize the breakdown of the "neutral," purely humanizing, missionary experiment? It was repeated so often that the Mohammedan world was unconvertible, and that three or four generations of peaceful penetration and of humanitarian activity were required before a breach

¹ E. G. Léonard, *Histoire du Protestantisme (Que sais-je?*, No. 427, p. 118).

could be made. Schools, railways, roads, hospitals, all the benefits of a material civilization were provided, which, it was thought, would ensure the gratitude of the native populations. Generations have passed, the account is closed, the experiment is completed: the result is total failure. We are still at a dead point, because we have not dared to act, because the impetus of apostolic zeal halted before difficulties, as the sea is stopped by a cliff. We did not dare to preach Christ, as the monks of Columban did of old in barbarian Europe, or as the disciples of St. Francis and St. Dominic did in the sixteenth century, when they covered Asia with missionary centres, from the Volga to the Gobi desert. We did not believe that God must be obeyed, when He told us to "go," rather than men, who ordered us to stay; we sacrificed the Gospel to human diplomacy which, for reasons of security and policy, forbade any religious approach to Islam. Now we are losing ground on both planes.

And not only is Islam there, still impervious and even extending its sway in Indonesia, in India, in Pakistan, but it has opened its doors to others who did not keep silent, and Communism is stepping into the place that we have left empty. Colonial settlements in North, South and Central Africa are mined with this propaganda, which feeds on every offence committed against justice and charity in the course of colonial history, and exploits them all for its own benefit. The Communists did not believe that Islam was impenetrable. They trained Arab leaders, first in Moscow, then in Korea and Indo China, and these agents are spreading Marxism and fomenting disturbances in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, as elsewhere in Africa. They stamped their ideology on the thousands of Moslem workers and intellectuals who came to Europe, particularly to France, and whom we Christians dared not approach on the religious plane, either in their

own country or in ours: they returned home to become ardent propagandists of Communism.

And these Communists themselves after all, what were they in the beginning but Slavs of the Orthodox Church? Did we try to approach them while there was yet time, in a truly apostolic spirit? Now and then through the centuries a few theological conferences were held with a handful of specialists. But no collective move was made by Catholics towards their separated brethren. It was repeatedly said that the Slavs are essentially a passive, apathetic race, unapt to be organized, unconvertible to the full religion of Peter. History records but a few rare attempts at reunion. On the other hand it tells of movements in the opposite direction, the absorption, brought about by trickery, indeed, of certain entire Latin or Uniate groups into the Orthodox religion, such as the changing over to the Russian Church of 250,000 Catholics of a Polish diocese during the nineteenth century. We did not seek to make contact with the leaders of those local Christian Churches, we did not go to them with our hearts full of anguish for the breach, and of eagerness, while respecting all legitimate secondary variations, to give them back the unity and the fullness of the faith and that integral Christian religion which they could not enjoy while cut off from Rome. Berdyaeff has said that Communism is the result of neglect on the part of Christ's disciples, the sign of a Christian duty disregarded.

We are obliged to agree that this is so and to strike our breasts with shame. We have accepted too easily a schism most painful to the Heart of Christ; we have believed that some situations were stereotyped and unchangeable. Human prudence has too often judged situations with its own criteria, and faith, which believes that what human power cannot accomplish is supernaturally possible, has not had full sway in our poor half-Christian outlook. *Modicee fidei*,

quare dubitasti? The Master has still the same complaint to make to His own, "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" We saw before us mountains of prejudice, of animosity, of bitterness and we did not believe, with a living and active faith, that we could move those mountains.

Let us leave the past and ask ourselves this simple question: What are we really doing today for the conversion of countries as near us as, for example, the Nordic lands, cut off from us by no Iron Curtain? The missionary effort on their behalf is painfully weak. The priests there are burdened with a task out of proportion to their numbers, and, absorbed as they are in the care of their flocks, are practically unable to pursue real missionary activity among the non-Catholics.

We say sometimes, to console ourselves when the Church suffers a violent set-back, that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Christian faith. That is true; but that blood must be made fruitful by our efforts. In the sixteenth century nearly all these Nordic countries experienced a religious persecution soaked in bloodshed: great numbers of martyrs gave their lives for the faith, and yet these countries did not return to the Church, because the Christian world did not make the indispensable missionary effort to give them back the faith of those martyrs. It is not for want of a store of grace that the spiritual life fails to flow as it should, but because of a short circuit caused by men whose duty it was to transmit the current and who shirked their task.

Once again let us repeat that God does not fail men, the source of grace does not run dry. There has never perhaps been so much piety in the Church; Communion has increased by millions since the decrees of St. Pius X; numberless crowds flock to places of pilgrimage and to Eucharistic and Marian congresses. And yet the world is moving away from Christianity, as its superficial humanization progresses. There is something out of gear: the current of grace does

not succeed in breaking through the obstacles of indifference and materialism that arise on all sides. We are to blame, for we fail to transmit grace. It is too easy to say, as we contemplate a multitude, once Christian, now no longer so: "We are powerless; those poor people have not grace, God must give it to them." We forget that grace is offered to all in full measure, pressed down and running over, and that it is men's hearts that deny it entrance. St. Thomas says very truly: *Defectus gratiae causa prima est ex nobis*,¹ that is, the first cause of a lack of grace is in ourselves. In the story of evil the creature is the first cause. In the story of good, on the other hand, God never fails man and at all times takes the initiative with him. It follows that we must approach all men, strong in the grace of God, who through us goes to meet them and will not fail them.

That duty is today more pressing and more necessary than ever.

¹ *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 112, 3, 3.

ONENESS OF THE PRIESTLY APOSTOLATE AND THE LAY APOSTOLATE

There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit: and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit.

ST. PAUL (I Corinthians 12. 4)

PRIESTHOOD OF THE LAITY

THE direct religious apostolate indispensable for the life of the Church is not, as appears to have been too long believed, the exclusive concern of the clergy. A one-sided emphasis on the layman's duties in the temporal and secular order sometimes produces the impression that the religious apostolate is the priest's domain, and that the layman has no part of real worth to play, otherwise than on the worldly plane.

The Christian layman's duty, indeed, is not confined to the religious apostolate. He is intended to take his share in the secular activities open to all, and to play the great game of human life with generous and all-embracing ardour. On the domestic, professional, social, cultural, political, national and international planes, it is his mission, and none can replace him, to embody to the full his Christian faith. "*Nihil humani a me alienum puto*: I reckon nothing human alien to me." The words of Terence constitute an imperative for his conscience, since man is wholly Christ's. *Omnia vestri sunt, vos autem Christi*. That referring all to Christ "in whom all stand," as St. Paul says, requires the baptized Christian

to grasp the final end of all created things and to express it in his life. The active participation of the layman in all secular activities is imposed on him by his faith, which embraces all of human life and demands of him to complete the work of creation according to God's plan. The Christian lives in this world; he must fill it with the Spirit of God.

But he does not belong to the world any more than the priest. He belongs to the Kingdom of God, to the Church, and belongs to it as an active member; and because of this he has a specific mission: to share in the evangelization of the world. Did not St. Peter call the faithful "a kingly priesthood, a holy nation" (I Pet. 2. 9).

This priesthood of the baptized Christian, too often ignored out of fear of the exaggerated emphasis placed on it by Protestants, or misinterpreted by a "lay theology," whose inadmissible claims were condemned by His Holiness, Pius XII, has recently been brought into prominence insofar as it is legitimate, by Fr. de Lubac in his book *Méditation sur l'Église*. He writes:

In a primary and very profound sense, every Christian is a priest—though in order to avoid a very serious confusion of meaning we must immediately explain this statement. . . .

The priesthood of bishops and priests is not properly speaking a higher dignity in the order of the Christian's participation in the grace of Christ. It is not, if we may so speak, a super-baptism, constituting a class of super-Christians, although he who receives it receives in consequence special graces and is thereby called by a new mandate to the perfection of the Christian vocation.

It goes without saying that the priest differs from the lay Christian in that he receives a priesthood of ministry, a visible priesthood, which corresponds with a special end of

the Mystical Body. We need not here set out the differences in full. The writer already quoted goes on to say:

The priest is not by reason of his ordination more Christian than the mere layman. . . . All are called to the same sharing in the divine life, all are called to it here below, and so all are united in the one essential dignity, that "Christian dignity," a wondrous renewal of human dignity, which the great Pope Leo X extolled in such glorious terms. All Christians are clothed with that dignity, whatever be their special function in the great body of the Church. But nevertheless there is in the Church, between clergy and laity, a difference of position and of power that is irreducible. Therefore while personal sanctity cannot be measured or tested by any standard . . . the priestly character, even if not actively exercised, must always be highly honoured. For those on whom it has been conferred . . . by virtue of a delegation by God Himself, share in the Church's mission to engender and to maintain the divine life in us. Jesus Christ "the true Priest," the one Priest, has chosen them as His instruments to work on souls. For that end He has communicated to them something of the power that He Himself receives from His Father. It is through them alone that are perpetuated here below, according to the mandate of our divine Redeemer, the functions of Christ, king, doctor, and priest.¹

It may be added that bishops and, in a more restricted order, priests are ministers and representatives of Christ in the full meaning of the word, and that they possess the incommunicable powers of teaching, ruling and judging. This fact being established and unquestioned, we may without fear of attaching undue importance to the lay apostolate, emphasize the powerful bond that unites priests and laity in the building of God's Kingdom on earth.

See a layman at work in the active apostolate. How does

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 122.

he proceed? He awakens in the unbeliever the need for God and Christ, and by so doing enkindles in him the baptism of desire, which leads him to sacramental baptism. He goes to a hardened sinner with words which, coming from Christ through him, renew life in his soul by perfect contrition, which attracts to him the grace of God, while leading him to the sacrament of penance. He goes "into the streets and lanes," to tell poor forgetful men that the Master has made ready the Eucharistic wedding banquet and, on his invitation, they draw near and receive the bread of life. In his way he has baptized, cleansed, fed these men. How close is the connection between him and the priest, despite the difference in their relative functions! *Confiteor unum baptisma*. Clergy and laity have the same vocation and it is with this common foundation in mind that we must distinguish between them without separating them, mark the differences, the better to unite the two functions. If we bring them too close together on the one plane, we misunderstand the specific nature of the priesthood of ministry, an error propagated by a certain egalitarian Protestant doctrine. If we disjoin them, we shall do harm to both by isolating the priest from the laity and by restricting the laity to purely secular activities.¹ The notion of the apostolate in

¹ Fr. Holstein, S.J., pointed out, with reference to *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc*, by Fr. Congar, O.P., that the author attributed to the layman "an activity too closely restricted to 'profane tasks,' which were to be the share of the layman and his only way of going to God." He may create such an impression in some passages, but these are corrected in others (Cf. *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, Feb. 1954, *La théologie du sacerdoce*, p. 177, note 2).

On the other hand, in an article on *L'éminente dignité des laïcs dans l'Église* (Eminent dignity of the laity in the Church), Étienne Borne pointed out the danger of an over-simplification in this matter and wrote concerning the book mentioned above: "If one may put it so, Fr. Congar's cleric is a Platonist, the layman is an Aristotelian: the world is not real enough to the cleric, it is too exclusively real to the layman" (*Vie Intellectuelle*, Dec. 1953, p. 37).

Fr. Daniélou, in a study of the same work, makes a similar remark (*Dieu Vivant*, No. 25).

the Church is thus modified with every slight deviation from truth in our thoughts.

THE TWO APOSTOLATES COMPLETE ONE ANOTHER

If it be true that the priesthood as ministry can never be conceived of apart from the general priesthood implied in baptism, it is true also that the priest's rôle cannot be defined separately and without reference to the laity. The union between the priesthood and the laity has its roots deep in the mystery of the Mystical Body, whose functions are diverse, but never divided into compartments. Here more than anywhere we must not separate what God has united.

As Cardinal Suhard has written: "The work of evangelization is carried to completion, neither by the baptized layman alone, nor by the priest alone, but by the Christian community. The basic cell, the unit of measure in the apostolate is, as everywhere, a sort of 'organic compound,' an indivisible dualism: priesthood, laity."¹ It is a delicate task to specify the complementary relations of the two elements; we would not echo the words of a theologian who carried his thoughts to extremes: "The priests are not at the service of the laity, neither are the laity at the service of the priesthood. All of them together are at the service of the Church." If it be correct to say that the whole Catholic community must be organized for missionary work, it may rightly be said too that on the religious plane the priests are at the service of the laity and the laity of the priesthood, just as the head is at the service of the arm and the arm of the head. In the oneness of the Mystical Body, functions are at once single and diverse.

¹ *Le prêtre dans la cité*, pp. 44-45.

THE LAYMAN IN HIS RELATIONS WITH THE PRIEST

The Christian layman is at the service of the priest, in the sense of sharing his pastoral and priestly responsibility. It falls to him to prepare the way for the priest's action, to sustain and extend it, a task for which he will need guidance. He has the rôle of St. John the Baptist, making straight the paths and clearing away obstacles. But it is his rôle also to co-operate with the priest, to help him, to extend his work. That subordination or secondary status in no way excludes the layman's initiative, but gives it a supernatural value. The Christian layman who obeys interprets in his life the Master's words to His Apostles: "He who hears you hears me." To despise or belittle the lay religious apostolate, on the pretext that it compromises the layman's own adult status, reduces him to the "rank of an altar boy" or of a merely passive instrument, or takes him from his proper tasks, is to misunderstand a fundamental subordination which on the spiritual plane is of divine right. It is to forget that, if the layman has his own indispensable, irreplaceable work to do in the secular sphere, the religious apostolate provides also, though not exclusively, a duty for him. To forget this is to take a one-sided view and to dissociate two complementary aspects of one task, a point which was made clear in the conclusions of the Congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome:

The laity in the Church, faithful to their vocation as the people of God, will fulfil their task by collaborating with the hierarchy in the salvation of souls and by working to promote in the world conditions of temporal life adapted to the Church's redemptive mission.

These are the lay Catholic's two ways of collaborating in the expansion of God's Kingdom. The two duties bind him simultaneously; he has not the right to sacrifice the first to

the second. The words, "the layman is not at the service of the priest," are correct, if by them we mean to claim for the layman his legitimate independence in the domain of secular activities, which are the subject of his own choice. The farther one goes from the religious, and enters the secular sphere, the more fitting and desirable does it become that the layman should take the initiative, and finally that he should take it entirely. But the same is not true on the religious plane. The subordination of laity to clergy here is a delicate matter and, in formulating it, all aspects of the question must be respected. The layman participates in the Church's apostolic mission without sharing the powers of the hierarchy. In an address at the time of St. Pius X's canonization, His Holiness Pope Pius XII laid marked emphasis on the unique place of the teaching authority of the Church which has been minimized today by a certain school of "lay theology." The laity have on their own plane a special responsibility and the authority implied in it. But, while on that level they are truly leaders, in essence they are followers, not by any unreasonable exercise of authority on the part of the clergy, but by reason of the very nature of the priesthood. They are leaders in Catholic Action; but Catholic Action is itself a sharing in the apostolate directed and controlled by the hierarchy. That fundamental state of dependence is an exercise of active faith in the mediation of the priesthood, and submission to the divine order is a source of fruitfulness, of spiritual wealth and of grace. Filial obedience safeguards and exalts the activities which it canalizes.

This complexity in the relations of clergy and laity shows to what an extent their functions are inter-related.

THE PRIEST IN HIS RELATIONS WITH THE LAITY

If, in the sense defined above, the layman is at the service

of the priest, the latter, in his turn, is at the service of the layman. *Pro hominibus constitutus*, St. Paul says; the priest exists for the sake of men, to help them in fulfilling their vocation, as men, as baptized Christians and consequently as apostles. By his special call he must follow the example of Christ and be a trainer of apostles. He is not yet sufficiently conscious of this call, because he has not yet fully realized the need for Catholic Action, in a word, for the lay apostolate, and has not yet measured its full consequences. How many years had to elapse before the decrees of Pope Pius X with regard to frequent Communion became part of our ordinary daily habits!

We are at a similar stage regarding the call to a universal apostolate. Just as the priest's special vocation is not to pray in place of the laity, so as to dispense them from the duty of prayer, but rather to lead them in prayer, so must he devote himself to apostolic work, not in place of the laity, but at their head. For this he requires a twofold training, first, for himself personally, and then, in view of his future function as trainer of laymen.

The priest is like an officer leading his troops. He must himself know how to attack and fight the enemy, and have at the same time the art of directing his men's assault. He would fail in his true mission as a leader if he contented himself with acts of personal courage—an officer in full dress uniform—and did not seek to lead his troops along with him. A battle cannot be won by officers fighting alone or by soldiers without a leader.

The same thing holds good for the priest. His function is to be a mediator between heaven and earth; he is the bridge—the pontifex—joining the two banks of the river of life. He is not really a mediator between God and men, if he fails to make contact with them, if he remains suspended in mid-air like the platform of a bridge that does not come down

and rest on both banks. But by his function he is also appointed to develop the apostolic sense of the Christian people and lead them to battle for God. These two aspects are complementary. The priest must be trained for this twofold function; he must learn for himself how to make direct religious contact with men and he must know how to prepare the faithful for the apostolic duty proper to every baptized Christian.

Any solution of the problems of the apostolate which does not take into account the indissoluble bond between the clergy and the laity cannot be adequate. On this point many recent articles dealing with the priest-workers are defective. It is too often forgotten that the multitude can never be rechristianized by the efforts of priests, whether priest-workers or not, when these work without the co-operation of the faithful. It is not a question of numbers: even with a thousand times their actual strength, priests could not take the place of the laity in a task for which the laity are indispensable.

The priesthood is too much isolated from the laity. Too easily is it believed that the layman's rôle begins only when there is a shortage of priests and consists only in supplying for them. The laity have been told that by virtue of their baptism they are to be apostles; priests have perhaps not been sufficiently taught that, in consequence of this, their duty is to provide or discover for the laity a field of apostolic work, and to train them for it. The clergy will convert the world, only if they avoid isolationism and collaborate with the laity to whom they have revealed their proper responsibilities.

THE PRIEST'S TRIPLE TASK

Seeking for helpers

It follows that every priest must recognize the importance

of finding collaborators, of training them and of setting them to work. This was indeed the threefold direction that His Holiness Pius XII gave to Lenten preachers (1954) in a letter which is a true charter of pastoral theology. After mentioning the impossibility for the shepherd of reaching his flock without help from the laity, the Pope emphasizes the duty of discovering first of all apostolic souls, that is, "finding out how many there are, where they are, what they are capable of doing and where they may be effectively employed." His words mean that the priest must seek out his helpers, and that unwearingly and in all places. He must not expect to see them come to him of themselves; he will have to overcome their resistance, their fears, their timidity, and the mistaken theories behind which they entrench themselves. If he wishes to be heard, he must not content himself with a general collective appeal: he will approach souls individually and address to them a direct, concrete, precise invitation. He has to make clear the imperative need of their apostolic vocation and the consequences for the world of the indifference of Christian laymen. He must dare to press the laity, with all the love of Christ for those souls in peril who await a saving hand; and he must dare emphasize the gravity of the apostolic duty, without allowing a first or even a second refusal to discourage him.

He must dare also to approach the ordinary Catholic who lives an average Christian life, the Sunday-Mass Catholic, and even more, the daily-Mass Catholic. Every one of the faithful is called on to collaborate in this work of grace and we have no right to set conditions to the collaboration which only a minority could fulfil. It is well to remember, moreover, that the active work of the apostolate is itself a training school for apostles. Why should prohibitive conditions be set up from the very start? In recruiting

for the army only a small number are rejected as unsuitable at the first examination and a well-conceived military organization will take care to plan the training of recruits of average abilities, so as to secure from them a satisfactory return.

The priest should avoid the temptation to say: "I can find no one." This may be true at first sight and judging by human standards, but faith will tell him that any soul in a state of grace—a child or a poor old woman—possesses Christ and is perhaps the collaborator he is seeking, with whom he could start a general movement. A single soul is sufficient as a lever and deserves all our care, if it is true, as St. Charles Borromeo used to say, "that a single soul is a diocese big enough for a bishop." Since each Christian is another Christ, he must necessarily be an apostle, as Christ was. The faithful would make a tragic mistake if they imagined that Christ is the model for the priest exclusively and not for each one of them; or if they believed the apostolate to be reserved for some future saints, who by their miracles would dispense the rest of men from all effort. The words spoken by the Apostolic Delegate in England to a gathering of Catholics may be said by the priest to everyone: "God has no other voice, no other hands, no other feet than yours with which to carry the Gospel over the world."

What a revolution would be brought about if every baptized Christian accepted it as an evident duty to take charge of his brother's soul, just as he accepts the precept of Sunday Mass; if every Catholic became conscious of his obligations to the multitude around him and within his reach, and if he sought to meet these obligations by making a series of personal contacts! To take a concrete example: suppose that the 30 million Catholics in the United States took on themselves the care of their 120 million fellow-countrymen, four persons for each Catholic. It

becomes clear at once how the magnitude of the work is reduced proportionately, and how it is our neglect that creates an impossible situation and never any impossible situation that justifies our abandonment of effort. All this no doubt is but an argument from figures; and the redemption of the world will always be a mystery of suffering and failure. The Cross of Christ is before us, to show that the salvation of men is impeded by the powers of evil and that souls must be bought at a heavy price. But we must not misunderstand this mystery nor argue from the temporary failures, ever recurring in the Church Militant, to escape the combat and the sufferings which necessarily result from it. We must not accuse Satan before pleading guilty ourselves.

We shall realize very keenly how urgent is this task of recruiting and training the laity for the apostolate, from a page of Canon Thellier de Poncheville's book, *Tout l'Évangile dans toute la vie*. He tells the story of a visit that he paid to a family described as "very good Catholics," to ask co-operation in a work of the religious apostolate. The answers he got from these people throw light on the state of lethargy or thoughtlessness engendered in "good people" by an incomplete education. The father of the family refused his request with a sarcastic smile, saying: "So you would like us to do your work for you?" The mother excused herself on the score of principle: "It is a matter of principle with me, Father, not to interfere in what is not my business."

The daughter, when it was pointed out to her that she would be wanting in charity if she did not do some apostolic work, found an answer that takes one's breath away: "I wanting in charity! Oh! Father, how little you know me! I never interfere with anyone." The Canon then turned to the younger brother, an ecclesiastical student at home for the holidays, and asked him what he had been doing for

souls. He received this calm reply: "I have not had the opportunity."

The story needs no comment. It shows the weight of inertia that one meets with in the search for collaborators, which is the first step in all healthy pastoral activity. It suggests too a need to revise our Christian education, starting from its earliest foundation, the catechism. This call to the apostolate must be driven home as an elementary requirement, from the very first chapter which asks: "Why was man created?" and answers: "To know, love, and serve God." It is a perfectly correct answer, but only if we do not limit ourselves to the individual outlook and if we understand rightly the word "serve." For to serve God means to *make* Him known, to *make* Him loved, to *cause* Him to be served. The two duties—the personal and the missionary duty—are bound together and depend upon one another. Together they supply the answer to the problem of man's destiny. When this first lesson enlightens all the others and penetrates to the core of religious instruction in all its stages, then the priest will be sure of success in the difficult but indispensable task of seeking for collaborators.

Training helpers

After the priest has discovered collaborators, he will have to train them by making them conscious of their latent riches. That is the next stage that he has to pass, and it corresponds to the second direction given by His Holiness Pius XII. He must apply the words of the French philosopher, which are worth their weight in gold and can never be sufficiently meditated upon by those who are truly leaders of their brothers: "The greatest good we do to others is not to give them of our wealth, but to show them their own." That is just what is asked of the priest: to practise the art of awakening and directing the energies of others in the common effort.

It is so much easier to issue orders than to call forth real collaboration. It is so much easier to do something *for* another than to do it *with* him, to solve a problem for him than to make him discover the solution for himself and to work with him at applying the result. It is essential for a priest not to assume an authoritarian attitude, he must trust the resources of the laity: he must resist the temptation to do everything himself, on the plea that so all will be better and more quickly done; he must learn how to inspire others and efface himself; in a word, he must learn to be all and to be nothing. A dictatorial priest destroys at the outset any possibility of collaboration. Social psychology, notably the researches of Kurt Lewin and the experiments in industrial activities made by French and Coch, have proved how the output of a team is ruined by an undue show of authority. Control is no doubt indispensable; control, however, does not mean repression; but rather stimulation, guidance, encouragement. To control is not to take the place of the workers; on the contrary, it is the art of getting work done by others, rather than doing it oneself, of provoking life and growth, instead of stifling or quenching energy. If work undertaken in common is to be successful, each worker must feel himself pledged, responsible, fully active, and sharing from within in the task of all.¹ The priest, as director of a spiritual concern in the higher sense of the word, will gain much if he seeks inspiration in the elementary principles which govern efficiency and success in business: he will soon feel their value for his work.²

It would be a senseless act to refuse to undertake the task of training apostolic workers, on the pretext that one had more urgent duties, or that time was lacking.

There is a well-known episode in the life of St. Pius X

¹ An article, "*Psychologie moderne et apostolat*," by Gérard Petit, may be read with interest (see *Feuilles documentaires de l'A.C.H.*, Nov. 1, 1954, pp. 607-622).

which Dom Chautard relates in his book, *Soul of the Apostolate*. The Pope in conversation with a group of Cardinals asked them: "What is the most necessary thing today for the salvation of society?" He received various answers: more schools, more churches, more priests. . . . "No," replied St. Pius X, "the prime necessity today is to have in every parish a group of laymen, virtuous, enlightened, resolute, fearless and truly apostolic." This answer given by a saint of our own day is still of burning interest. One cannot fail to see that, by raising up such a band of helpers, the priest prodigiously increases his power of action. If he fails to make use of these apostolic workers, he has no right to complain that his flock are overwhelming him by their numbers. After the direct worship of God, his first duty to men lies there: he must seek out and train lay helpers, through whom sinners and straying souls will come to him, by whose intermediary he will make contact with the multitude that keeps out of his reach and crushes his spirit by its weight. In the address quoted above, His Holiness Pius XII disposed of the miserable plea of want of time in these words:

The time spent in preparing collaborators is not time lost. Those who will help you in the apostolate cannot be considered as a "burden," unless it be as the weight of wings, which facilitate rather than hinder movement.

Making use of the layman

The Pope's third direction with regard to the laity may be expressed in these words: to make use of them. The priest cannot face alone the great multitude that are to be rechristianized. His Holiness Pius XII continues:

The apostolate must be exercised in factories, in schools, in large apartment houses, not only by one's presence, but also by one's actions; there must be someone to

initiate and bring into action, under your guidance, and with your blessing, a band of "lay missionaries."

These words echo a well-known saying of Pius XI: "The first apostles of the workers will be workers themselves." The whole ideal of Jocism rests on this affirmation. The priest owes it to himself to organize lay collaboration. Under his impulse laymen will be the leaders of their brothers and the first organizers of apostolic activity on their own particular front. The priest must always of necessity be cut off from the world; this fact is inherent in his priesthood; for while he can, if need be, share his brothers' work, he cannot share their leisure, their married life, their family life. From that point of view he can only become one with humanity in a fragmentary and limited way. It must be said, however, that while the state of chastity which he has chosen isolates him, it does so only to give him more completely to other men. He renounces having a family, but it is in order that he may acquire spiritual fatherhood and extend indefinitely the field of his responsibilities. "Chastity, virginity," affirmed His Holiness Pius XII, "do not make souls strangers to the world. Rather do they stimulate and develop energy for wider and higher tasks, which are beyond the powers of ordinary families."¹ The chastity of the priesthood differs from religious chastity properly speaking, which has been called "a chastity of perfection," in that it is before all "a chastity of self-sacrifice," opening out on the world by sacrificing heroically the warmth and intimacy of a home. The priest buys at that price his freedom to love all men, to be "all things to all men," and to play his part as chief inspirer of the layman's apostolate. He will not realize that part fully unless he makes use, as he should, of the help of the laity.

¹ Address of Sept. 14, 1951.

It is not enough to possess an instrument, one must besides know how to use it, and to use it boldly. We are too much afraid of asking the laity for an effort which they will readily exert, if we call on them in a convincing manner. We quote again from His Holiness Pius XII:

Be exacting in pointing out their goals to them and be constant in encouraging them towards their realization. It is clear they will not have to give orders, but neither may they be reduced to merely carrying out orders. Leave them therefore sufficient scope for developing a spirit of eager and fruitful initiative; this will also make them happier, more alert and ready to collaborate with you.

We have in these words a picture of the early Church and of those forerunners of the lay apostolate of whom St. Paul said that "they laboured with him in the Gospel." Their names are written for us to read at the end of the Epistle to the Romans: Prisca and Aquila, Andronicus and Junias, Ampliatus and Urbanus . . . and that Apelles of whom it is said that he is "approved in Christ," are for all time the models of the laity's collaboration with the priesthood in the apostolate, which is diverse yet undivided, many-sided yet one. When the Popes speak with such insistence of mobilizing the Christian army, it is to this united effort that they invite us. Too many people persist in believing that the religious apostolate is the domain of the priesthood and of a few isolated saints, and a religious apostolate carried on by all baptized Catholics has not yet really been tried, at least on a wide scale—as is done we know, alas! for another cause, in the Communist camp. As long as this unanimous action of the clergy and the ordinary faithful has not been attempted, we shall not really have obeyed the Master's command to go and bring the Gospel to every creature. The triple task that His Holiness Pius XII assigns to the priest is no doubt particularly appropriate to the

pastor who has charge of a flock. But priests called by obedience to carry out the diverse intellectual or administrative tasks requisite in the life of the Church must also take their part, however little time they may be able to devote to it, and however various may be its forms, in the work we have described, of organizing the laity for missionary activity. God grant that priests may understand their obligation to surround themselves with a vast army of helpers and that "practising" Christians may realize that the time has come for them to practise their Christianity to the full. There is no other road to salvation.

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH FOR MISSIONARY WORK

But to attain that end, it is indispensable that we should think out afresh our methods of action and use our intelligence in organizing the allotment of the work. That is not naturalism: the grace of God is the first and vital element in our work, and without the riches of Christ's redemption the Christian apostolate would be unthinkable. But supernatural treasures, like the wealth of nature, must be made use of, if they are to attain their end. The waters of Niagara could give neither light nor heat to a single home, if they were not stored in powerful hydraulic reservoirs and if their power were not driven from point to point in all directions. Once electric power has been produced and put at man's disposal, nothing is needed for its use but adequate organization; the lighting of all New York City is no more than a question of proper wiring and connecting. The same is true of divine grace. That it may reach men, one thing is sufficient—but it is indispensable—for each sector to be put under the charge of a responsible worker; which is possible if each one accepts, as his share of the task, to be an agent of transmission.

The man to whom light is offered is still free to refuse it, but it has been put within his reach; that is the task proper to the engineer.

The Church must organize some sort of appropriate contact with every single soul in the diocese or in the parish. Such a division of work, which we need not here discuss in detail, implies organizing; if the work is organized, there will be definite tasks, care will be taken that the output is satisfactory, a certain control will be exercised. A formless intermittent good intention is not sufficient; steam is nothing but vapour as long as we merely set water boiling. It acquires propulsive force only in a properly constructed apparatus. In the interests of efficiency we avoid doing work by hand when 100 per cent output can be secured by pulling a lever; no one has any right to give a 5 per cent yield by his individual effort, when 100 per cent is attainable with organized team work.

Think of all the systematic organization provided for in religious congregations, and compare that serious effort with the indefiniteness and laxity frequently seen in the direction of the laity. One would not suggest, of course, shaping these two forms of activity in the same mould—but there is too great a difference between the methods applied. What is needed for the laity is a framework of activities, flexible, diversified, and leaving wide play to personal initiative. This implies neither regimentation nor uniformity: there is room in the Church Militant for the most varied activities, and all cannot be asked to devote the same amount of time to the apostolate or to do equally specialized work. But no one has the right to shirk the "war effort," or some small share of co-ordinated activity.

An invitation to think out our methods of activity afresh is but an application of the Master's precept, which orders us to love our neighbour, not only with all our heart, but

also with all our mind. *Ex toto corde et tota mente tua*. The rich man, in a burst of generosity, may give his money to the poor, but he may also set up a factory and provide work for them. If this is the motive of his action, we may truly say that he loves his neighbour, not alone with his heart, but also with his mind. It is evident that such a long term act of charity is immensely more valuable than the immediate and much easier gesture. That is the form of brotherly love most lacking in the apostolate. How can one withhold admiration from the incessant and methodical exercise of thought and the perpetual reorganizing required for the successful working of a factory, a colliery or a ship-building yard! What an amount of energy is expended in the world to ensure the success of a film, of a television programme, of a new play! And how this contrasts with the methods employed in the apostolate, too often merely empirical, casual, desultory and inconsequent. On the one hand, what activity, what an expenditure of energy, what keen attention to the end in view; on the other, what half-heartedness, what haphazard and improvised methods! Do we think that the Holy Ghost, who breathes life into the Church, has dispensed us from employing all our talents, and undertaken to supply for men's laziness? Why is it that the children of this world too often outdo the children of light in foresight, in courage, in consistency, in constancy, in practical and efficient wisdom? We have no right to be guided by caprice in the service of God, or to employ outworn methods which have no contact with reality. We must bravely think out our own methods of work afresh in the light of our objective, which is nothing less than the salvation of the world; we must reject the methods which are clearly seen to have failed or to be flagrantly out of proportion with the ends worked for. It is for priests and laymen together to work for this renewal of methods, in order to meet the needs of the hour.

APOSTOLIC RÔLE OF THE "AUXILIARIES" OF THE CLERGY

I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?

ST. LUKE 12. 49

A WANT THAT MUST BE SUPPLIED

IF "the whole Church must set itself in a state of missionary activity," the need is particularly urgent in the case of those who may be classed generically as "auxiliaries of the clergy": brothers, religious who are not priests, women religious (in the canonical meaning of the word), members of secular institutes and, in a wider sense, souls dedicated to God and working for Him in the world. Their share in the Church's apostolate sets a very serious problem. Too often the question of co-operation in the apostolate is understood only of relations between clergy and laity, and we forget to assign a function and a vital rôle to those other chosen and indispensable elements.

In a book that attracted considerable attention, *Der Laie und der Ordenstand*,¹ Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar called attention to this want in our pastoral planning. Rightly he emphasized the gravity of this omission, pointing out how illogical it is to discuss problems of the lay apostolate without adverting to the co-operation of that "Third Estate," the world of religious who are not priests. It is very true that

¹ "Christ heute" series: Einsiedeln, Johannes-Verlag (O.S.B.), 1949. Translated into French under the title: *Laïcat et plein apostolat (Études religieuses)*, Nos. 664, 665, 666, Liège, La Pensée Catholique).

the problem can neither be treated in bulk nor left out of consideration, and, even if one does not share all the writer's opinions, one must agree with him that the omission disorganizes and weakens apostolic work.

The book unfortunately speaks only of "secular institutes," though it would be important to examine the question in full, independently of the divisions and classifications of Canon Law.

These distinctions, of course, have their own marked importance. From the standpoint of the call to perfection, we cannot group together in one solid category those whom we have called here the auxiliaries of the clergy. But from one aspect common to all of them—co-operation with the priest—they may be taken collectively and their activities in the apostolate examined.

Among the diverse categories of souls consecrated to God, the nuns of long-established congregations, who by their vocation are in direct contact with the world, deserve special attention, and that for a twofold reason. First, because of all groups of auxiliaries, they are the most numerous. To cite only the figures relating to teaching orders in France, it may be noted that they have charge of 7,300 schools, numbering altogether 835,000 pupils, or 20 per cent of the school population of girls. And the proportion is much higher in other countries, like Belgium, where it reaches 65 per cent. Secondly, because for them it seems more difficult to solve the problem of determining their appropriate place in the scheme of the apostolate, while it is easier for secular institutions, and similar bodies recently founded, to adapt themselves to modern requirements.

What is said of the first group may be said *a fortiori* for all categories of auxiliaries of the clergy.

As to the purely contemplative orders, they are the answer

to a special call from God. Their splendid contribution to the growth of the Mystical Body of Christ is on another plane and must be viewed from a different angle—we are considering here those orders or congregations only which are in direct contact with the world.

PROBLEM OF THE ORGANIZATION OF CATHOLIC LAYWOMEN

It would be superfluous to lay stress on the importance of women, the makers of civilization, whom so many others have extolled through the ages. Recently, Gertrude von Le Fort, in *The Eternal Woman*, has devoted to this subject pages marked by penetrating thought. We need not labour the point. It is a commonplace of speech to say that a man is moulded on his mother's knee, and that all through his life he remains the child, first of his mother, later of his wife. A woman's influence usually predominates in the home and makes its mark on men's lives, for good or evil, to an unequalled degree. Biographies of men eminent in politics, in science, in the arts, in letters, bear witness to the presence and the action of women in their lives.

The claim was a well-founded one at all times; it is more so than ever in our day, when women no longer play the obscure part, hidden "under the symbol of the veil" of which Gertrude von Le Fort speaks, but when their influence appears more and more in the light of day, because of their gradual emancipation. The time is past when women were confined in the home by custom and tradition, and when they were denied permission to move about freely or to seek access to public positions and to most of the professions. They have ceased to be minors and less than ever are they satisfied with the passive and secluded position suggested by the famous saying: "Be beautiful and be silent."

Only yesterday a woman exercised her influence on

society indirectly, through men; now, while still maintaining this unobtrusive power, she wields another, plainly visible to all: she assumes functions in the forefront of the political, diplomatic, governmental, literary, medical and scientific world; she creates charitable and social organizations; she influences trends of opinion, even revolutions. Lenin's judgment was a striking one: "experience in all movements for freedom testifies that the success of a revolution depends on the extent to which women share in it" (Nov. 19, 1918).

It is to be expected, then, that this autonomy in secular matters should result in the Christian woman's having a greater sense of responsibility in the religious apostolate. Grace does not destroy nature, but takes possession of it and elevates it. It has been said that "the holier a woman is the more completely is she a woman."

Her traditional rôle remains unchanged: it will ever be true that, not only the destiny of the world, but also in great measure that of the Church, is in the hands of woman, because she is the mother. Hence she watches over the birth of priestly and religious vocations, which are the glory and the life of the Church: "Were it not for this ring," said the mother of Pius X, showing her wedding ring to her illustrious son, "you would not have yours."

But as a woman she is also asked nowadays to collaborate directly in the extension of the Church. Work which, because of custom, was not even conceivable in the past has now become imperative. Women no longer have the right to shelter within the walls of home, to live silent and hidden, when the hour of action and missionary initiative has struck. Their emancipation imposes on them a fresh duty of collaboration and action, and hence an urgent question arises: who will organize the practical application of this latent energy? Who will gather and store that energy and give a full apostolic force to the laywoman's powers of

religious influence, powers that were until recently unsuspected? It will no doubt be said that the task of awakening the laity to their responsibilities, and therefore also of organizing the work of laywomen, belongs properly to the priest. But awakening is one thing—organizing quite another. We must realize what an absorbing individual effort is required for setting the Church in a state of missionary activity.

To organize thoroughly and obtain definite results, those who undertake the training of the laity must share their lives in an intimate way, and this will call for constant close contacts, that they may encourage, sustain, counterbalance human wavering or discouragement; it will imply a gift of discernment, an understanding of the nature of women, an inside knowledge of the practical circumstances of life. It will be seen from the mere enumeration of these conditions of success that the task cannot ordinarily belong to the priest who, despite his sacred character, is still a man and therefore bound to act with reticence and to avoid familiarity. In this sphere, which is quite distinct from the ministry of the sacrament of penance, his proper domain, the priest can act only indirectly or at intervals. Even if the task were directly his, he would be unable to carry it out to the required extent, were it only because of the immense multitude that he cannot reach and that escape the influence of our social activities and our charitable associations.

A glance at a typical city parish will suffice to bring conviction. Here is a parish of twenty thousand souls, under the care of a parish priest and his three curates. The disproportion in these figures is obvious. Yet someone must take charge of each of these twenty thousand souls. In baptizing a soul the Church becomes its mother, that is, she agrees to take an interest in it, to guide and enlighten it, to

give it spiritual nourishment, to make its life a success supernaturally. How could these four priests alone organize even the girls and women of the parish? Must we then despair? By no means. In that parish there are a home, an orphanage, a crèche, served by some sixty nuns who, like the priest, have dedicated themselves exclusively to God and have chosen the religious life only in order to devote themselves more fully to the salvation of the world. Their immediate objective, no doubt, is that hospital, that home, that school, but the final objective of these consecrated souls must be the sanctification of the whole parish, and it is for this end that they will exercise upon women first, and through them upon families, upon all society, their beneficent and civilizing action.

The inspiring and organizing of the women's apostolate in a parish must fall naturally and by right to the nuns established within its boundaries. Instead of dividing the twenty thousand inhabitants among four priests and reserving for the nuns the five hundred or so souls that are directly confided to their care in their institutions, would it not be the more obviously right arrangement to divide the whole body of the parishioners among the priests and their auxiliaries? No doubt the pastoral ministry is the duty of the clergy only, while the auxiliaries have a different immediate objective; but, though methods of work in the apostolate and the various functions of each group vary with the time given to each, nothing need prevent all men and women auxiliaries from working in common, under the headship and direction of the clergy. Formerly custom and convention did not allow of religious action being viewed from that wide angle. It was not fitting for a woman to assume the initiative in certain activities.

But times have changed. The nun of today is not, from many points of view, the same woman as she was formerly;

religious life must be in harmony with new conditions, under pain of being obsolete, and a nun must carry out her rôle in all departments that are today open to her. While she should not take the place of the laity or make herself their guardian, her vocation marks her out for the task, new in our time, of organizing the laity. She will undertake that mission today in co-operation with the priest and under his responsibility. Like him, she is not to direct, but to inspire, the lay apostolate. Like him, she must avoid all undue claims to authority, in order to get the most out of the hidden talents of the laity whom she seeks to win for the apostolate. Before the Popes had initiated the idea of an organized lay apostolate, religious constitutions did not mention as a duty for nuns the leading of the laity to the apostolate. That is easy to understand: we are all the children of our age, and religious bodies are no exception. In France certain teaching orders or congregations have been in existence for over four hundred years; the seventeenth century gave birth to fifty or so, the eighteenth to thirty more. After the French Revolution, over a hundred and twenty teaching congregations were founded between 1800 and 1850, and at least forty in the second half of the century. These dates account for certain anachronisms in their rules and customs.

However matters may have been in the past, the duty of bringing the laity into apostolic action is today, as Pius XI reminded us, an integral part of the religious vocation. And just as the priest cannot refuse the co-operation of the laity, he cannot neglect to ask the help of nuns, which is quite indispensable to the success of his own mission. He must do all to prepare and train for their work those who, by their vocation, will have to inspire Catholic laywomen. All Christians, according to their place in the Church, have an irreplaceable function to fulfil. The strength of an army

rests on the co-operation of all ranks: an army without non-commissioned ranks, composed only of field officers and privates, would be doomed to defeat. This analogy will repay consideration.

RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF THE SITUATION

Want of time

It will be said that these suggestions cannot be put into practice, are incompatible with the religious life. Let us not too hastily accept the "impossible" of human wisdom, when it is in conflict with the necessity of faith. We should accept it only on compelling evidence. Is that really the case here? Let us examine the arguments. The first objection put forward is that nuns have not time for these new duties. It is impossible, we are told, to confide to nuns the whole or part of the organization of the laywoman's apostolate; they are already sinking under the burden of their particular work, school, crèche, refuge, hospice, hospital. Just take a look at the time-table, count the hours that make up a day, and see the conclusion forced upon you. Is it not decisive? Yes, as decisive indeed as a time-table, that is, as something which depends on circumstances. A time-table is in no way sacrosanct. It is neither an absolute nor an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. If the end is widened under the urge of some superior necessity, the time-table will have to be made flexible and to yield to the new demands. If the day's programme in a religious house has remained unchanged for half a century or longer, it is more than likely that it is not adapted to the present-day needs of the Church. This *status quo* itself would need to be looked into.

The question of time, that is, of its rational use and arrangement, is dependent on faith, which puts first things

first, in accordance with its own scale of values. The principal test is the apostolic output that is secured. This is not primarily a question of quantity, but one of right outlook, of perspective. A few hours a week may be sufficient to give a new orientation to all one's ordinary activities. Once the relative importance of different works is established, practical conclusions will follow naturally. An effort will be made, for example, wherever possible, and even at the cost of a financial sacrifice, to confide certain duties or classes in the institution to lay people, so that the nuns may be set free to make sure of the all-important mission of training the laity. Christ, who promised to those who seek first the Kingdom of God that the rest would be added unto them, will not fail to reward such a sacrifice and such an act of confidence in Him. Care will be taken too not to let immediate duties become overpowering and to give to the work that has been recognized as of prime importance its proper place in the programme of everyday life. Again and again the question must be asked, how time can best be utilized, so as to reach and win the laity.

It should be considered of far more importance to save time or reduce labour by adopting technical improvements than to maintain an appearance of poverty by using outworn methods of work.

There is no doubt that our nuns are often seriously overworked, but it would be well to make sure that they are not wrongly overworked, to consider whether a better understanding of missionary duty would not suggest certain modifications in their programme. Is it not likely that nuns will always be overworked? Is that not what one would expect of devoted and generous souls? The main question is to know how they are overworked. Exhaustion may come from the thousand calls of daily life, imagined by ourselves as being indispensable, just as it may be due to the effort of

building up an apostolic group among souls that have as yet little generosity. What matters most is to know which fatigue will be more useful to the Church.

Spiritual writers have repeated to excess that, with the same love in our hearts, we can do as much for the salvation of the world by offering our educational, manual or administrative work as did St. Francis Xavier by going to preach at the ends of the earth. That is true, but only on one condition, that we are really unable to reach souls directly. We have no right to entrench ourselves in a subjective perfection, heavy with pious intentions, when the act that gives concrete existence to those intentions is within our reach. And besides, has not the self-denial inherent in apostolic work a unique value for our sanctification?

Spiritual exercises

Another objection that will be made is that, while a lay-woman is free when her day's work is done, a nun has her many spiritual exercises to fit into a time-table where each minute is provided for. One must not minimize the fundamental importance of the life of prayer, which is the soul of the apostolate. But in prayer it is primarily quality that counts; the more or less time devoted to it is secondary and may be varied. It is to be wished that the governing Councils of religious congregations would look carefully into their customs, and see if in certain cases there is not some overloading, with a danger of supersaturation, and if a certain amount of pruning might not be beneficial. Every active order—we repeat that contemplatives are not under discussion—should ask itself firmly whether its means are the best for the end in view, which is to serve at once the institution itself and the wider community of which it is a part, whether a right proportion of time is allotted to each of these objectives. That is the essential question.

It will be remembered how, when St. Ignatius sought to prepare specially flexible apostolic troops for the Church, he simplified the framework of religious life for his followers. Other orders have followed his example. If, as will frequently happen, a selection has to be made, it would be useful to consider the time that the Church herself asks her priests to give, *ex professo*, to prayer. Her programme is conceived with moderation and sobriety; she is not concerned primarily with many prayers or long ones. Under her inspiration religious should revise their time-table, in a spirit of faith and of practical realism, and ever bearing in mind the need of facilitating the apostolic mission. These suggestions are not proposed as a planned programme; they only invite the rulers of religious houses to undertake a thorough revision of their constitutions, in conjunction with the competent authority, and this for the benefit, not only of the apostolate, but even of the spirit of piety within their community. For the spiritual ideal of souls dedicated to the apostolate must not aim at a niggardly form of the contemplative life. Each spiritual vocation has its own line of action, which must be respected and thought out in view of its particular requirements.

Sometimes active orders adopt almost unchanged a programme of spiritual exercises which was planned for contemplatives, and that is bound to set up difficulties. In the name of a contemplative ideal which has been fitted into the programme of an active life, they arrive, in perfectly good faith, at avoiding their missionary work. Now, it is the object in view that determines the balance of religious life. In active orders, it is evident that the end is the visible and tangible salvation of the world.

The Constitutions

The same objection will be made under another form;

instead of the lack of time or the priority of religious exercises, the Constitutions will be appealed to.

We shall be told that every congregation was founded for a definite object and that the apostolic "mission" is not part of the programme.

This objection too can be met.

At the base of every positive rule are the great law of the Gospel and the universal commandments of God. We are required by the divine claim of our baptism to realize our oneness with the whole world, and the injunction of Christ, "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature", is a binding law for all time, and concerns every one of us, whatever methods we adopt to realize it. Each congregation selects, not the end, which is common, but the means to attain it; the value of every religious rule depends on the measure in which it enables its subjects better to respond to the call of the Gospel. Religious vows are but the completion of our baptismal profession of faith: they raise to the highest degree the grace and claims of baptism, which is common to all Christians. Our duty as baptized Christians is as compelling for religious as for the laity and takes precedence of our professional duty. No one has the right to limit his obligations to the organizing of a hospital or school, and to confine his efforts to working for the success of his institution.

We have not done all that God asks of us until we have fulfilled our missionary duty; our school, our special activity, is not cut off from the rest of the world, but is rather a means of setting up a contact with the world. Each man's work is connected with the whole divine scheme at the point where the part is joined to the whole. *In omnibus respice finem.* The immediate end must not be sought to the detriment of the ultimate end. *Ad quid venisti?* Why have you come? asks the Abbot of the postulant who seeks admittance to the monas-

tery. A similar question must be asked here. Why has one come to spend one's life in a particular spot, unless in the hope of spreading the Gospel message and acting as a radiant centre of love? The specific end, the education of children or the care of the sick, is not the final objective, but a door of communication, a means of approach, a sort of right of entry, the justification of our claim to be members of Christ, and, at the same time, the material means of subsistence which allow of a freer and more complete devotion to the service of the Church. A will so to integrate one's work in the general programme of the Church should be always active and should direct one's outlook. This does not in any sense mean that one is bound to reserve for the final objective the same amount of time as for the specific end: a few hours given up to the organization of the laity may have incalculable repercussions, just as a gear lever may set a vast system of machinery in motion.

Religious should continually resist the temptation to restrict their mental vision. They should remember that the laity, on whom the Popes have called to join the apostolate, have duties in life, just as a teaching or nursing nun has. In spite of their moral or material cares, in spite of their responsibility for health and family, they are asked to make room in the midst of their professional duty for the missionary duty that transcends all the rest.

It is true that religious are doing apostolic work throughout the day in their schools or hospitals. But the Master invites us all to an apostolate outside our immediate circle, for He wishes us to go, not alone to those who come to meet us, but also to the great multitude of souls who otherwise would never be reached.

There is at the present time a city which numbers forty religious houses, regular and fervent, in the midst of a population which is 80 per cent non-Christian. Such an

instance, by no means unique, invites us to meditate more seriously on our responsibilities and helps us to realize that every Christian has a missionary vocation, whether it be far afield or near at hand: the command to go to those who do not come to us is ever imperative and it must shape our attitude and our choice of work. Has any one the right to say: "My school or my hospital is my parish"? Should not every Christian, and more particularly every dedicated soul, rather say: "The Church is my parish, the whole world is my parish"? And should we not all bear in mind the thought expressed by Marcelle Auclair: "All the troubles of the world are our direct concern"?

Before belonging to a congregation—and so as better to belong to it—every nun, like every baptized person, belongs to the Church. She is indeed at one with the universal Church in prayer and sacrifice, and that is gain for God's Church. But on the plane of action—we are speaking of the orders not recognized as contemplative—she cannot take her place until a wider interpretation of the Constitutions directs her towards the care of the masses. His Excellency Mgr. Himmer, Bishop of Tournai, warned religious against the temptation to "a spirit of particularization, which inclines one to be more interested in the congregation or the work undertaken than in the Church or the parish." It is a matter of delicate adjustment to keep the necessary harmony between two aspects of the same vocation, which are not opposed but complementary. That ordering of the parts with a view to the requirements of the whole is the rule too in organizing a diocese, for dioceses are not isolated segments of Christendom, but parts of an integral whole. The Church is not made up of the juxtaposition of all the dioceses, it is she that creates them. Because of this primary unity of the Church, every bishop has a missionary duty, as His Holiness Pius XI recalled:

Christ commanded not only Peter whose chair we occupy, but all the Apostles, whose successors you are: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 5). It evidently follows from this that the responsibility for spreading the faith falls upon Us, but on condition that you share with Us the burden and assist Us as much as your own pastoral duties permit. Therefore, Venerable Brothers, do not look upon compliance with this our paternal exhortation as an irksome duty, for you must know that God Himself shall one day ask of Us a strict accounting of this tremendous obligation which He has laid upon Us.¹

Truly the Church is one before being diverse. That supremacy of the whole over the parts is true at every stage. It belongs to the essence of Catholicism.

LAY ASPECT OF THE SITUATION

Not only does the organizing of Catholic laywomen meet with difficulties from the viewpoint of nuns; it is also viewed with certain apprehensions by laywomen themselves. The laity fear that nuns may not understand their peculiar problems, or their mentality, or their way of expressing themselves, and this not from a lack of sympathy or interest, but because they are trying for spiritual motives to live apart from the world and to aim at a life of contemplation. Such a guarded attitude is obviously not favourable to friendly co-operation and mutual understanding. In practice, except in missionary countries, the lay organization of the apostolate is not in the hands of nuns, apart from some groups of children and young girls. Contact is slight with adult workers; accommodation may be provided for them in view of an enclosed retreat or a congress, but there is no regular co-operation in apostolic work. It is idle to deny the fact

¹ *Rerum Ecclesiae.*

that this state of things gives rise to a somewhat strained or even unfriendly atmosphere, and it would be well to look facts in the face and seek a remedy; great would be the gain if all could agree to "be different but complementary, and love one another so." That attitude would be beneficial, even in the matter of religious vocations. The drop in vocations expresses in heart-breaking figures a rift that is growing ever wider, when normally an increasing *élite* should be joining the ranks of those who consecrate themselves body and soul to the whole-time apostolate. His Excellency Bishop Himmer wrote recently to his flock: "Do you know that from 1920 to 1952 our predecessors, or we ourselves, have had to close 78 religious houses out of a total of 522? This is but one sadly revealing figure, and just as painful is it to examine the average age of our nuns. Nearly 30 per cent have passed the age of 65 and only 10 per cent are under 30."

Elsewhere the situation is even more tragic; the falling back is universal. Starting from that fact, the Bishop of Tournai asked the direct question, "Whose fault is it?" and replied, "The fault is not God's, but ours and ours alone. For in this, as always, God wills to have need of men in carrying out His plan, and that is why He allows the complex, and often puzzling, play of human liberty to influence the awakening, development and success of religious vocations." And in a pastoral letter to the Religious Communities, he suggested that this dwindling of vocations "should be taken as a warning to alter or correct the ideas and attitudes of mind liable to lessen the value of their testimony in the eyes of young girls of today and even of their parents. The holiness of the religious life is God's work; it gains nothing from customs inherited from the past, which may have been very useful when they were introduced, but are quite unadapted to our age."

The causes of this falling off in vocations are complex and the place for an examination of them is not here; but this aversion to the religious life, added to a unilateral insistence on the greatness of the marriage vocation, creates gaps that urgently require to be filled. It is of capital importance to remove all obstacles to the religious vocation coming from within, and this can only be done by taking resolute steps to adapt the details of life in the cloister to the needs of our day.

THE NECESSARY ADAPTATION

In order that nuns may be capable of inspiring Catholic laywomen, obtaining their confidence and winning the most generous among them to the apostolate, they will have to adapt themselves to the needs of the day, and the modifications that are called for must be faced in a spirit of realism, and with perseverance and courage. The fate of that multitude without leaders depends upon it. Half measures will be useless; we must know what we want and be ready to pay for it. In the sphere of hygiene and of professional training and qualifications, many conditions thought unalterable have been changed under the pressure of material or secular forces, which have brought about desired reforms. What a pity it is that these salutary changes were obtained, in some cases, only under pressure from medical, reforming or governmental authorities!

The modern world offers unexpected developments; and new ways of life have some aspects which must be accepted without delay. Nuns have to prepare the rising generation, which is confided to their care, for its part in the world of today; they have to form, not nuns, but wives, mothers, women of action, who in their turn will inspire the workers in the lay apostolate. For that it is not sufficient to instruct and educate children up to 12 or 14 years of age: wives and

mothers are not formed at that age; they must in one way or another be followed in life and their education completed when they are more mature. Children are put under the care of religious that they may be given a training for life; if they escape us when they grow up, we have failed in great measure.

And the grown girls who are to be taken under our care are not only those who have been taught in our schools, but also the others—those who come from undenominational and state schools, and who have a special right to the Church's concern. But if nuns are to play this vital rôle of training young laywomen, they must adapt themselves in some ways to the work. The best manner of doing this will have to be examined under the direction of the proper authorities: and, once determined on, the changes must be courageously carried out.

The Popes and the bishops have spoken of this need, none with more force than His Holiness Pius XII, who, at the Congress of Religious in Rome, appealed explicitly to the spirit of religious founders:

The legislators of religious Institutes [he said] generally conceived their new foundation to fulfil functions or meet necessities which had appeared in the Church and could suffer no delay. If then you wish to follow the example of your founders, conform your attitude to theirs. Study the opinions, the judgments and the customs of your contemporaries, among whom you live, and, if you find elements which are just and right, adopt them; otherwise you would be unable to enlighten your neighbour, to help and encourage him, to guide him.¹

Anyone who reads the lives of foundresses of religious orders—for example, that of Blessed Mother Javouhey, foundress of the Congregation of St. Joseph of Cluny—will

¹ *A.A.S.*, Vol. XLIII, 1951.

be struck by the daring spirit of those virile souls, who went out to succour spiritual or material distress and did not hesitate to sacrifice to their end the customs that might have hindered it.

A living thing must be always adapting itself to its surroundings. If religious are to remain faithful to the spirit of their foundation, they will have to revise periodically the letter which embodies it and which, if care is not taken, might be in danger of stifling it.

"You wish to serve the cause of Jesus Christ and His Church according to the needs of the world today," said His Holiness Pope Pius XII in an address to teaching nuns; "it would not therefore be reasonable to persist in customs and ways which hinder that service or perhaps even make it impossible."¹

Before such an imperative call there is nothing to be done but seek for ways and means of adaptation to missionary activity. That the search may be fruitful, there must be wider collaboration, and the opinion of the laity themselves, throwing light on their needs, might be very precious. Schemes must be tested, all those concerned must consult together and exchange experiences, that the best methods may be found.

KINDLING A MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN THE SCHOOL

The world influenced by nuns is, thank God, wonderfully widespread. It includes all sections of primary, secondary and professional education, as well as training colleges for teachers, social workers, the nursing profession. That vast world requires to be trained for the apostolate. Who but religious can undertake the training? Pope Pius XI strongly emphasized this point:

¹ *Osservatore Romano*, September 15, 1951.

Religious of both sexes [he said] will render signal service to the Church . . . by preparing for Catholic Action from their tenderest age the boys and girls whom they educate in their institutions, and particularly in the schools and colleges for boys and girls which are in great part under their direction; first, by developing in them an apostolic sense and then by directing them towards works of Catholic Action. Where the latter do not yet exist, these religious will themselves set them up. It may be said that there is no time better than the years of study, and no place more suitable than schools and colleges, for the initiation of youth to Catholic Action.¹

The task is being undertaken in part, but one cannot say, unfortunately, that the majority of young people leaving our schools are as keenly animated as they should be by the active missionary spirit that our Holy Father desires. Examination syllabuses and the responsibilities of school management are so absorbing that one must be constantly on the watch lest these anxieties encroach on the preparation for life and for the apostolate. It is essential to draw up and follow actively, whatever the hindrances, a time-table in which the exercise of the missionary apostolate will find a place. An almost universal temptation in schools may let examinations absorb all the time, and only an alert apostolic sense and a rare energy will enable us to resist it. Every educator must bear in mind the future for which his pupils are being prepared, and must be able to say to a young Christian about to enter on life the words of the old Bantu sage: "I have begotten a son. I shall live on in him. Go, my son, mix with the crowd." Consider the young generation trained with implacable energy by Communism and "set in a state of missionary activity." Those young people have been taught that they are personally engaged in a world

¹ *A.A.S.*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 5, p. 159.

war. They have been brought into a cell, a study circle, an active group, to be working agents in the spread of Communism: they know that they must be ready, for the sake of the cause, to sacrifice their leisure, their interests, even their lives, always and everywhere. There is a painful contrast between the hold that such an education has on youth and the timidity, the indefiniteness and the unpractical vagueness of our call to the Christian apostolate. We are not eager enough to awaken in every soul a sense of the responsibility imposed by baptism, and to get from all active work commensurate with their age and their spontaneous generosity. It is astonishing what even children can do in this way and what treasures of spiritual energy are latent and too often unused in souls. The responsibility is ours to see that this supernatural force is not wasted. An "apprenticeship" to apostolic work is indispensable. We learn to spread the love of God and to help our neighbour by a constant repetition of practical action.

There is an art of influencing and leading others which cannot be learnt in a day, and so it is with the apostolate. Though the grace which enkindles the apostolic spirit comes from God alone, that grace will be made fruitful by the active co-operation of all our human faculties. We need to learn how to organize the missionary activity of children and grown people, how to inspire and set up in co-operation with the clergy the various works and schemes of the apostolate. All the secular subjects that we teach—languages, science, mathematics—are of value only in so far as they develop the entire human personality of the souls confided to us, which is no more nor less than to make of them fully active members of the Church, radiating in it and over the world the grace of their baptism. That is our supreme aim, dominating all the rest.

We must revise our notion of the ideal Catholic girl leaving

our schools, and raise our standard to the level of the demands of our faith. The world is over-full of "decent" people, whose passive good will leaves an open field to the rest. *Hannibal ad portas!* Are we making ready a generation able and fit to suffer for the faith? Have we taught our young people in a practical way how to communicate that faith to others and how to make it fruitful, directly or indirectly, in saving or helping souls? Each group of young Christians leaving school should furnish the Church Militant with fresh troops. It will be quite natural for those who were their teachers during school years to direct these young soldiers of Christ towards the works of the apostolate that are suitable and that await them, and also to organize the religious apostolate for them as well as possible. It is wonderful to think what a force the Church would dispose of in the immediate future, if Associations of Past Pupils in our schools took part in the activities that may rightly be expected of the flower of Christian youth, and not alone in works of mutual aid or of charity however praiseworthy, but in the actual work of bringing the world back to Christ in all spheres of society.

And beyond the world of pupils and past pupils, there is a "hinterland" that religious are able to influence, to organize, to control. These are the many people connected with their institutes, or visiting there frequently for any purpose: friends and benefactors, members of an association or a Third Order, readers in a library, voluntary workers, domestic staff. In every Christian resides a force that asks to be set at work. It is the task of that special *élite*, the religious—*illustrior portio gregis Christi*—to find out and train these helpers of God, in order that Christ may through them give Himself in full measure to the world.

KINDLING A MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN OTHER SECTORS

We have spoken so far of the apostolic work of nuns in schools; but their field of action spreads far beyond that: hospitals, sanatoria, crèches, hospices, orphanages, homes of all kinds, prisons, re-education centres, retreat houses, missions, catechumenates. . . . Everywhere the nun must seek to extend her personal action and to kindle vocations to the lay apostolate. It is her task to seek out untapped sources of good will and devotion.

To take two examples, how, for instance, can a girls' hostel or a house of correction be organized for mission work? There is no lack of work to be undertaken. Is the hostel a centre of religious influence, where everything is ordered with a view to creating a spiritual atmosphere, and to developing to the full the spiritual and cultural life of the girls? Or is it merely a hotel, a boarding-house, a refectory and dormitory, where the nuns are no more than servants or landladies? Is a serious effort made to develop tactfully a many-sided religious activity, with a human appeal as varied as possible? These questions should claim the attention of those in authority and inspire the rules and customs of the house.

Does that house of correction exist to house social wrecks sent to it by the Courts? If so, the apostolic action undertaken might be to organize a crusade against certain moral plagues, to seek out and train for the purpose lay workers who will attempt the possible rescue work; or again, to create a network of helpers who will keep in loving contact with each individual when she returns to normal life. Similar examples might be multiplied indefinitely.

And beyond the walls of every institution, there is the parish, offering an unlimited field of missionary activity. What an appeal to *duc in altum* (launch out into the deep) do we see in a glance at the dechristianized multitude that

breaks about the walls of our religious houses like a flood-tide whose waves are ever mounting. What a call for volunteers to put out to sea, carrying lifebuoys!

A typical example of the apostasy of the masses is afforded by the common experience of the morrow of solemn First Communion ceremonies and professions of faith in our cities. For a great number of children—for the majority in towns—that ceremony is the signal for desertion of religious practice. Although they are prepared with great zeal and care, generally in good dispositions, they will probably cease entirely to attend Mass or receive the sacraments on and after the Sunday that follows their solemn First Communion and promise of loyalty to Christ. Are we to be forever passive witnesses of this tragedy?

Is it right for us to content ourselves with noting this defeat and blaming for it the irreligious family atmosphere and the tragic indifference of our times? Should we not rather remember that "it is better to light one tiny candle than to blame the darkness." The problem of leakage among children is an urgent one. How much could be done to solve it by the auxiliaries of the clergy, if they inspired the Catholic laity to initiate for children at this critical age some form of friendly guardianship, carefully thought out, effective, consistent!

The missionary apostolate will sometimes require the sacrifice of certain habits, of certain recreations, of long-established customs. When the soldier has been called up in time of war, he must at once renounce the ways of civilian life and submit to a new discipline. Has not the Church the right to ask of her most privileged children sacrifices of the same nature? At the sight of souls in such grave danger and to save drowning creatures, is it not our duty to alter the habits of times of peace?

If in certain cases, in some crowded cities, or for some

difficult work of the apostolate, religious dress prevents or hinders contact, would it not be possible for the competent authority to consider adopting out of doors a simple, practical, inconspicuous dress, one that would be suitable for all times and places, and so to facilitate nuns in getting about?

Until quite recently, religious life and secular life were organized on a similar system of hours. Today a change of time-table would be required to adapt the former to the latter. How can we influence our contemporaries, if custom forbids all intercourse at the only hours when we could have any contact with them, that is in the evening, when the working day is over? Should not the shepherd suit his steps to those of the flock, rather than expect them to fall in with his pace? The laity cannot be expected to adapt themselves to the rhythm of convent life, but it is for nuns to reconsider their customs in the light of the new needs of humanity and of the order of life today, while at the same time maintaining a certain regularity, indispensable to religious life itself, as well as to the proper functioning of any kind of institution. In the case of conflict between the "community" outlook and the "missionary" outlook, the latter should prevail. And it is not right to argue from custom, and refuse a revision of rules that is called for by a higher charity, the supreme law of Christian perfection. In his well-known book, *Paroisse, communauté missionnaire*,¹ the Abbé Michonneau even suggests that purely missionary communities should be formed, where this dualism would not exist.

Why should we not have a congregation of Sisters who would devote themselves solely to the direct apostolate? As things are now, we have flourishing orders doing almost every conceivable kind of work, ranging from orphanages to hospitals. Not for one moment would we ever hint that

¹ Translated into English under the title *Revolution in a City Parish* and published by Blackfriars. The passage quoted is borrowed from that translation.

this work is not valuable; it is indeed, and we would be lost without it. But if there were a Congregation which would devote itself exclusively to a door-to-door preaching of Christ, without any secondary motive, we believe that a tremendous uprising of Christianity would result. Everyone accepts nuns and respects them. In lay or religious dress, they could be the Christian equivalent of social workers, or the Western equivalent of mission catechists; better still, they could provide the Catholic equivalent of the evangelical zeal of the Salvation Army.

If the auxiliaries of the clergy for whom the Abbé Michonneau pleads could not only attack this task personally, but bring to it the ordinary laity gathered around them, an immense work of "mass penetration" would be accomplished. We do not feel very hopeful of forming communities which could give their whole time to missionary work, for the problem of their maintenance would be a grave one. But if each of the established congregations could, without changing its constitutions, devote some hours each week to missionary activity of this nature, we should have made an immense stride forward. It is easy to see what a power the Church would have at her disposal, if each nun inspired groups of laywomen and trained them for action. The scheme is not a utopian one, provided only that the religious superiors are willing to form their subjects for this rôle.

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF THE SUGGESTED CHANGES

The consequences of this change in religious customs would be incalculable, not alone for the world outside the convent, but for the nuns themselves, who would be the first to benefit by it.

This apostolic fervour would give to daily action a new range and a supernatural character even more marked than

before. Every nun, down to the humblest lay sister inclusively, would see opening before her, at her own level, an unsuspected opportunity of missionary action. Each one would see her own power of action increased and multiplied far beyond her personal powers. The very consciousness of having the responsibility to guide others will here as everywhere work marvels of transformation. What an antidote it would be to the wear, the monotony, the routine, of those purely material tasks that threaten to absorb some lives! We must believe in the power of humble and little ones in the Kingdom of God. Let us beware of hesitation due to want of faith and let us not judge aptitude for the apostolate by our own short-sighted human wisdom, which God is often pleased to contradict by repeated lessons. Let us not draw back either at the thought of the dangers that may surround the apostolate. Do we not ask our young Catholic workers, who have not the training gained in the religious life, to be the apostles of their hostile surroundings and to go to souls in peril where they are to be found?

We must be consistent. Nuns have God in their hearts and that is a sufficient foundation for their hope and their action. Their apostolate, under the impulse of the priesthood and extending its action, will share also in the priest's glorious function of mediation. They will remain securely bound to God by their life of prayer, and will at the same time be united with their fellow-men, whose suffering anxiety and spiritual hunger they will share more intimately. That sense too common among them, of being strangers to the life of humanity and enclosed in a sealed-off world, will disappear like a mist in the bright sunshine of radiant spiritual charity through which they will be "all things to all men," and will feel themselves, in the words of St. Paul, to owe a debt to their brothers in the world. This change will give a fresh value to religious vocations in the eyes of the world,

which reacts so surely to any mark of energy, courage and dynamic force. The recent flowering of secular institutes—in 1953 the Holy See received 210 requests for canonical recognition of such institutes, without counting secular associations—is explained in great part by the desire for a more flexible and more direct missionary approach. With *Provida Mater* we can only rejoice at this breath of the Holy Spirit blowing through the Church. But it would be right to see in it also a pressing invitation to the long-established congregations to make the modifications requisite to ensure a renewal of spiritual force, which is needed by the Church as much as by themselves.

Vocations are not wanting today any more than yesterday: the grace of God is always faithful and superabundant. A recent enquiry seems to have established the fact that more than 60 per cent of the young men leaving those of our secondary colleges which have a classical programme had considered the matter of a vocation to the priesthood during their student years.¹ Many young girls also must have had thoughts of the higher ideal, while completing their studies. Formerly, vocations were usually decided upon on leaving school; and young people passed without an interval from school to noviceship. Nowadays, the change in customs, the necessities of life, the attraction of higher studies, retard these decisions. A vocation is lost or strengthened between the ages of fifteen and twenty. It is often fixed by a girl's continuing contact with a nun after she has left school. If a nun uses her influence to inspire girls with an apostolic spirit, her relations with them will safeguard vocations and will be easily kept up. If, on the other hand, nuns do not help to smooth the transition from life in the world to the cloister, few young girls will offer themselves spontaneously; and the best of

¹ P. Delooz, S.J., *Pourquoi ne seront-ils pas prêtres? Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, April 1954, pp. 392-412.

them will devote their lives to works of the lay apostolate which have captured their enthusiasm when they left school.

It is of course very necessary for Catholic Action to recruit many workers for its activities, but this must not be done to the detriment of religious vocations, which are in themselves higher and more definite, because their call is to a complete and life-long offering of self. When religious life has been adapted to the needs of the apostolate, the strain which so often affects relations between the convent and the laity will disappear of itself; it is due, not to the religious life, but to the fact that it has been kept apart from present-day needs. To avoid setting up a vicious circle, it is in a wise modification of the religious life that the remedy lies. If that is secured, nuns will be welcomed with joy as the natural guides of Catholic laywomen, and will be able to exercise to the full their gifts and their training. Both religious and laity will gain by the contact.

The clergy will gain by it too, for they will realize how fully their "auxiliaries" are co-operating in the priestly pastoral action. And all that has been said about nuns is just as true for men religious who are not priests. There too the priest will find useful helpers who will vastly extend his action. When he has at his disposal these choice instruments, his action will be increased tenfold and carried to its highest degree of efficiency. Like St. Paul he will be able to say of them that they are "his joy and his crown." In the spiritual desert around him their presence will be a valuable stimulus.

But to say how things should be is not saying how they actually are. Between the inception of a desirable change and its realization there is some way to travel. It will not be possible for our suggestions to be adopted immediately or everywhere. If the situation is disappointing, it is that an element was lacking in the training of religious, for which it would be unfair to blame the present generation. It is due

to a multiplicity of causes and the responsibility for the omission cannot be borne by one alone. But it is the future rather than the past or the present that interests us. An effort must be made to prepare the coming generation for their new responsibilities and, if we are serious about it, we can make the requisite effort. It will be a work of long duration and will bear fruit only in the future: but it is well worth attempting and rich in hopes. When our religious orders already do so much good in the Church, what can we not expect from a full flowering of their possibilities? It would be desirable to have the problem considered at the periodical congresses held by religious and in the training centres that are organized for them. In this way, by dint of repeated experiments, discussed and compared, a dimension would be given to religious life, to the advantage of all.

All these suggestions of course depend upon the responsible authorities and not on individual members; obedience is of vital importance in religious life and the adaptations of which we speak must be pursued in a spirit of generous faithfulness. For active orders perfect religious dedication includes the apostolate and the training of the Catholic laity; the religious life and the apostolic life are to be lived in a deep-rooted harmony. The best method of maintaining that harmony in everyday life and in the world of today will be decided upon after mature consideration and, no doubt, after several successive modifications. It is for those who obey never to forget the great redemptive value of the sacrifice entailed in their obedience; and for those who rule, to propose for obedience the religious life lived to the full, with its whole apostolic consequences.

CHAPTER SIX

NEED OF A DIRECT TRAINING FOR THE APOSTOLATE

Cœpit Jesus facere et docere. Jesus began to do and to teach.

ACTS I. I

CORRELATED TRAINING

THE apostolate is a work for the whole community. The christianization of the world, both in depth and in extent, is not confided to the priesthood alone, but to priests, their auxiliaries and the laity, all working together. Together they form the Church appointed for mission work, and given charge of bringing salvation to the world. This co-operative work is essential, and everything must be organized to bring it to the highest degree of efficiency. The apostolate of religious and of the laity is not just a supplementary activity, added on from without and as an afterthought to the work of priests, to be used or left aside at will. The priestly, religious and lay apostolate is an organic whole.

In his letter of January 18, 1939, to the hierarchy of the Philippines, Pope Pius XI wrote these important words:

As a fruit of Our long experience, we have learned that in every country the lot of Catholic Action rests in the hands of the clergy, who must therefore be familiar with the theory and practice of this new apostolate, which forms part of their sacred ministry.

Knowing your paternal solicitude for the salvation of souls, We know also that you will ensure that all your priests will receive the necessary preparation for this work.

These are but an echo of the words that the Church puts on the lips of the bishop, when he addresses the faithful and asks for their consent, at the beginning of an ordination ceremony: *Rectori navis et navigio deferendis*, he says, *eadem est, vel securitatis ratio, vel communis timoris*. The faithful and the clergy are bound together; the fate of the crew is linked to that of the pilot. This common destiny should be reflected on the pedagogical plane.

A priest's training cannot be undertaken without reference to his future helpers, but must always bear relation to them, and primarily bear relation to those who will share fully with him, and under his direction, the common responsibility.

As long as the priest sees his ministry only as it concerns himself and the multitude, he is disregarding an essential aspect of his task, and soon he will feel it crushing him. Between the multitude and himself there stand those specially chosen auxiliaries, those officers in the army of the apostolate, religious who are not priests, nuns, members of secular institutes, souls dedicated to God for the extension of His reign. Working together, priests and auxiliaries are called upon to raise up around them other souls animated with the same zeal as themselves for the Kingdom of God. Speaking to religious, men and women, Pope Pius XI pointed out to them an important duty that they had to fulfil, that of "devoting themselves to the difficult task of preparing the laity and leading them to Catholic Action." Those words should be seriously weighed, with the intention of honestly drawing from them all the conclusions that logically follow.

There is no need to consider here what is the form under which Catholic Action presents itself; the principle is what matters. It is sufficient to realize that the Pope sets as a duty, not only before priests—to whom he has repeated it unwearyingly—but before the auxiliaries of the clergy, to train the laity for the duties of the apostolate. The command is a

logical one: it is the only one adequate to the immensity of the problem. The army to be mobilized is as vast as the Church Militant. It is necessary for all those who in any way belong to the commissioned ranks of that army to take their share in a correlated system of training. If each one of them, at his own time and place, is constantly concerned to surround himself with helpers who will extend his apostolic effort, the religious output of the Church will gain a wonderful increase. Instead of one mouth, there will be a hundred, to spread the same message; instead of one action accomplished, there will be a whole series of actions. How many inert and idle Christians there are to whom one would like to cry out: *Quid hic statis tota die otiosi?* Why this indolence, this inertia, this somnolence, when the world is in peril? But we must not reproach them thus; they could give us an answer that would be an accusation: *Quia nemo nos conduxit*—because no one has engaged us, organized us, led us, taken us by the hand and shown us what to do. A layman who devoted himself spontaneously and heroically to religious action said recently: "Never has a priest personally called on me to undertake apostolic work." What hidden treasures of supernatural and natural energy lie unfruitful, shrivelled up and turned inwards, because someone, a priest or an auxiliary, did not play his part, because there was a short circuit somewhere! Where is the initial cause of that neglect? Have those who should themselves form others been rightly prepared for their task as awakeners and inspirers?

Here we come to the crux of the matter.

In order to train others, one must first have been trained oneself. Before recruiting followers, one must have learnt to overcome in oneself timidity and fear, and one must know by experience how to knock at a door, how to approach a stranger, how to engage in conversation, how to make contacts, how to create a definite and well-ordered apostolic

organization. Have we in our religious centres of training made a sufficient place at all stages for this apostolic apprenticeship, both active and concrete, for the practical exercises which will enable those who have the task of training future apostles to speak with first-hand knowledge? Have our ecclesiastical students, our scholastics, our novices been guided in the delicate and indispensable art of personal contact and prepared for the difficult vocation of awakening apostolic zeal and putting it at the service of Catholic Action? It will be said that the whole of their education should aim at fitting them for this end. Doubtless the indirect preparation is of primary importance. But is it sufficient by itself? That is the whole question.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT TRAINING

It is evident that the direct training for the apostolate cannot be isolated from that indirect preparation which must be its background and starting-point. Everything that conduces to piety and strengthens it is indispensable to the success of the work. Everything that contributes to a deeper intellectual training is a precious enrichment of personality. We must not fall a prey to "immediatism," be impatient for speedy and tangible results, *hic et nunc*, to the detriment of the later ripening powers of action which are the result of serious doctrinal studies. "Thought," writes Paul Bourget, "is the highest form of action." It is indeed its earliest source, provided that the thinker translates it into action. Nothing of this remote preparation must be sacrificed.

But we must be equally concerned about a direct apostolic training, which is only the setting in motion of the indirect training, or, as the philosophers would say, its passing from power to activity. It is in vain that coal is heaped into an engine: if one cannot start it, the train will not go. We have

to learn the technique of setting a force in motion. To transmit an electric current, we must have a means of raising it to a high tension. That is the function of all indirect preparation. Without the powerful store-houses of piety and study, it is useless to hope for any apostolic radiation. But between the central storage points set up beside a dam and the room that is to be given light, there is an indispensable series of pylons and posts, ending in a modest plug which fits into a socket and produces the expected light. The plug and the central power station cannot be compared as to size, but it is not enough to accumulate power; without that final contact, nothing is accomplished; all depends on the ultimate transmission which carries the current of grace to the farthest isolated soul, lost in the cold and the darkness. If we do not know how the final connection is made, if we think it unimportant, the rest fails of its object.

What is the situation in our different centres of religious formation with regard to this practical training for the apostolate? It is unnecessary to distinguish among scholastics, ecclesiastical colleges and novitiates, or between clerical students and religious, men and women. Rather should we examine what is common to all, what sets the problem before us impersonally, if we may so express it. What is true of ecclesiastical colleges can be taken as even more true for novitiates, since the training in the colleges where occasionally experiments of the kind proposed have been tried is, from the point of view of practical apostolic work, less deficient than in most novitiates.

COMPLETE AND INCOMPLETE TRAINING

If we examine our religious training centres in the light of the triple watchword of the traditional programme for every apostolic movement—piety, study, action—we shall see

that these three vital aspects of a complete education are portioned out very differently and an unequal significance allotted to each. It is evident that, as far as these centres are concerned today, their programme is planned almost exclusively in view of an individual life of prayer and study, with apostolic action reduced to a minimum, if not eliminated altogether.

There can of course be no question of restricting the more than legitimate part of prayer and study. The importance of these elements is capital and to contest it would be to adopt an unpardonable attitude of pragmatism. To neglect the acquiring of a personal appreciation of the Christian message by seriously studying and integrating it in daily life, on pretext of giving time to apostolic action, would be to undermine that action in its foundations. But—this being agreed upon—we must admit that the place given to apostolic action is almost non-existent. Doubtless a few sporadic efforts are made: a catechism class for children, a juvenile club may be entrusted to students, but it is only a fractional part of the programme, and is usually fitted in outside of the normal scheme of work, as a subsidiary activity of third-rate importance. Usually the authorities responsible lay down as a postulate that the years of formation are not suited to that apprenticeship; and they hope that immediately after profession or ordination the apostolic sense of young clerics or religious, so long compulsorily dimmed or perhaps even extinguished, will of itself find an outlet and improvise methods of approach to souls. That deficiency in the training of future apostles brings about grave disadvantages and deprives their education of precious elements.

PIETY

To begin with, the spirit of piety itself suffers from a

training given in a rarefied atmosphere, which is in danger of producing a certain self-centred individualism, subtle though unconscious. It is right and necessary to emphasize the importance of personal sanctification as the condition of any far-reaching action, and of obedience to the rules as the expression of God's will. But even the holiest things may be wrongly used. The care for personal perfection, ill grasped, may lead to a lessening of generosity. Often, before entering the college or novitiate, young people have known the ardour of apostolic generosity in some Catholic Action group. They have been led to enter religious life by the desire of giving themselves wholly to the apostolate. This desire, if deprived through six years or more of all nourishment, may wither away. It is hoped that the sacred fire, kept smouldering under the embers, will blaze up again when exposed to the open air at the end of the period of training. This expectation may be ill-founded; it is not unusual to note in young students, at the end of their formative years, a sort of conventional rigidity or torpor. It is worth while to consider this matter and seek some way of establishing a balanced programme, in which all the elements of training will be harmonized.

Nor is the negative aspect of the problem the only one.

On the positive side, a practical introduction to the work of the apostolate will greatly enrich general training.

Everyone will agree that our centres of religious formation must develop first of all the theological virtues, beginning with faith. The virtue of faith is certainly nourished by prayer and study, but also by action. Under pain of a certain atrophy, faith must be exercised: and it must radiate if it is to come to maturity. By communicating it to others we receive it afresh ourselves, just as it is by losing one's life that one gains it. Every effort that we make to hand on our faith or cause it to live in others, forces it to strike deeper root in ourselves. "A fire is smothered if it is not spread,"

wrote Jean Guittou. "Truth would wither in our hands if it were not communicated." If the Gospel is truly the Good News of salvation, those who have received it must feel in themselves an ever-growing wish to share it with those around them, to spread the joy of its knowledge. If our faith is deprived of every practical outlet of that order, it runs the risk of losing something of its spontaneity, of its freshness, of its ardour. Faith set to work even in a small and restricted way, is discovered afresh; with each step taken, with each overture to a soul, with each word spoken, the future apostle becomes more acutely conscious of the presence of Christ working through him. He will realize more concretely in his own person that communion with the Church whose maternal solicitude he is learning to exercise, communion with the whole Church in all its dimensions, with all the powers and supernatural energy of the angels, the saints and the souls in purgatory, who are his allies in the great fight for God. That practical application of the faith gives to it a reality, a translation into flesh and blood, which is bound to increase and strengthen it. *Qui facit veritatem venit ad lucem:* he that doth truth cometh to the light. These words of Scripture promise not alone a first discovery of truth, but also an ever-deepening understanding of truth, when we possess it. Ollé-Laprune and his followers have made a close analysis of the splendid contribution that action makes to thought, without taking its place, but by being grafted to it and furnishing a life-giving sap, which enables it to ripen and develop in its own ground. The same may with due proportion be said of the young student who is preparing for the religious apostolate.

This practical initiation does not develop faith alone: rightly understood, it stimulates the theological virtue of hope, for it is based on prayer and brings a concrete realization of the absolute necessity of grace. "Without me, you can

do nothing." We are all tempted to adopt the naturalistic standpoint, and to think that our success depends on our own talents. We must learn to say "*servi imutiles sumus*" (we are useless servants), by realizing at each step taken the mysterious working of grace. The treatise *De Gratia* will take on an unsuspected force as a result of this action. What a lesson in spirituality, what an antidote to the prevailing atmosphere of naturalism is taught by the discovery of the decisive part played by prayer in the apostolate! One discovers, too, the part of penance, that other foundation of all effective action. *In oratione tantum et jejunio.* . . . Those are the eternal laws of the apostolate, which are not affected by passing variations and which ensure a virile spirit of austerity, indispensable for all real training. Even failures—and they will be numerous—can be made use of, to teach the profound truth that the Christian apostolate is a part of the mystery of redemption and not an overflow of natural generosity. We have to learn through suffering the value of perseverance and of hard unrewarding labour. It is a lesson that does not come unsought and we cannot begin too soon to practise humbly the virtue of hope, the soul of all apostolic effort worthy of the name.

These practical exercises are also a wonderful school of the virtue of charity. They are a test, a means of measuring the love of God in a soul. "*Non diligamus verbo neque lingua, sed opere et veritate:* let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth," St. John tells us. It is so easy to go astray in the maze of pseudo-mysticism. The love of our neighbour, on the other hand, is a reliable and tangible touchstone of the true love of God. Surely zeal is an integral part of any valid love. The danger of becoming conventional and self-centred is everywhere, even in our houses of religious training. There everything is methodical and fixed by rule; life can almost unconsciously become very selfish. The prac-

tice of the apostolate, even in a slight measure, helps the growth of a spirit of self-oblation, teaches a love of hidden, courageous, heroic work, such as will be required later, and wards off that unconscious spirit of officialdom which lies in wait for even the best of God's servants.

STUDY

Negative aspects

From the standpoint of studies even, a purely theoretical training is not without its drawbacks. Learning, cut off from any practical application, easily tends to bookishness. We may speculate forever and, by that very exercise, become incapable of speaking in a simple and direct manner to others. A commendable effort is being made at the present time to direct study more and more towards the transmission of the message. Instead of conceiving the classes as a kind of second-hand university course, the authorities tend to prescribe a programme of studies formulated in their relation to vital truths. This is a definite advance. But there is a further step to take which is, not to abandon books, classes and lectures, but to go beyond the world of pure ideas and enter that of action. It remains to complete the training, without curtailing any part of it, by adopting the technique common in most professions, the traditional method of apprenticeship, the method of collaboration between master and learner. The master shows his pupil practically how to set about a piece of work, confides a definite task to him to carry out, corrects his efforts on the spot and directs the lessons which precede and follow the practical work, with a view to the result aimed at. Instead of a divorce between thought and action, there is a constant relation between them and a mutually vivifying influence. Are we not inclined to overestimate the effectiveness of our theoretical lectures? If a

professor or lecturer could ask his hearers how much they take away with them from a brilliant exposition of his ideas, he might be astonished at the reply. Experience obliges us to a modest estimate of the result achieved and calls for additional enlightenment. A purely theoretical explanation of action may well put off or alarm. By dint of hearing complicated accounts of the art of swimming, one may very well run the risk of staying on shore, for fear of being unable to put them into practice. We must beware of a curtain of ideas shutting off the road to action. All men are not called upon to be intellectuals, but all are called upon to be apostles.

In all departments modern pedagogy tends more and more to carry theoretical studies into practical and vivifying action. One could not imagine nowadays a medical school which provided only oral lessons, without giving to future doctors an opportunity of clinical work and of practical experience under the professor's eye. Nor could a teachers' training college be without a practising school; nor a course of social studies without many concrete exercises and immediate contacts, giving a practical value to the teaching. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same pedagogical principle should be applied in the case of apostolic training. There is everything to be gained from opening wide the door to the carrying out of a duty that is laid on all. And that is true in a special way for those who have to train others. What an atmosphere of realism we would create if we succeeded in making our students "think out their action and act out their thinking," according to the Communist formula for education, which, in this particular, is a true one.

Study circles of a different type [writes the Rev. F. Dufay in *Red Star versus the Cross*] long ago made their mark in the West, but it was left to the Communists to bring them to such a pitch of perfection and efficiency that it is

worth our while to follow their lead. Their real success lies in the fact that they have managed to relate teaching to man's living conditions, to unite both theory and practice, to educate their disciples to live their idea. Our study circles on the other hand still all too often remain mere academic discourses without any real bearing on life at all (p. 130).

These words merit attention: the immediate translation of thought into action in our lives is truly a powerful source of vigour and realism.

A study circle will not be fully efficient unless it aims at action and ends in action. We must never allow ourselves to be "encircled" by it, but must be careful to set it spiralling into life. The danger of a programme of studies, however valuable, is that it tends to become an end in itself and to neglect action, creating a sort of optical delusion and indefinitely postponing the practical issue. The Communists are past masters in the art of translating ideas into action, into practical ways of life. As Pope Pius XII said in his message at Christmas 1954, "they know how to lead their members to action and to make sacrifices willingly." They know how to inspire youth, show it the tasks already prepared and make it accept with tremendous seriousness the consequences of a revolutionary idea. In *Rythmes du monde*, a missionary, Fr. Winance, O.S.B., described in the following words the transformation that the Communists had worked upon his own pupils:

When last year at the beginning of the vacation my pupils set out, their knapsacks on their backs, they were going, not on a jolly camping holiday, but on a serious "retreat." After a few weeks devoted to the exercises of this new ascetic teaching, they started off, all freshly prepared, with their rugs, their books and their notes, to the poor, hard-working, rural districts, where they would

live like the peasants, learn to understand their needs and convert them to Communism. Others were sent to different provinces and gave up a long-desired visit to their families. "We must serve the people first," one of them explained to me.¹

We must realize how much in earnest the young can be in translating an idea into action, and we must learn a lesson from this fact. If we who can call upon the grace of God, yet so often fight with unequal arms, is it not because we have been inadequately trained for our trade as "fishers of men," to use the expression of St. Luke?

Suppose for a moment that the Belgian Communists had at their disposal fifteen thousand leaders, trained by six years of higher studies, set free from all other work in order to devote themselves entirely to their task, having every Sunday thousands and thousands—a quarter of the population or more—listening to their words; visiting homes and setting up an immense network of activities. How would they exploit these opportunities of exercising influence that our fifteen thousand priests control? The question invites consideration. Doubtless there is a special difficulty about transmitting the Gospel message, due to the nature of its content. To teach men evangelical self-denial and the duties of a Christian, at the same time practising them oneself, is a mission which will always clash, in our own nature first and then in that of our hearers, with the secret revolt of selfishness and of the other passions. It would be unjust to forget this, but there is still need to examine one's conscience with regard to the share of human effort which, in conjunction with the grace of God, we expend in that transmission.

There is a widespread complaint of the too bookish nature of our education in general. A leading industrial magnate

¹ Vol. I, 1953, p. 245.

stated that he thought it a pity for the Universities to turn out engineers but no business executives. There is a world of difference between the two functions, and indeed schools are being set up even at University level for the study of the human aspects of production. Considerable progress has been made in the systematic analysis of human contacts. We have heard of the increasing part assigned in the United States—and in the U.S.S.R.—to studies on public or social relations, or “Social Group work.” The same thing is badly needed in the sphere of religious training. For the priest is a business executive in the noblest sense of the word. He has to lead a whole people to its eternal destiny. He must be able to depend on a team of workers, to assign tasks to them, maintain contact with them, be aware of the needs and of the different situations that confront them, and at the same time exercise a paternal authority which will be freely accepted in the measure of his intimate union with the flock confided to his care.

Everything is to be gained from planning our programmes of study with special relation to social psychology in all its ramifications, from making a direct study of the human repercussions of the great religious duties, from opening a window on the social problems which absorb men and affect their happiness here and hereafter. The studies of a future priest should have two centres of powerful interest for him: God and the man of flesh and blood that he sees before him, knowing God in His relations with men and man in his relations with God. That knowledge cannot be gleaned from books alone, it must be learned too by practice, and this for the better grasp of theory itself.

Positive aspects

If this practical outlet is given to religious action, the young student's book learning will be the first thing to benefit

from it. A regular contact, even for a few minutes only, will have a reaction on his life of which it would be hard to exaggerate the importance. For it will alter his perspectives, will breathe into them a life-giving influence and will colour all his life of study by emphasizing for him its true objective. He will learn to think out his theoretical principles in their relation to human beings and at the same time will discover in them new depths of meaning. There will be a vital energy given to all his mental processes: he will feel the importance of the problems that he is studying and he will realize the need of believing with a living faith the supernatural truths that he is to set before others for their belief. He will understand the truth of the axiom *non scolae sed vitae discimus*, which we might translate freely by saying that we begin to learn when we leave school. He will realize better what St. Peter asked of Christians when he called upon them to be “ready always to satisfy everyone that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you” (I Pet. 3. 15). What a difference there is between assimilating knowledge for an examination and garnering it for life! One may write down without a mistake all the proofs of the immortality of the soul or of the existence of God, and yet be unable to make those truths accessible to an indifferent Catholic who rejects his faith. The long hours of study will be precious to the student, not only for deepening his knowledge, but also for helping him to find the words which convince, and which must be simple, like all great and true words.

He will be enriched by what he gives, but also by what he receives. For, before speaking, he must first listen attentively and at length. It is easy to see what a completion of theoretical study that harkening to souls will bring. Usually it will mean meeting with indifference, materialism, carelessness, indolence. It will open up a world that no book, no theoretical lecture would reveal with the same vividness. Such contacts

in the form, not of apologetic discussions, but of friendly persuasion, of serene and positive reasoning, will provide an unparalleled stimulus to eschew bookish unreality, and will make of study an instrument of life.

ACTION

Negative aspects

The effects of an incomplete training will likewise be felt in after life and action. Its shortcomings, sensible during the years of preparation, will appear especially when these are over.

A tree is known by its fruits. To judge this training, let us examine the young priest or religious at the threshold of active life, on the morrow of his ordination. With no transition, he passes from a life of prayer and study to the intensive life of the ministry. Is he equipped, seasoned, armed for the conflict? Or rather is he not awkward, ill at ease, unrealistic in his outlook? It is clear that the transition will always require a period of adaptation, of "running in."

Experience cannot be gained in a day and it would be unjust to expect the training given to these young men to guard them against the inevitable groping of beginners. The only question to be considered is whether the transition could be made easier, for it is certain that the young priest of our day is thrown into some confusion at his first contact with the world. Often he does not know how to make intelligible to the laity the spiritual and doctrinal treasures that he has amassed. He speaks a language unknown to them, abstract, bloodless. He is remote from the souls that surround him. He has no sense of practical life or of the words to use if he is to be understood. It has been suggested that this state of maladjustment is due to his classical education or his philosophical and theological training. If the handicap

does reside in the content of his studies, it has invaluable compensations, and could surely be eliminated by a practical introduction to reality, by an apprenticeship to the art of understanding and handling his fellow-men, by repeated contacts with them.

To reach ordinary men one does not need to speak a rough, unpolished language, but to have a practical and real love for them. Love will overcome the barrier of speech and will find a way to men's minds and hearts. But there cannot be love without knowledge. What is wanting to the young priest is that he does not know the man in the street, that he does not, as has been well said, "understand the customer." He cannot find the right words, because he does not see how to "put across" his Gospel message. Nothing can supply for immediate contact. Have not all priests experienced this difficulty? In giving a retreat, for example, the first day they are addressing a completely unknown audience and have trouble in making their listeners think with them. Then come the confessions; and according as the listeners become concrete, distinct persons, the audience and the instructions come to life and the barrier falls. This personal contact progressively vivifies the preaching. What is true of public speaking is found too in private conversation. Every man is not a born orator, but all should be able to pass on their convictions to individuals—yet this is far from being the case.

The young priest will feel ill at ease, especially with grown people, and will be tempted to avoid them and devote himself to children.

The Abbé Michonneau has written excellently, in thoughtful and judicious words, on that fear of adults and on the "imperious necessity for the priest of approaching them." As he has never learnt to speak to them, the young priest does not know how to transmit to them the message of the Gospel,

and he is even less able to lead them into organized work for the apostolate. He often has the infantile attitude of one immature in the apostolate, who devotes himself to the easiest task, the care of children, and even of children who come to him, rather than of those who have to be sought out. Certainly the apostolate to the young is of prime importance and we would not think of belittling it. But it seems as if there were a want of balance in the work of the apostolate, giving disproportionate attention to them, and this serious gap in our work is perhaps due to the absence of training and of contacts. The founder of the Y.C.W. has never ceased calling the attention of the Catholic world to the millions of young workers who, at the age of fourteen, are swallowed up by our factories and have to face life without support or protection.

We have centred our care too exclusively on the children, and we lose much of the benefit of that initial work by leaving to their own guidance the young people who go from us when school is over. The enemies of the faith have often made the cynical offer: "Keep the children, and we'll take charge of the adults." This unavowed fear of the adult, and especially of the male adult, paralyses all successful activity. "Encircled" by the flock of the faithful and cut off from the masses, the young priest has no idea of how to approach them, because he has not been given practice in missionary activity. He becomes the chaplain of those who come to him of themselves, who want him, whom he will find in all Catholic activities. But the others, that great multitude which will never take part in our religious organizations or our Catholic Action activities, how is he going to approach them? Did Christ found a private oratory or a Church, and have we the right to curtail or mutilate His works which, like Bernini's colonnade in St. Peter's, Rome, stretch out their arms in welcome to the whole world?

The question conditions preparation of the future apostle and sets out the problem. It is urgently necessary that we should have priests, filled with missionary zeal, who will give a large part of their ministry to this apostolate, outside the limits of their faithful flock. *Alias oves habeo et illas oportet me adducere*—these words of Our Lord should be written in letters of fire on the front of our churches, or at least in the heart of the priest. The training to be given must be judged in great part in relation to the preparation for that task which, alas, grows more urgent every day.

It must not be thought either that this sort of paralysis of the missionary spirit exists only in regard to approaching the non-practising multitude. The young priest will often feel embarrassed in his ordinary ministry among the faithful. Yet he must be everywhere and always the messenger of the Gospel. He has not the right to keep his apostolate shut in within limits or to teach only from a pulpit lifted high above men's heads. He must learn to "open his mouth" like Philip, and to make others open theirs, that is, to provoke and make others provoke opportunities of speaking from man to man about the one thing necessary. To open his mouth, that is to speak, not to an audience, but to individual listeners, to that plumber, to that hairdresser, to that fellow-traveller in the train, on the road, to a member of his family, to a child who may have a vocation, to that taxi driver or that passing stranger; to open his mouth, that is to be on the watch, to be always available, as radium is always radiating and affecting everything within its reach: to open his mouth and speak a sincere, friendly and simple word, inspired by faith and introduced with a smile, which is in itself an offering and a gift: to open his mouth and to speak as naturally as breathing, as a mother speaks of her child, from a full heart and with the wish to let others share her joy; to open his mouth, that is to go, as the Apostles

went, from house to house, not just once passing by, but regularly and systematically; to get into the very heart of a family where the deepest influence can be exercised, because in his own surroundings a man is free from affected attitudes and so is more himself than elsewhere; and there, in the friendly home circle, to bring out quietly and patiently all the latent possibilities of Christian social apostolic life, is not that the normal task of the shepherd who cares properly for his flock? And how will he be able to pursue this action in the family and lead others to undertake this indispensable direct religious activity, if he is himself hampered by a want of adequate preparation? How keenly he will feel that want, when he finds himself seeking to make opportunities for contact, when he goes after a lost sheep, rich or poor, or knocks at a strange door, or starts a conversation in the street, or tries to find a way of broaching a subject, or goes to visit a sick person who has not sent for him, a soul in trouble or one in revolt against God's Will, one who is indifferent or sceptical, or a hardened and hostile sinner. Or even, more simply, when he has to speak to men individually of God, of the supernatural verities and of their social reactions, to show some ignorant soul what Christian life really is, or to sustain a discussion in a friendly spirit and with ready aptitude. He has been taught to preach, but no one has taught him to speak, to seize a chance opportunity of contact, or above all, to create one. Is he not always and everywhere the witness and interpreter of God? The faithful—and the others too—are scandalized, not at a priest who announces the Gospel, but at one who speaks of everything save the Gospel. A person who was seriously ill complained recently that, among the many priests who came to visit her, only one spoke to her as a priest. We have all heard the story of the military chaplain who was telling his colonel how he had vainly tried everything in the effort

to interest his men: films starring famous actors, a bar with free beer, games, and competitions. The colonel thought for a moment, then he said: "Suppose for a change you gave them a bit of religion?"

Our hesitations and false shame show that the apostolic sense has been insufficiently developed in us; and that is why we miss innumerable opportunities of making religious contacts and fail to provoke them. Let us not say too hastily that the world is not ready to listen to us. The truth is that too often we are not ready to speak to the world; and it is dying of our silence.

Positive aspects

A complete training, on the other hand, is a source of vital enrichment and of strength for action, through all its psychological and human contribution to personality.

The development of a sense of responsibility is a decisive element in all education. Modern pedagogy works resolutely in that direction, with undeniably good results. Nothing marks a man more than the confidence that is placed in him. It reveals him to himself and to others, saves him from mediocrity, lifts him above himself and makes him yield a harvest of a hundred per cent.

This principle is applicable too in the training of young priests. Responsibility, limited and controlled, but real, will be a powerful instrument for the development of character. It will prepare a virile generation of leaders for the Catholic laity, men capable of overcoming in themselves and in others the selfishness, timidity and fear which so gravely hamper the life and the expansion of the Church in the world of today. For we must recognize that men recoil instinctively from practical action. A subtle and hypocritical lethargy, whose name is human respect, often reduces the apostolic ardour of the best of us to vague wishes or petty

activities. If we do not react against this fear, all work for souls is reduced to insignificant proportions. And if we would but dare, the results would be astonishing. A striking number of souls would be won over at the first serious effort to present the Gospel to them individually, and they would form as it were the thin end of the wedge, to open the hearts of many more to the grace of conversion. But, alas, effort is paralysed by human respect, which thinks of a thousand pretexts for inaction.

Courage is a necessary virtue for him who wishes to save the world. Like all the virtues, it can be acquired by progressive training. A graduated and continuous effort will repel in us the fear of difficulties, of refusals, of possible objections, and will drive away the phantoms that our imagination takes pleasure in creating, in order to put off decisive action. "It is not because a thing is difficult that we are afraid to venture," says Seneca, "it is because we are afraid that it is difficult." Fear is in haste to pronounce our neighbour's salvation impossible or hopeless. It tries to persuade us that those outside the Church are so strongly anchored in their ignorance and their prejudices that nothing can be done about it. It tries to persuade us that we are confronted by a great Wall of China, with no drawbridge giving access to the land within. It tries to persuade us that example and prayer should be sufficient to obtain the decisive graces of God.

To this natural and instinctive fear, which would soon cut short all apostolic effort, we must oppose the education of courage and seek inspiration in the paradox of a wise man who wrote: "What we call difficult is what we can do at once, the impossible is what needs a little more time." Courage is a virtue that can be acquired: an army is organized entirely with the object of developing this quality in the average soldier—and it succeeds. Apostolic courage is not

made up of heroic deeds, of gallant exploits, of spectacular acts of daring. No, it is inherent in every work of redemption, in the mystery of suffering and salvation; it is bred in renunciation and self-sacrifice. Self-love is not served by it and will often be bruised and wounded in the struggle. A man needs to have humility solidly rooted in his heart, when he goes willingly to meet dense ignorance, polite indifference or merely the casual shrug with which St. Paul was received at the Agora of Athens. It is easier for men to brave a hail of bullets than a sarcastic smile, as St. Peter knew from one night's bitter experience. The courage that an apostle needs is none other than a continual and ever-renewed dependence on the spirit of faith, that insists on seeing Christ in a poor deaf old woman who has forgotten her prayers and must be taught them once more, or in a man drunk with success who has no room for God in his life and may listen to us "some other time," as was once replied to St. Paul.

If we are to hold firm we must believe obstinately, in spite of appearances, that every hour is the hour of grace, that it is never a waste of time to knock at closed doors, that every word and every effort animated by charity enrich the whole Church and have a value for eternity far greater than the glass of water given to one who is thirsty, that glass of water which has been promised the gratitude of God. Such courage is not exhibited before men: only the angels can measure its glory and its worth.

There is nothing here of the daring shown by the parachutist or the explorer, but rather an initiation into the quiet courage of the doctor who does not shrink before an epidemic and who sits at each patient's bedside, to fight with him against death, or of the soldier, faithful to his post, who faces danger in the darkness. Heroism is not a luxury; in many human lives risk is part of the day's pro-

gramme and belongs to the very nature of one's duty in life. The priesthood and the religious life include this duty too. *Noblesse oblige*—we have no right to disregard a duty, even if it entails a painful surrender of our habits and demands from us the total sacrifice of self.

If at all times and in all places education in courage is necessary for the disciple of Christ, what shall we say of the present day? The time is no longer when a religion of tradition and conformity might suffice for Christians; it is the day for battle and for virile combat. Already the Christians of our generation in many countries are faced with the choice between apostasy and martyrdom. The Church of the Catacombs has become a reality in Soviet Russia and its satellite countries, in China, in Vietnam and in Northern Korea. Tomorrow a Communist drive may bring the worst to the heart of Africa or even of Europe: there is nothing fantastic about the assumption. The time for half-measures and compromise is over. The Church asks us to look danger in the face. She calls upon us to believe that this is more than ever the hour of God's love working through men. She knows that God never ceases to be God, and that faith, strong and virile, expressed in acts, compels miracles from Him today, as it did yesterday. We repeat "expressed in acts" for faith expresses itself in a gesture, in a "going towards," in a positive action. Faith in Christ led the friends of the paralytic man to hoist him up on a roof and let him down at the Master's feet. When Peter saw the Lord on the lake of Tiberias, his faith urged him to walk on the water and go to meet Him. It is that true faith alone that puts us in possession of the promises of God. The Church, enlightened and upheld by that faith, invites us to raise our eyes to Christ, the highest incarnation of courage, and to meditate serenely and peacefully on the farewell words of the Master: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

... In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world."

Christ wishes us too to be faithful to Him on that Good Friday night which is continuing mysteriously to our day, in the persecution of Christians and in the triumph of atheism, materialism and evil in all its force. In the interval between His departure and His glorious return, while the mystery of death and resurrection which makes up the history of the Church and the world is still in progress, Christian courage must reach the dimensions of that twofold ocean of suffering and of joy. An education which gives preparation for it will be to all a priceless benefit.

CHAPTER SEVEN

 PLAN FOR A DIRECT INITIATION INTO
THE APOSTOLATE

Come after me and I will make you to become fishers of men.

ST. MARK I. 17

VARIETY OF SCHEMES

WHILE it will be agreed that a gradual introduction to the apostolate is necessary during the years of formation, there is no doubt that this practical initiation cannot be without its difficulties. It will be the duty of each responsible authority to examine these difficulties before God, weighing against them the price of souls to be saved. Our Saviour, shedding His Blood for every soul, may ask us: "What could I have done for my vineyard more than I did?" Well for us if we can reply truthfully that we too have given all we could, in order that His Blood might not have been shed in vain. Perhaps in the light of that hope, objections will assume their true proportions and we shall be able to say with Newman that "ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt."

If such an introduction be undertaken, we should examine the conditions required to make it successful, and determine its general outline. Obviously a model programme cannot be proposed; there is room for many possible varieties of schemes and one cannot prescribe, *ne varietur*, the best time for implementing them during the years of training. Each country and each local set of conditions has its own needs. The wisest procedure is to be convinced that there is a

solution in each case and to seek it earnestly, trying to adapt it to the particular requirements of one's field of action.

The time that can be given to this particular work will vary. In a missionary country, for example, the programme may be more extensive than elsewhere. The difficulty of working to a time-table will be less acute in a secular institute, not bound by ancient tradition, than in an old-established religious house.

It is possible, however, to lay down some general conditions that will be favourable to the end in view.

 ACTIVITIES THAT MUST BE EXCLUDED—NEED FOR A
PROGRESSIVE INTRODUCTION

First of all, there can be no question of prematurely exposing clerical students, novices, scholastics, to the dangers they will have to confront later. Certain particularly delicate forms of the apostolate cannot be confided to them, and their field of action must be clearly defined and circumscribed. Everything that His Holiness Pius XII condemned in his Encyclical *Sacra Virginitas* must from the start be excluded from their activities. It is not by plunging them in the immoral atmosphere of modern society that we can immunize them against its seductions. Separation from the world during the years of religious formation and after—for the words *segregatus in evangelium* have an enduring reality—is ever a priceless blessing and in no way incompatible with the need for "judiciously and step by step taking up and mastering the problems of our time" (Pius XII). When writing those words in *Sacra Virginitas*, the Pope himself invites us to re-read what he said on the same subject in the Encyclical *Menti Nostrae*, which sets forth his thought more explicitly:

When young men have been educated—especially from their tender years—in places somewhat too secluded from normal social intercourse, they will find some difficulty afterwards in adjusting themselves to the ways, not only of the educated, but also of the ordinary, people. Commonly, such men either will be thoughtless in their behaviour or will come to take a disparaging view of the education they have received. Care, therefore, should be taken that the students are gradually and prudently introduced to a knowledge of the sentiments and outlook of the general public. They will not then suffer from indecision in their priestly work, causing them distress of mind and diminishing their efficiency.

And farther on, speaking to bishops, the Pope added :

You should therefore bear in mind that they need to be gradually introduced to their ministry, and to have a father's eye prudently watching their first steps; otherwise they may come to belie the high hopes you have placed in them.

Practice in apostolic work will be planned according to these directions. It is not enough to point out to the future mediators between God and men that earthly shore which it will be their function to unite to the heavenly shore. We must also teach them the art of throwing a bridge across, and of approaching the men of their generation, so as to bring God to them. For that end they will need leaders themselves expert in that *ars artium* which tomorrow will be the key to the success of their pastoral work.

FIELD OF ACTION AND CHOICE OF WORK

To meet these requirements, it will be important to make a careful choice of the sphere of action. A proper military education calls for a good field of manœuvres; so too an

adequate apostolic apprenticeship must be carried out “on the field,” that is, in great part outside the college, but in strict relation with it, and also, of course, in agreement and close contact with the local clergy.

The work to be undertaken must be chosen with judgment and discernment. A spirit of initiative gets no marks in examinations, but it has its value. Too often we do not see the immense work that is within easy reach, because we have not been shown how to look for it. There is no lack of tasks to be undertaken: the main thing is to choose with discrimination and method those which are most worth while.

In his address at the closing of the world congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome, His Holiness Pius XII pointed out the magnitude of the Church's mission :

The Church has towards all a threefold mission to fulfil: to raise up the fervent believers to the level of the needs of the present day; to introduce those who hesitate on the threshold into the warm and salutary intimacy of the hearth; to lead back those who have separated themselves from religion, and whom she cannot, for all that, abandon to their miserable fate.

To raise up, to introduce, to lead back: there is the work to which the Pope invites every baptized Catholic, as a consequence of his baptism alone. If the youth of our religious training centres had remained in the world, they would have had to carry out that task, as a good many of their comrades and contemporaries carry it out, having neither their training nor their culture. That programme of action outlined by the Holy Father can be infinitely diversified and take a multiplicity of forms: contacts with the aged and with sick people, who may be visited in their own homes or in hospices and hospitals; contacts in preparation for missions, retreats, liturgical ceremonies; contacts with parents whose

children are, or are not, members of Christian Doctrine classes, attend, or do not attend, Catholic schools; contacts for the purpose of preparing adults for baptism or confirmation; contacts on the occasion of a death or wake; contacts for the recruiting and training of members for the various religious activities and Catholic Action organizations; contacts aiming at awakening a sense of responsibility and stimulating a specialized apostolate; contacts for the spread of good literature; contacts to invite individuals to undertake family or public prayers; and many more. We need not speak of the immense field of action that might be gradually discovered in the approach to non-practising Catholics and even to unbelievers, thanks to a variety of social activities which would provide new openings and ways of widening the Catholic circle of influence.

It will be for charity to discover the best means of access and to use them to the full. These examples are by no means rigid or exhaustive; they are merely signposts. The important thing is to approach people in the manner most likely to attract them, and to set about methodically organizing every voluntary effort, so as to obtain the fullest output.

By its breadth and variety the programme we have sketched will help all workers to go beyond the too narrow framework of activities to which their natural or inherited tendencies would limit them. It will translate into action the words "*Nihil Ecclesiae a me alienum puto*—nothing that relates to the Church is alien to me."

It will prepare the apostle of tomorrow to build his spiritual life on the words of St. Paul: "To the Greeks and the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, I am a debtor" (Rom. I. 14).

Such religious contacts are not new in the tradition of the Church. The Constitutions of St. Ignatius provide for exercises of the kind for novices, and Chapter IV of the

General examination on the Institute of the Society of Jesus gives a series of examples of suitable experiments. A certain novice house, applying this rule, undertook to get in touch with the population of a rural area, and collect names for enclosed retreats. The novices took charge of securing retreatants, interviewed the parish priests of 232 neighbouring villages, obtaining from them the requisite permission to proceed and some useful information; they then visited more than two thousand families. The result of this action was the organizing within two years of 21 retreats, in which 523 persons took part. This gives an idea of what those who undertook the experiment must have gained from it in spiritual enrichment.

To attain our aim it is not necessary to devote a great amount of time to these practical tasks and there will be no need to encroach on other obligations. A few hours a week would suffice to colour the whole of a day's work with this apostolic preoccupation, and to influence it in an astonishing manner. Think of the time devoted to physical training in our schools: though it takes up a very small space on the time-table, it is intended to give a tone to, and to "inform," in the scholastic sense of the word, all the physical behaviour of the scholars.

Even the prospect of the religious contacts described will help to create a new state of mind. The great landscape painter Corot was asked one day how much time he had spent painting one of his pictures. "Five minutes," he replied, "and my whole life." A somewhat similar gradual permeation will take place here. The few minutes of contact with souls will be charged with the spiritual wealth gathered in prayer and study, and in return these will make spiritual exercises singularly effective. It is not a question of the length of time spent on active work, but of atmosphere generated. Those few hours must not seem to be something outside the day's programme, a kind of luxury. They must be a regular

recalling of the aim before one, which is nothing less than the return of the multitude to God. They are a sermon in action, much more eloquent than any exhortation, a practical lesson, an invitation to take one's faith seriously and to translate it into real life. So much depends on this training that it cannot be neglected for the sake of an established time-table. The time-table is a means, not an end. And the end must shape the means by its sovereign influence. No rule or custom can be allowed to prevail against it.

PERSONAL CONTACT

It has been very truly said that the soul of the pastoral ministry is personal contact. Lay people frequently complain of the clergy that, in their dealings with their flock, such contact is wanting, a fact partly explained by circumstances. This claim of the faithful will be satisfied by a gradual apprenticeship of the young priest. We cannot insist too much on the unique value of a religious contact between man and man as the secret of success in the apostolate. And indeed is not the ordinary personal touch the soul of all true human relations? Grace as usual follows a path traced out by nature. Yet the individual apostolate has been much underrated in recent times, and scornfully dismissed as mere "fishing with a line."

No doubt there are methods of exerting influence on a large scale, such as the Press, the wireless, the cinema; and it is essential to make use of them. But all have not these forces at their disposal, whereas everyone can use the method of direct contact, an immediate means of action within easy reach. The individual apostolate and that which aims directly at transforming a whole environment are not opposed; each calls for the other and completes it.

It is by direct contact that the Catholic Press will be

introduced to individual households; and the "League for Morality in Films" will influence the public only in so far as its members are recruited directly, and one by one. There is a profound harmony between these different methods of approach.

The approach to souls by living and direct speech is of right divine in the Church, where oral tradition preceded and threw light on written tradition. Our Gospels are only the echo of an earlier catechetical teaching, and it is the function of the Church as a living teacher to introduce us to the inner sense of Scripture. *Fides ex auditu*: faith is transmitted by speech. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation," says St. Paul (Rom. 10. 10).

It is not by gazing on the tabernacle that the unbeliever will discover the mystery of the Real Presence; someone must go to him and tell him God's secret. "How shall they believe him of whom they have not heard?" asks St. Paul again. "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10. 14). The religion of Christ is the religion of the Word.

Psychology too emphasizes the pre-eminence of the spoken word. A recent enquiry in the United States into the influence of written, as compared with oral, statement showed that living speech has four and a half times the power of print to impress the mind. It is well to remember this finding. The following words of Frank Duff, a great apostle of our time, go to confirm it:

- There is a tendency to think that sufficient has been done, when the Catholic claims have been set abroad by radio, by the wide circulation of the printed word, or by the addressing of public meetings. But in fact, the approach becomes the less effective according as it loses the personal touch. If conversions depended on the reaching of people in bulk by means such as the above, the present age of scientific publicity should also be one of conversions on a

grand scale. But, instead, it is found difficult to keep even the Catholic fold intact.

No! the approach to be really effective must be an individual and intimate one! The radio, the Press, etc., can all be made to play an awakening or supporting part in a scheme to bring those "other sheep" to the Good Shepherd, but the centre of that scheme must be the appeal of one person to another person. According to the laws that rule the spiritual world, as Frederick Ozanam puts it, the attraction of one soul is needed to elevate another. In other words the law of charity must operate; and the gift without the giver is bare.

The future apostle is in danger, through want of faith, of being hypnotized by the sight of the dechristianized multitude, which he is told cannot be reached. Direct contact, in the spirit of faith, will give him a vivid sense of the immense field of activity opening before one who patiently resolves that multitude into individuals. We are familiar with the question: How long would it take to sweep Paris clean? and the answer: A quarter of an hour, if each man swept before his own door. There is a world of apostolic wisdom to be learnt from this graphic reply. Direct contact will help to get behind the kind of iron curtain that liberal notions would erect between the apostle and souls, in the name of that liberty which we are told must be respected above all else. It sets us again in the great tradition of the saints, who were agents of conversion and fishers of men.

We are happy to meet a recognition of the primary importance of personal contact from the pen of Fr. Congar, O.P.:

Conversion [he writes] will always be a personal matter. "Souls are converted individually as they come into the world and leave it to go before the judgment seat individually," said Cardinal Vaughan. He spoke thus in reference

to the proposal for the return to the Church of the Anglican communion in a body. Indeed the comparison between the universal apostolate and missionary activity working for individual conversions is not without analogy with that of Catholic Action, seeking to build a general apostolic plan, and the individual apostolate, "fishing" for souls. We think that the two lines of action are sound, necessary and willed by God. While we feel our personal vocation to be one for the work of the universal apostolate, we do not undervalue the missionary effort at individual conversion. May it always have its place in Catholic Action, and may that place be the first.¹

When personal contact implies visiting homes—there may very well be other methods too—it is well for two visitors to work together, both for the sake of the help they can afford to one another and for motives of prudence. This system remedies timidity and human respect, favours mutual support and encouragement and persevering action. It is hallowed by having been chosen by Our Lord as His own missionary system when, even before their ordination, He sent His disciples two by two into the towns and villages where He was to pass, setting them to work thus under His own guidance and getting from them an account of all that happened in their journeys, thus initiating them into the great missionary task which would be their charge after the morning of Pentecost.

If the Master promised that "where there were one or two gathered together in His name, He would be in their midst," we may believe that He who sends them will be very truly present in the activities that they undertake for His glory. So they will learn to work in co-operation and their community of action will be sustained by a communion of prayer before, during and after the action. These teams

¹ *Jalons*, pp. 536-7.

of workers, varying according to circumstances and missions, will create a great current of brotherly feeling, where too often there is no more than juxtaposition.

And finally, this system allows of sending out a beginner with a more experienced worker, or even with the professor or director himself, which would produce the best effect of all. What an atmosphere would be created in our houses of religious training, if the masters themselves, whose duty it is to prepare the future apostles, gave an example of the apostolic spirit on the spot, and led them on by their example. We say "on the spot," that is, working with those whom they are directing, for it often happens that they expend much zeal in some field of action, a parish, an organization or a movement, not sharing it with their students, and so with no advantage to their training or to the community spirit.

THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH CONTACTS ARE TO BE MADE

If we are to bring God to men, we must draw near them, accost them, make contact with them. This word "contact" may create a false impression, if it is understood in the sense of rapid and superficial conversation. Nothing of the kind is meant: to approach a soul is, naturally and supernaturally, a delicate and complicated matter. It requires tact, sympathy, gentleness, patience, discrimination, above all, that self-effacement which leaves room for grace to pass and gives to Christ in us the opportunity of touching hearts. "*Virtus ex illo exibat*—Virtue went out from Him." This is the very reverse of the "propagandist" method which, acting from without, seeks only to impose an opinion, to violate intimacy, has nothing in view but the immediate victory to be won. The contacts to be aimed at will be made in a spirit of respect, of self-forgetfulness, not as from a superior to an inferior, or from an equal to an equal, but rather as from

an inferior to a superior, from servant to Master; they will be sought, not arrogantly, but humbly, since in every man faith teaches us to see Our Lord Jesus Christ, and since it is Him we serve in our neighbour. What we want is not controversy or discussion, only to win hearts and make them open to grace.

"The world belongs to him who loves it most, and who proves that love," said the Curé d'Ars. It is a mission of supreme theological charity to approach a soul in the hope of leading it nearer to God, of bringing it a message of life and joy, of drawing it closer to the sacramental sources of life; to rouse a hesitant or rebellious will and bring it to take part in the works of charity and in the apostolic action which calls urgently for the co-operation of all. We must love that unknown soul, not with a poor, cold, grudging, human love; love it, not only for the love of God, but with God's own love: with that love at once relentless, unwearied and infinitely delicate, watchful of the peculiar rhythm of every soul. For one man to open his heart to another he must feel in that other a sincere, faithful, disinterested love. As the sun unfolds the petals of a flower which night has closed, so charity slowly expands souls shrivelled up and turned in on themselves, hardened by the shocks and disappointments of life.

Charity performs the task which Saint-Exupéry's *Little Prince* calls "taming" men, and which prepares the way to confidence and harmony. Usually a first contact will hardly suffice and we must learn to create a friendly atmosphere, to contrive a gradual yielding, to prepare a further meeting. All is made possible by the true humility of the visitors, who know that it is not they, but Christ in and through them, who knocks, without breaking down the door, yet knocks persistently. These contacts must not be soliloquies nor, as conversations so often are, two monologues, succeeding but

never answering one another. For a fruitful dialogue, one must listen much. A wise man reminds us that we have only one mouth but two ears, and the fact gives a lesson in proportion. The amount of speaking we do is unimportant; a word or two charged with intense love, even a smile sometimes, may be a vehicle of grace.

In dealing with an unbeliever of today who denies God, Christ, and even the existence of the soul, we must advance progressively: a full acceptance of religious practice cannot be asked of him, for he does not yet understand its meaning. This gradual method in religious teaching is not only lawful but necessary, and is quite a different thing from putting off evangelization until social relations and the framework of society have been "humanized." It is very easy to slip from one standpoint to the other, and the attraction of the humanist theory is largely due to the fact that it claims in its favour arguments that really hold good on another plane and from another point of view. Direct apostolate does not mean point-blank apostolate, producing an immediate result, to be realized within twenty-four hours. Charity must create an atmosphere and prepare hearts. But this patient charity has nothing to do with a dimming of doctrine; it is tense and watchful, not hopeless or defeatist.

We have spoken elsewhere, in *Theology of the Apostolate*, of all that inventive charity, under Our Lady's tutelage, can do in these visitations, which extend her spiritual motherhood and her gift of mediation.

An initiation in the apostolate thus conceived is a practical school of sanctity, which will benefit first of all, not him who receives, but him who gives.

* * *

These are some conditions which appear essential in the proposed initiation. It is easy to appreciate the radical

difference between this method and the various proposals for experimental terms of apprenticeship to be spent in the world, which have been repudiated very wisely for the years of training by the Congregation of Seminaries. The periods in factories or different spheres of work were planned as an introduction to sociological problems, as a plunge into the realities of life. The many drawbacks of this method are obvious: first of all, its danger to the life of prayer and to the priestly vocation, which it exposes to all the risks of promiscuity and of propagandist attacks; also, its incomplete nature, for knowing a sphere of life from within does not ensure one's knowing how to approach it on the religious plane. In place of these periods of informative training, out in the world, with all the dangers they involve, what is here suggested is a series of practical exercises in the apostolate, organized within the framework of the house of training itself, and under the direct control of the responsible authority.

Instead of terms spent independently, with all the risks of moral and doctrinal contagion, there would be contacts on a religious basis, through team-work guided and controlled by authority, and supported by the whole atmosphere of the house. Instead of spending a time in different surroundings, in order to learn their peculiar conditions, the future apostle would be given a general initiation into the common element of all forms of the apostolate, direct religious contact with men, the final objective of all apostolic work.

It is important to emphasize this point.

We have heard a wearisome repetition in recent years of the question asked by an American pedagogical review: "What is the chief thing one must know in order to teach John Latin?" The answer is familiar: "One must know John." Very true! It is a healthy reaction against a too abstract theory of education which takes no heed of the

child's mind. But, like all reactions, it goes too far if it turns a telling exaggeration into a basic truth. For, if the old-fashioned educational system was indeed in danger of forgetting John through absorption in the study of Latin, a certain modern system, by concentrating on the study of John, might be apt to forget to teach him any Latin. A well-balanced method will keep a knowledge of John before us as we teach him Latin, and show us how to study John with a view to the success of his Latin lesson.

Similarly we may say that a right training will teach the future apostle to bring God to the hearts of men, and for that end, to know them and to approach them on a religious level.

In practice many methods of approach may be utilized. By reason of the world-wide expansion of the Legion of Mary, of its adaptability to every form of the apostolate and of the immense current of grace that flows through it, a framework and a proved method of action, offering the requisite guarantee of prudence and efficiency, might be found in it at the initial stage. At the initial stage—we insist on this—for the final aim is to integrate the apostolic training which we have sketched in the very structure of the seminaries where our young priests and religious are formed.

THE COMMAND OF THE LORD

Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

ST. MARK 16. 15

THE New Testament ends with the momentous scene of the Master's last meeting with His Apostles before His Ascension. Jesus had told the Eleven to meet Him in Galilee. As He had assembled them on a hill to hear His inaugural message, so it was on a hill again—perhaps the same one, writes Fr. Lagrange—that He confided their final mission to them. Jesus was waiting for them: at the sight of Him they knelt in adoration. The moment was a solemn one. The Risen Master was coming to them as Lord of the world, His face shining with majesty. He drew near His Apostles and said, in a tone that recalled that of the Last Supper:

All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.
 Go ye therefore into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.
 Baptize the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,
 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,
 and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world (Mark 16. 15 and Matt. 28. 18-20).

“All power is given to me”

Never had such an astounding command been heard in the world. Jesus knew that, humanly speaking, the Eleven

would be overwhelmed by their mission. To comfort them, He began by reminding them that all power was His "in heaven and on earth" and concluded with an undreamt-of promise that He Himself would fulfil that mission in them. Before we face the obstacles ahead of us and set out on our mission, it is well for us to measure the power of Him who sends us. Jesus has willed it so for all time. These obstacles will be numerous and weighty, as weighty as the stone sealed on Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, and before which the holy women said to one another: "Who will roll back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" But what matter since the risen Christ is with us, and since, by virtue of His Resurrection, a tombstone may still today point the way to Life!

During His time on earth, by virtue of His power, "the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11. 5). But did He not say to His disciples: "He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do"? So the power of Christ prevails over time.

The Church knows this and that is why, at a bishop's consecration, she asks for him—as a perfectly normal gift, the logical fruit of faith—the power to work miracles of grace: "Give him, O Lord, the ministry of reconciliation, in words and in deeds, in the power of signs and prodigies, *in virtute signorum et prodigiorum*. Let his speech and preaching be not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the Spirit and power."

What is true of a bishop is true of every priest, of every Catholic: if Christ lives in us, it is natural that He should work through us. *Agere sequitur esse*. If we are united to Christ by grace, Christ will act through us.

This is a truth of our faith which influences our whole

attitude to the world. However deplorable is the spiritual distress of a world or of a man, even if like Lazarus he has been four days in the tomb, we have no right to doubt the Master's words: "If thou believe thou shalt see the glory of God." That is a permanent reason for never despairing of the conversion of the multitude. The chances of success must not be estimated by laws of human probability. Active faith, which wins and holds fast the power of Christ, places in our hands a force strong enough to overturn the world and shatter tombstones and sealed sepulchres.

"Go ye into the whole world . . ."

The Master's command to go and preach the Gospel to every creature is not limited by time or space: it is addressed to all generations and all countries, as far as the ends of the earth. While He spoke, His eyes looked out beyond the plains of Galilee, upon all men, forgetting none. He saw too all the impossibilities that would rise up to oppose His command: seas, deserts, forests, solitary spaces, glaciers to be crossed, torments to be endured, and all the secret rebellion of the human heart and its pride. He spoke those words as one speaks a sacramental formula, knowing them to be heavy with meaning for the future and for eternity. He, better than any other, could measure the contrast between the immensity of the mission and the weakness of the men appointed to it, who were there before Him and who only yesterday had fled in the Garden of Olives. Yet He did not soften His words to them, any more than He had moderated those by which He had announced the mystery of the Eucharist, to the great dismay of the Jews. No interpretation can make of them an Oriental hyperbole; their blinding clarity forced conviction on the disciples; each word dropped upon them with decisive force, as an investing sword dubs a candidate for knighthood. They shivered as they heard, but no one of

them ever doubted that the words were to be taken literally. That supreme command was henceforth to dominate all history. Each of its terms must be weighed singly and accepted in its uncompromising finality. "Go," said Jesus, "preach the Gospel." He did not say that men would accept it. He simply said that it was to be brought to them and offered for their acceptance, that, in the words of Rivière, they must be "tempted to believe." Their acceptance or rejection of the message depends on the mystery of free will: all we know is that grace is not refused to anyone, but that it waits for us and follows us. Jesus asked His disciples to go forth and speak to men, to speak to them the words of life that He had taught them. That was all. But it was a task for giants.

It may be thought that that command does not concern us, that it was intended only for the Apostles, His immediate audience. But no—it cuts through time and space, as lightning flashes through the clouds; it is intended for the Apostles and for all those who, with them or after them, share their task; it is intended for each of us, to the last one. How could the Eleven, alone, fulfil such a commission? That there might be no misapprehension about it, the Master added: "Behold I am with you all days." The Apostles died: their mission lives on in us and it is by our actions that Christ works every day and everywhere. Henri Bergson, while still on the threshold of the Church, wrote these lines: "What struck me in Jesus Christ was the order to go forward always; so that one might say that the stable element in Christianity is the command never to halt." St. John Chrysostom in his day was already writing to Christians who tried to escape their duty: "'Go and make disciples of all nations' was not said for the Apostles only, but for us also. The promise does not concern them alone, but also all those who were to follow them; that may be seen by

what is added: 'even to the consummation of the world.'"¹

The order leaves room for no evasion: it must be obeyed by all, and that independently of success or failure. It was pointed out to a missionary in China, who had sacrificed a brilliant career in the world to go on the missions, that his work produced a very paltry result in comparison with the success of his earlier life. The missionary agreed that the soil he was cultivating brought forth very little fruit, but he added: "I am not here because of past or future success, but to obey the command of the Master and bring the Gospel to every creature." This is the answer of the truly faithful servant. It takes no account of visible results and cares but for the will of God.

"Go, preach the Gospel"

We must understand the depth of meaning in that word—the Gospel. It means, not a page or some words selected by us, but all the Gospel. We must go to men "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever have been commanded." That is to say that we must teach them the moral law and the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the ten commandments as well as the Beatitudes, the precepts and also the counsels. Men are hungry for the entire Christ, and we are forbidden to limit our teaching deliberately to rudiments of His doctrine. Every man has a right to be admitted to the supreme secrets of the Master, to be fortified by His sacraments, to be brought to the heights of sanctity. We are not required merely to go and teach the elementary truths required for salvation, but to bring to each the invitation of the Master, "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." The priest has not accomplished his mission when he has taught the faithful the ten commandments of God

¹ *In II Thess.*, C. 3, hom. 5, no. 4, P.G., 62, 498.

and the six commandments of the Church. To each soul he must bring, as far as in him lies, all the lessons of the Gospel, one by one, line by line. He has not the right to pick and choose, or bury his treasures, which are given only to be handed on. "My words," said Jesus, "are spirit and life." We need them all for our nourishment, down to the last crumbs taken from the table. This does not mean that all the secrets of the King should be revealed at once, or without preparation. Jesus Himself spoke of pearls that must not be cast before swine, and St. Paul made a distinction between milk and stronger food. But Christ asks that every soul be prepared to receive the plenitude of Truth and Life: "I came," He said, "that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Evangelization implies entire christianization and that mission will never be completed.

"Go to every creature"

Every creature, that is, every man. When the Master says all, He means all. To each individual soul without exception the message must be given. Such is the command: it reflects the personal and ineffable love of God for each of the creatures that have come from His hands. We are constantly tempted to consider the human race in a body, in a mass, serially; and to imagine that, since there are some two and a half thousand million human beings on this earth, God gives to each only an infinitesimal fraction of His loving care. This is misunderstanding the heart of God: He loves each soul with the whole of His love, just as if it were the only one. To say this is not exaggeration, but a truth of faith. Christ shed for each of us, not, as Pascal said, "a certain drop of His Blood," but all His Blood, the entire chalice. Nothing matters more in life to God than the fate of an immortal soul.

Every man can say to God with the Psalmist:

Lord, Thou hast proved me, and known me;
Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up.
Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off;
My path and my line thou hast searched out.
And thou hast foreseen all my ways: . . .
Thou hast known all things, the last and those of old:
Thou hast formed me and laid Thy hand upon me . . .
If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the
utmost parts of the sea:
Even there also shall Thy hand lead me: and Thy right
hand shall hold me.

When Jesus confided their mission to the Apostles, He consecrated them, by His choice, mediators of that unique and total love of His, repeated to infinity and ever the same. He wills that they should bring to every man that unutterable individual love. We must remember the singleness of that love, when we try to estimate the true value of the sublime and superhuman order to go in the name of Christ "to every creature." We have no right to express collectively what Jesus Christ spoke for each soul singly, or to be satisfied with a general or indirect approach. We must go therefore to the individual Jew or Protestant, Mohammedan or Buddhist—to each of those who have not yet "found the Messiah" and who are seeking Him in the night. We must go to the homeless tramp and to the financial magnate, to the laughing child and to the bedridden old man, to the illiterate dullard who cannot remember a single prayer and to the university scholar who has read everything; to the weary, mocking sceptic and to the troubled, questioning soul; to the drunkard and the woman of the streets and to the statesman, to our neighbour over the way and to the Eskimo buried in the snows or the savage, deep in the heart of a forest or of some distant island. Before we can say that we have done all that was in our power to do for our brothers, we should re-read

those burning words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, which tell how he understood the command to go and preach :

In deaths often ; of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck ; a night and a day I was in the depths of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Each line is like the lash of a whip on our indolence : we fall back instinctively before the price to be paid. It is so much easier to entrench oneself behind some pious exhortation, given from a distance, than to go to those who will not welcome us and are liable to wound our feelings. And yet, we are sent rather to the sick than to those in good health. It is with each of these that we must try to engage in conversation.

“And behold I am with you”

If the apostle is not to faint in the way, he must meditate deeply on these words, fragrant with an Easter morning freshness : “Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.” Nothing more powerful could have been said. Our security lies in them alone. Jesus did not promise success. There must be no misapprehension, under pain of building on an illusion or a misunderstanding. The apostle faced with coldness, hostility, ingratitude, failure, has no right to complain to the Lord. The Master said He would be with him—He promised no more, but He promised that—and the guarantee should suffice. *Ero vobiscum*: what

a wonderful thing is this constant daily indefectible presence ! We must believe in the presence of the Master with the faith of Our Lady, of the Apostles and of the saints. That faith would enable us, if it were active, to cope with the vastness of the mission we have been given. Its virtue is such that it reverses in our favour the play of the forces of good and evil. Faith opens a new world for us, in a sudden burst of light ; thanks to its indwelling we can say with St. Stephen, “Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” And the glory of Christ who is living in every age reveals to us and illuminates the invisible world of the angels and saints, who are also with us in the contest, even to the consummation of the world. If the forces of Antichrist are unchained and frighten us, faith repeats quietly to us, as Eliseus said to his servant who was terrified by a pursuing host : “Fear not, for there are more with us than with them.” And the mountain of Carmel became suddenly covered with heavenly horsemen. It is a figure of the Communion of Saints, which Christ brings with Him by His sovereign and glorious presence. Faith beholds a world of unknown and mysterious forces, which it must gather and conserve. We can see a striking figure, in a negative sense, of this power of faith, in the atomic energy which has been made known to us in recent times by nuclear physics. We know now that a hitherto unsuspected force of destruction and of death lies hidden in the depths of matter ; and humanity tries to stupefy itself, so as to forget the collective suicide with which it is threatened. In the supernatural order, faith tells us that there is an immense store of spiritual energy latent in every Christian heart, which has in itself the very life of Christ and “the powers of His resurrection.” That this faith may shine forth and radiate to the ends of the earth, it is required—and no more is required—to take form and be expressed in action.

“And behold I am with you all days”

The Master is with us at every moment in history, in each generation as it passes. He wills to save our contemporaries through us and without delay. He wills it with all His impatient love.

Much has been said of God's patience, of His deliberate action. Let us understand this aright. God is love, and love is always impatient to communicate itself. God is in haste to give Himself to man. He cannot be resigned to be unknown, unloved. He is in haste to save each generation as it comes into the world. The slow working of His grace is not willed by Him: it comes in spite of Him, from the obstacles set by us to His action. To grasp that divine urgency, we must remember that, in God's initial creative thought, the act of procreation was intended, through the immediate intervention of God, to beget saints, that is, children filled with the life of God from their first breath. Original sin ruined that first plan, but it did not modify the love of God. He wills to give Himself to men today as He did yesterday. St. Paul's cry, "The charity of Christ presseth us," echoes that divine urgency. God is patient because we drive Him to it. That patience is not a relaxing but an adaptation of His love. He is, if we may so express it, impatiently patient, and He asks us to translate His impatience into action by our apostolic eagerness.

* * *

There in a few lines is the sense of the Lord's final command. Let us weigh it and set against it that other word of the Master's: "If you love me, keep my commandments." Love is not a lyrical outpouring; it is first of all a cleaving to the beloved: God measures our words by our actions, and the worth of those words depends on our readiness to submit to His will. The order "to go and preach the Gospel

to every creature" must be obeyed. That commandment sums up all the others and carries them all within it. It is His last will and testament. Before meditating on those words, let us turn to the Lord, as He stands on the mountain; we must read them in His eyes, hear them from His lips, and follow the gesture of His hand, pointing towards the horizon. Let us receive them upon our knees, in our hearts, like a Eucharistic gift, and let us unite ourselves with the salvific will of God which they express. Then let us rise up and look towards the plain, towards the nameless, indeterminate multitude, which does not know that it is dying of hunger. It too will judge us by our obedience to the Master's command, for its fate depends on our fidelity. Will fear freeze us into conformity with the world's attitude or will faith urge us to walk upon the waters? Shall we find strength to answer the call of God, which is also the call of our age? The answer will depend on the understanding and the courage with which priests, religious, laity succeed, with the grace of God, in putting the Church of the twentieth century in a state of missionary activity.