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George Johnson



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GEORGE JOHNSON

APOSTLE OF
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



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FOREWORD

AN APOSTLE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

MONSIGNOR GEORGE JOHNSON

A biographical outline, a commencement address dramatically ended by death, a short funeral sermon and the expressions of esteem sent by his many friends and admirers make up this simple tribute to an Apostle of Christian education—Monsignor George Johnson.

The vigorous and exhaustless energy of his life, dedicated unreservedly to Christian education, was expended only by his death which seemed untimely according to human wisdom.

The conscientious performance of the sacred duties of the priesthood tells the whole story of the life of Monsignor Johnson. To present Christ as the Divine Educator and to make Him known and loved through the medium of Christian education was not of his choosing; it was the priestly commission laid upon him by authority. His acceptance and discharge of that commission will be an inspiring page in the history of Christian education in our country. An appraisal of his notable achievements must be written at a later date.

✠ JOHN T. McNICHOLAS, O.P., S.T.M.
Archbishop of Cincinnati

MONSIGNOR GEORGE JOHNSON CATHOLIC EDUCATOR

ON June 5, 1944, Monsignor George Johnson died while delivering the Commencement address at Trinity College, Washington, D. C. In the full exercise of his mature powers, earnestly carrying out the high apostolate assigned him, and with the sacred name of Christ literally the last syllable that fell from his lips, the dramatic circumstances of his departure from this life were an inspiration to the witnesses of his death and to every priest of our country. In this final address Monsignor Johnson was entirely unaware of delivering his last spoken words on earth; he was likewise unconscious of giving the true summation of his priestly life. In preparing it he could not realize that he was writing his own valedictory—"the best, the truest, the most substantial advice that can be given to a Catholic graduate is this: Go forth and die. Die to yourself; die to the world; die to greed; die to calculating ambition; die to all the unrealities the world calls real. Die and you shall live, and live abundantly."

Born in Toledo, Ohio, on February 22, 1889, Monsignor Johnson obtained his early education in the parochial schools of Toledo, and his high school and college training at St. John's University there. From St. John's he went to study for the priesthood in St. Bernard's Seminary at Rochester, New York. He completed his theological studies at the North American College in Rome, and was ordained in the Lateran Basilica on June 6, 1914.

On his return to the United States, Father Johnson became secretary to the Most Reverend Joseph Schrembs, who was then Bishop of Toledo. In 1916 he was sent to the Catholic University of America to prepare himself for the office of Superintendent of Schools.

At the Catholic University, Father Johnson met at close range those educational forces which were to make him their disciple, and which he in turn was to master, simplify and broaden. He found in his teachers in the University's department of education, the Right Reverend Edward A. Pace and the Very Reverend Thomas E. Shields, a fine theory of education, one of the farthest-visioned of any ever enunciated in the United States. It was a theory of education with a definite, high and purposeful spiritual significance. It envisioned religion as the motivating power of life.

The theory lacked general and thorough application, however. Father Johnson, returning to Toledo to assume the duties of his new office, began to see how it could be put into practice. He did a full-size job in the organization of supervision, the adoption of uniform textbooks, and in the completion of a course of study; but he was not satisfied with his achievement. As a matter of fact he was never satisfied with what he did, never conscious of the outstanding excellence of his work. To the day of his death he was to regard himself as a toiler who accomplished little; but all the while he was building with strength and skill a magnificent structure of Christian education.

In October, 1921, at the request of the Rector of the Catholic University, Bishop Thomas J.

Shahan, Dr. Johnson became a member of the Department of Education at the Catholic University. He took over courses in educational administration and supervision; but the formal naming of these courses in no way indicates what he did in them. With rare simplicity of manner and method he conducted his students not only through the direct course materials but through wide avenues of Christian philosophy. Probably no student ever left his classes without realization of responsibility for his own share in betterment of society. Education was to Dr. Johnson not merely a matter of pedagogic method. It was an unending crusade for human betterment, carried on through the application of God's law and God's love.

Dr. Johnson's first opportunity for putting into practice the theories which base all human action on Christian principle and which insist upon the correlation of doing with knowing came to him soon after his university career began. He was given complete charge of a parish school in the neighborhood where these educational ideas were already in operation. In this school, the Thomas E. Shields Memorial School in St. Anthony Parish, he laid the groundwork of the structure he was later to transfer to the Campus School of the University. In these schools he was able to demonstrate the validity of the teaching methods in which he believed.

As director of the Commission on American Citizenship of the Catholic University he was able to project this ideal of education still farther. Under his immediate supervision a Curriculum for Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living has been completed; nine of the ten Faith and Freedom

Readers, written for students in elementary Catholic schools, have been finished. Both Curriculum and Readers carry out his insistent demand that religion be made the motivating force of social life.

This immediate educational work constituted only a small part of Monsignor Johnson's activities. For twenty-three years he was associated with the Right Reverend Patrick J. McCormick, Rector of the University, as editor of the *Catholic Educational Review*. He was co-author of a three-book series on Bible history. He wrote scores of pamphlets and a recent volume, *Better Men for Better Times*, the statement of principles of the Commission on American Citizenship. It was characteristic of him that he put off publication of this book for a long time, declaring it unworthy of its purpose. Only the urgency of his associates induced him to allow it to appear. To his amazement, it received a very warm welcome in educational circles, both secular and religious.

In 1928 Monsignor Johnson was appointed Director of the Department of Education of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The following year he was elected Secretary General of the National Catholic Educational Association. In both these capacities he was called upon to represent the interests of Catholic education with organizations both governmental and non-governmental. He served as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Education appointed by President Hoover in 1929, and later on the Advisory Committee on Education appointed by President Roosevelt in 1937. He was a member of the Wartime Commission of the United States Office

of Education, the Education Advisory Committee under the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, and the Advisory Committee on Education of the Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation. He was for three years secretary of the American Council on Education, and at the time of his death a member of its Committee on Problems and Plans in Education. He was, too, a member of the American Youth Commission, and numerous other educational and civic committees.

Some of these organizations were not too demanding of his time and attention, but many of them required arduous service from him. His fellow members on many of these committees have given testimony that his great value as a fellow-worker with them arose from the fact that, while he never deviated an inch from principle, he never antagonized those who did not agree with him. To them, as to all men, he gave close, keen attention which was never personally hostile, although it might be entirely hostile to their aims and intentions. In every co-worker Monsignor Johnson revered the dignity of the human person.

Of the many honors conferred upon him—he was made a Doctor of Laws by Marquette University in 1930, and a member of the honorary society of the Laureate Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi in 1942—the one honor he deeply valued was his elevation to the rank of Domestic Prelate by the Holy Father in November, 1942. For first, last and always, Monsignor Johnson was a priest. Through every page of his written work, through every hour of his teaching, through every phase of his multitudinous activities his priestliness was outstandingly

apparent. He died as he had lived, speaking the word of God to students for whom he hoped that the world of tomorrow would be a better world than the one whose struggles he so well understood and sought to alleviate.



CHRISTIAN REALISM

THE UNFINISHED COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

OF

THE RT. REV. MSGR. GEORGE JOHNSON

ANY moment in the history of a nation has its prevailing mood, and the clue to that mood may often be supplied by the wide use of a particular word. If the word is spoken freely, if it spreads itself on every printed page, if the great, the near great, and the not so great roll it unctuously on their tongues and find delight in the sound of it, one may conclude that it expresses an attitude that is presently popular. It is the tone to which the mood of the moment is pitched.

Currently, it would seem that such a function is being performed by the word "realism." We hear it constantly. We are counselled to arrive at conclusions about things in general and at the present state of human affairs in particular in a realistic manner. We ought to be realistic about the war, realistic about the peace, realistic about matters social and economic, realistic in the sphere of domestic relations, realistic about the truth, realistic about morals. Statesmen are admired because they are realistic; plans and programs are acclaimed because they are based on realism. In realism we are counselled to vest our hopes for the future.

Now realism is an old word and has had many meanings at many times. It has different meanings in different contexts. It reminds the philosopher of the perennial controversy concerning the nature of

ideas. In art and letters it is the rallying point of those who champion fidelity to nature and actual life as against the romantic, the subjective, or the sentimental. In education it labels the point of view of those who want schooling to be practical rather than academic and theoretical. By and large, it stands in contradiction to the ideal, the abstract, the visionary. It is often used as a synonym for common sense.

In its contemporary context, however, its connotation is somewhat different. At the least, it is disturbing; at the most, ominous. For what realism seems to mean today is the inclination to sacrifice principle for expediency, to capitulate to circumstances, to permit the end to justify the means. It implies the acceptance as a satisfactory philosophy of life and living of the doctrine that whatever works is for that reason justified. It amounts to the apotheosis of the law of tooth and claw, the furling of the standards of immutable truth and justice. It is content to make the most of a bad bargain. It is impatient of dreams that may never come true, of aspirations that court disappointment, of hopes that soar aloft unto the heights. It is content to remain mired in the turgid slough of cynicism.

When we find it difficult to square the noble ideas of the four freedoms with arrangements and accommodations that seem to negate them, we are told to be realistic. When we ask questions that are prompted by our assumption that justice and right must prevail in the affairs of nations, even as in the affairs of individuals, we are told to be realistic. When we speak about the rights of small nations and confess that we cherish a prayerful hope that

out of all the horror, the waste, and the destruction of war there will emerge a world in which the weak will not be at the mercy of the strong, we are told to be realistic. When we are a bit dismayed because we think we see emerging out of the welter of world-wide confusion something like the recrudescence of old imperialisms under new forms, we are told to be realistic.

You are utterly unrealistic if you try to envisage an economic order based on men's love for one another rather than on some compromise with greed and lust for power. You are utterly unrealistic when you voice the conviction that personal morality should be founded on a zeal for virtue rather than on the fear of the consequences of vice. You are utterly unrealistic if you decry what you consider to be the degradation of the arts and refuse to accept ugliness for beauty in music, in painting, and in literature. You are utterly unrealistic if you cling to any interpretation of human nature that does not circumscribe itself by the physical and material.

I am not saying that this new realism is universally accepted in the land nor that it has succeeded in destroying the idealism that has always been in some degree an American characteristic. That idealism is born of faith in man's origin in God, and it can never be completely stifled. After all, history keeps obtruding itself; it is too late to falsify the record of the glorious accomplishments of the saints, the seers, the statesmen and the soldiers who in every age and in every clime have refused to be realistic. We can be grateful that St. Paul was not a realist when he faced perils in the city,

perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, to preach the Gospel of a crucified God. Copernicus was not a realist, nor was Newton, nor Pasteur, nor Marconi. Raphael was not a realist, nor was Shakespeare, nor Beethoven, nor the builders of the cathedral of Chartres. Jefferson was not a realist, nor were the other Founding Fathers. Thank God no realist commanded the American army at Valley Forge, no realist directed the destinies of the nation when Sumter fell.

Unfortunately, however, too many people nowadays, particularly in our own country, have been nursed on an intellectual diet that lacks those elements which are necessary for long-range vision and for developing the fortitude that is ready to accept present defeat as the condition of ultimate victory. They have been indoctrinated with theories of life and living that chain them to the earth. They refuse to lift up their eyes to the mountains in quest of salvation. They see man's destiny circumscribed by the here and now and they give honor to no other God than the Caesar of their own potentialities. They are enamored not of the law of God according to the inward man, but of the laws of nature; and they prefer to adapt themselves to an outward ordering of human affairs based on what they like to call scientific planning. In metaphysics they are materialists, in morals they are pragmatists, in religion they are secularists, in the common parlance of the day they are realists.

If they but knew it, the realism they cherish is essentially unreal. They are presently occupied with the shadows and the substance has eluded

them. They have mistaken the symbol for the symbolized, the clue for the solution. Immersed in the visible, they disdain the invisible. They refuse to have God in their knowledge, and, as a consequence, they have cut themselves off from the root of all reality.

For reality exists in God and comes forth from God. He is the eternal source whence all things flow; without His sustaining power all things would vanish into nothing. The adequate answer to every human question, be it philosophical, or scientific, or social, or economic, or political, or aesthetic, can be found only in the mind of God.

In the heart of the fool there sounds stridently his own voice telling him there is no God. A fool he is and a fool he will remain until he gives up trying to drown out another voice that whispers in the depths of that same heart, the voice of the God who made him and fashioned him and formed him, the voice of the God to whom he belongs and apart from whom there is no substance, no reality to his life and living.

There is one great central fact in the universe, an eternal fact, a fact which can never be gainsaid. It is a fact that, unfortunately, some will always find to be a stumbling-block and others will try to dismiss as foolishness. That fact is Jesus Christ. He is the beginning; He is the end. He is the truth; He is the way; He is the life. He is God made manifest to man. He is more than just a reality. He is reality itself.

The reality that is Jesus Christ is the definition, the very heart and soul, of the education you graduates have received. It is the reason for this college.

Catholic schools exist for the purpose of teaching the truth that is in Jesus Christ, Our Lord, and teaching all truth in relation to that truth. Apart from that truth all other truth is meaningless. Christ is the light of which all other light is but a reflection; where it does not shine, there is darkness.

Outside of the Church education becomes increasingly stranger to Christ and the things of Christ. It has lost all understanding of the meaning of the supernatural. Absorbed in the human, it neglects the divine. It exalts the practical and is impatient of the speculative. It talks about the good life, but it talks about it in terms of earthly security and satisfaction. It has some interest in Christ as an historical personage and in Christianity as a social or cultural movement. It knows nothing of Christ as a determining force in human society, as the eternal and abiding reality.

Now secular education is a powerful factor in the life of the nation. It is making us the kind of people we are becoming. It has great resources of wealth and talent and equipment at its command. In comparison our Catholic effort seems weak and utterly inadequate. We have our moments of dismay, at times even of discouragement.

The odds against us seem so tremendous. We are out of tune with the times; we are in conscience bound to keep out of tune with the times. The temptation comes to accommodate ourselves to circumstances, to yield a bit here, to make a compromise there. The reality to which we are committed has a way of seeming very unreal when faced with the realities the world cherishes. We are

different. We must be different, and being different can be very uncomfortable.

Too often we are forced to admit that the prospect of being forever different is too galling for some of our graduates to face and we find them after a number of years being very realistic and not taking their religion too seriously. They still profess to be Catholics, but their deeds—their economic deeds, their political deeds, their artistic deeds, their literary deeds, their domestic deeds—reveal that whatever their lips may say, their hearts are far from Christ. They have become too realistic to be governed by reality.

We still have a lot to learn about educating unto Christ in a world that knows not Christ.*

It is by no means a simple matter to develop in the hearts of the young a zealous loyalty to the unchanging when they have to live in the midst of change. It is by no means a simple matter to impress upon carefree youth the necessity of building up the reserves of fortitude they will need for the daily martyrdom of living a Christian life in an atmosphere in which Christianity is unfashionable. Of course, we are not working alone. There is always the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We succeed more often than we fail. Yet our success should not and does not blind us to our failure.

The responsibility does not fall exclusively on the school. It should be kept in mind that no one can really educate anyone else. Schools and teachers may guide and direct, but in the long run every

*It was at this point that Monsignor Johnson was stricken.

individual educates himself. We rejoice with these graduates on the completion of their work. We honor them in solemn ceremonial as we present them with their diplomas. We have done all we could for them.

Perhaps our all has not been quite enough. Yet be that as it may, your future success or failure will be fundamentally your own doing. If you have made the most of your opportunities, and continue to make the most of your opportunities, provided these are opportunities for the love and service of God and your fellowman, your lives will be successful. You will be increasingly strengthened with might according to the inward man and will intensify by your faith and service the reality of Christ in the world. On the other hand, if you have hitherto preferred the unreal to the real, if you have lived according to the canons of selfishness and compromise, if Christ to you is nothing more than a shadowy ideal or the rallying point of sentimental devotion, you will succumb very readily to the realities which the world cherishes and in which it puts its faith.

The responsibility of a Catholic graduate is to make her contemporaries increasingly conscious of Jesus Christ, to insinuate Him into society. This she does by making Him real in the circles in which she moves by living as Christ would live in her. This she does by translating the faith that is in her into deeds and actions that are in conformity with the spirit of Christ and calculated to win the world to Him.

The realist is impatient with creeds and symbols. He claims they have no functional value. It is in-

cumbent upon the Christian, particularly if that Christian has had the advantage of a college education, under Christian auspices, to prove that he is wrong. Our creed is not just a series of empty formulas strung together. Our symbols are not vain window dressing. We are what we believe, and the signs of our faith are the signs of our character.

The noblest of all our symbols is the cross. Christianity is so utterly unrealistic as to teach that the only way to find your life is to lose it. The best, the truest, the most substantial advice that can be given to a Catholic graduate is this: Go forth and die. Die to yourself; die to the world; die to greed; die to calculating ambition; die to all the unrealities that the world calls real. Die and you shall live, and live abundantly.



SERMON BY
ARCHBISHOP McNICHOLAS
AT THE
FUNERAL OF MONSIGNOR JOHNSON
AT THE
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION
WASHINGTON, D. C.
JUNE 9, 1944

THE unexpected death of Monsignor Johnson makes us realize how immeasurable is our loss and how vast the sphere of influence which his presence filled.

The Church mourns a true priest, the Diocese of Toledo a humble and loyal member of its clergy, Catholic education an informed and fearless exponent, secular education a critical but constructive friend, the Catholic University a capable and inspirational professor, and the Bishops' Conference a tireless Director of Education, whose mature judgment was highly regarded and whose measured words always merited serious consideration.

I regard the many years of my close collaboration with Monsignor Johnson as a sacred privilege. I will not attempt even in briefest outline to sketch his priestly career. I prefer on this sad occasion, when we have not fully recovered from the shock of his wholly unexpected death, to select two points for our meditation.

THE PRIEST

For thirty years the deceased has been a priest. The realities and conflicts of life never lowered his high ideals of the priesthood. To his superiors, to his most intimate friends he was always the priest. To his colleagues, professors of this University, to his students, to his associates on the many commissions in which he labored, to educators not of our faith who respected his sound judgment in scholastic matters, he was not merely the restrained gentleman or the competent scholar in the field of education or the consultant who tried to get the point of view of those whose opinions he could not accept; he was first, last, and always the priest of the Catholic Church.

The priesthood meant to Monsignor Johnson precisely what we understand it to be according to Catholic terminology—the office of mediator between God and man. His first concern as mediator was to employ the means necessary for his own sanctification, in order to be better qualified to discharge his high office. Thus we found him always the man of simple and childlike faith. His faultless reasoning, his theological knowledge, his vast reading never changed the genuine simplicity of this true priest nor lessened his efforts to sanctify himself. To his devoted mother he was always the faithful, affectionate, priestly son.

In the performance of his many and varied duties in the field of education he knew that his priesthood could enlarge and ennoble his judgment and give prestige to his work. As a mediator, he must bring something of the divine message to the

classroom. His conferences, sermons, radio addresses, and his activities in educational circles were not to him occasions for personal glory; they were opportunities to be the *sacerdos sacra dans*. There was nothing forced, nothing ostentatious or pretentious, nothing attracting attention to himself personally in this phase of his mediatorship. He could not, and he would not if he could, be a showman; he knew how valuable it is to dramatize events or occasions in our world of today, but he refused to attempt it. He knew the full meaning and value of an artistic temperament, but he also knew that he must not play its part.

His priestly character was so simple, so direct, so transparently honest; his work was to him so serious that he was always true to the principles by which he interpreted life. He might be considered the matter-of-fact priest and scholar. He weighed criticism, but it never caused him to waver in the performance of duty.

His chief concern in life was the Church, the priesthood, sanctified scholarship, the Christian home, the Bishops' educational program, the extension of the influence of Catholic training, the Providential work of the Catholic University, the remote and proximate preparation for Catholic leadership, the urge to make those not of our faith understand the philosophy of Catholic education—all these made up the inspiring cause to which Monsignor Johnson's life was dedicated. Personalities, pettiness, the hindrances that come from personal ambition had no part in the life of the beloved Prelate whom we mourn this morning.

DEVOTION TO DUTY

The second point for our meditation is the consecration of Monsignor Johnson's life to duty. His life had fallen in the lines of the field of education. It was not his choosing; it was compliance with the direction of his superiors. He did not wish to chart the course of his life; he was the willing, eager soldier in the army of Christ; he would have been happy in any work of the sacred ministry, but he was most conscientious in preparing himself for the tasks assigned to him.

For six years he was the capable secretary of the first Bishop of Toledo, for nearly twenty-five years he has been here at the Catholic University, for sixteen years he has been the most self-sacrificing Director of the Department of Education for the Bishops of the United States.

Despite his outstanding qualifications for the posts he filled, his humility caused him to underestimate his ability and made him question his own decisions. His intellectual honesty, however, made him express his candid judgment to superiors, even when there was a difference of opinion.

Monsignor Johnson was the quiet, scholarly, and busy priest. He took upon himself burden after burden, which the shoulders of the most stalwart man could not bear; his friends and associates never seemed to think that there were limits to his capacity for work. He made one feel that he was ever the willing priest, eager for more work. His idea of recreation seemed to be a change of occupation.

Doctor Johnson had a healthy outlook on life, a fine sense of humor, a quick and, even, sharp re-

tort which was wholly without malice. His appraisal of men was adequate but always priestly. His keen mind, his training, and his rich, unusual experience enabled him to analyze quickly documents, legislative enactments, trends, and movements. With a priestly charity that was universal, he considered educational measures as they affected all groups in our country; he knew the sanity of the philosophy of Catholic education. He could enter into the mind of an opponent, and then in a practical judgment he would honestly, directly, and briefly sum up what he considered the Catholic position.

I cannot refrain from saying that I consider his loss at this time, in the Department of Education of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and in the National Catholic Educational Association, irreparable. I am sure the authorities of the Catholic University regard his death now as most serious, when the educational problems of our country and of the world desperately need scholars who should try to solve them by their sane, informed, experienced, and resourceful judgments.

Considering the excessive burden that Monsignor Johnson carried in the many fields of education, I cannot feel easy at this sorrowful hour. On several occasions, Monsignor Johnson told me that he thought he should give up his work at the University or in the Bishops' Department of Education. His conscientious anxiety was to discharge his duties better at one post. It may be ten years since he first expressed that conviction to me. I always urged him to continue in the hope that we would find the satisfactory solution of giving him

capable priests as assistants. He was always uncomplaining, ever ready to carry on, and at all times trustful that the superior wisdom of others would find a solution.

If there were assembled here this morning the educators of the country who had confidence in Monsignor Johnson's judgment and also the priests, members of religious communities, laymen and laywomen who have been helped by him, we would marvel at the extent of his labors and at the incredible number of his contacts during years of unselfish, ceaseless activity. Many secular educators had very high regard for Monsignor Johnson because of his open-mindedness and his fine sense of justice.

Our priests throughout the length and breadth of the land engaged in the field of education mourn today the loss of a devoted brother, whose wisdom often guided them, whose prudence and experience were an inspiration, and whose resourcefulness was always stimulating. Our educational institutions recognized in him a staunch friend and a capable advocate. Our Bishops found in him a wise consultant, eager to be helpful.

The life of Monsignor Johnson will long be an inspiration in our country. May his memory make us generous in praying for his departed soul. May eternal rest now be his, and may perpetual light shine upon him!



TRIBUTES TO MONSIGNOR JOHNSON

ON the occasion of Monsignor Johnson's death, many messages of sympathy were addressed to the National Catholic Welfare Conference. With other tributes paid to him some of these are included in this memorial to him.

Bishop Alter of Toledo said, "There have been few names in Catholic education which have won the universal esteem which has been associated with the name of Monsignor Johnson. In sermons, lectures, and conferences from one end of the country to the other, he carried the message of Christ to the schools and stood upright as a champion of true progress as well as of time-tested principles. But it was as a great and true priest that we shall remember him in this Diocese of Toledo. His priestly character overshadowed all his other activities. He was a mediator between God and man, conscious of his spiritual responsibilities whether at the altar, in the pulpit or in the lecture hall. Often he would express his longing to be wholly engaged in pastoral ministrations for the immediate welfare of souls. It was only his sense of higher duty which prompted him to continue his weary round of endless conferences. In his own words, so much seemed to be futility and frustration, but this was the normal reaction of the captain who is assigned to staff duty instead of the combat front."

Monsignor Ready, General Secretary of the Welfare Conference, with whom Monsignor Johnson worked so intimately for fourteen years, said:

“Monsignor Johnson left a great heritage to the Church in the United States. When death called him suddenly on the eve of his thirtieth anniversary of his ordination, he finished an apostolate which had enriched America.

“Monsignor Johnson in the past score of years has held the confidence of the Bishops of the United States in representing the interests of the Church in the whole complex field of educational relationships. We, his friends and colleagues, will treasure always the spontaneous eulogies spoken by distinguished educators throughout the country on the news of Monsignor Johnson’s death. These men knew him as a professional educator who shared with them the responsibilities of correct policies in education. But they knew him first of all as a ‘great Priest.’ Every priest glories in that appraisal. I know of no priest who deserved it more than Monsignor Johnson.”

Archbishop Curley said:

“I spoke with my beloved friend, George Johnson, for fifteen minutes before going into the procession of the graduates at eleven o’clock. Little did I think, as I walked between Monsignor McCormick, the Rector of the Catholic University, and Dr. Johnson, that the latter was walking to his sudden but, thank God, not unprovided death. He was a great priest because he was a priestly priest who did priestly things in a priestly way. He was an outstanding figure in the field of Catholic Education. God gave him a great mind which he used to its fullest extent. He was held in the highest esteem by every member of the American Hierarchy and he was respected not only by those who

agreed with him, but even by those who disagreed at times with his demands for the rights of the Church in educational matters.”

From the Foreword written by
ARCHBISHOP CURLEY
to “*The Unfinished Commencement*
Address.”

“We sincerely regret the death of Monsignor Johnson, a great loss to the cause of education. His wonderful and outstanding service will not be forgotten. His students will keep him in loving memory. May his reward be great. I join you all in prayer for the repose of his soul.”

MOST REV. HENRY ALTHOFF
Bishop of Belleville

“With you we mourn the passing of Monsignor Johnson, a severe loss. Prayers and Masses are being offered for him here.”

MOST REV. CHARLES F. BUDDY
Bishop of San Diego

“I am distressed to learn of the death of Doctor Johnson. I will offer Mass for him Friday.”

MOST REV. RICHARD O. GEROW
Bishop of Natchez

"I deeply regret the death of Monsignor Johnson. My prayers and sympathy are with his dear ones."

MOST REV. EDMOND HEELAN
Bishop of Sioux City

"I deeply regret the news of the sudden death of Monsignor George Johnson. His loss is irreparable."

MOST REV. FRANCIS P. KEOUGH
Bishop of Providence

"Sincere sympathy in the death of Monsignor Johnson. We will pray for him."

MOST REV. R. E. LUCEY
Archbishop of San Antonio

"Please accept my sympathy in the death of Monsignor Johnson. Be assured of his remembrance in our Masses and prayers."

MOST REV. SIDNEY METZGER
Bishop of El Paso

"The Extension Society officials regret the loss of their friend, Monsignor Johnson. Assure prayerful remembrances."

MOST REV. W. D. O'BRIEN
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

"I deeply regret hearing the news of Monsignor Johnson's death. I unite with you in prayers for this zealous priestly soul."

MOST REV. JOSEPH RITTER
Bishop of Indianapolis

"I extend my heartfelt sympathy to the N.C.W.C. as well as to the Catholic University on their great loss."

MOST REV. HENRY R. ROHLMAN
Bishop of Davenport

"I am very sorry to learn of the sudden death of Doctor Johnson and extend my sympathy."

MOST REV. JAMES H. RYAN
Bishop of Omaha

"We are deeply grieved to learn of the death of Monsignor Johnson. We will remember him in our Masses."

MOST REV. JOSEPH SCHREMBES
Bishop of Cleveland
and

MOST REV. EDWARD F. HOBAN
Coadjutor of Cleveland

"I am shocked by the news of the sudden death of Monsignor Johnson. His loss at this time is exceedingly great."

MOST REV. SAMUEL A. STRITCH
Archbishop of Chicago

"I deeply regret to hear of the death of Monsignor Johnson. The Church in the United States has suffered a severe loss. The field of Catholic education in our country has lost its staunchest

defender and most progressive member. We have all lost a good friend. Sympathy and prayers."

MOST REV. THOMAS J. TOOLEN
Bishop of Mobile

"Our nation has sustained a great loss in the education field by the death of Monsignor Johnson. May his soul rest in peace."

MOST REV. CHARLES D. WHITE
Bishop of Spokane

"I regret the death of Father Johnson. I will offer Mass and prayers for his great soul."

MOST REV. BARTHOLOMEW J. EUSTACE
Bishop of Camden

"I am grieved at the news of the death of Monsignor Johnson. His untimely death is a great loss to the cause of Catholic education."

MOST REV. ALBERT L. FLETCHER
Auxiliary Bishop of Little Rock

"I deeply regret to learn of the death of Dr. George Johnson. What a pity and what a loss! I do not know his age but I never looked upon him as old on account of his constant activities in his line of duty. We will miss him very much on account of his ability and extraordinary service to the Administrative Board. May his soul rest in

peace! I will offer Mass for him the first free morning I get. Please convey my respect and sympathy to his family."

MOST REV. JOHN MARK GANNON
Bishop of Erie

"I regret exceedingly the death of Monsignor Johnson. Please accept my sincere sympathy. I shall remember his soul frequently at Mass."

MOST REV. EDWARD D. HOWARD
Archbishop of Portland, Oregon

"Thanks for the telegram. Profound sympathy."

MOST REV. GEORGE L. LEECH
Bishop of Harrisburg

"I am profoundly grieved on learning of the death of my good friend, Monsignor Johnson. We have lost a great light in the educational field and a representative of our cause. He is assured remembrance in Holy Mass."

MOST REV. THOMAS H. McLAUGHLIN
Bishop of Paterson

"I extend sincere sympathy to you and the organization in the death of Monsignor Johnson."

MOST REV. JOHN G. MURRAY
Archbishop of St. Paul

"I deeply regret the death of Monsignor Johnson. Catholic education has lost an outstanding exponent."

RIGHT REV. VINCENT TAYLOR
Abbot of Belmont Abbey

"Please accept our expression of regret and sympathy on the death of Monsignor Johnson. His association with our late Bishop and services here were highly appreciated by clergy, religious, and laity."

RIGHT REV. JEREMIAH S. BUCKLEY
Administrator of Manchester

"Bishop, priests, religious and laity extend heartfelt sympathy in the death of Monsignor Johnson."

MOST REV. THOMAS K. GORMAN
Bishop of Reno

"I am profoundly grieved by the news of the death of Monsignor George Johnson. What a sad loss for the cause of Catholic education! I shall keep Monsignor Johnson in my prayers, and tomorrow I shall offer my Mass for the happy repose of his soul."

MOST REV. LEO BINZ
Coadjutor Bishop of Winona

"I want to thank you for the notice of the sad and sudden death of Monsignor Johnson. Monsignor Johnson's death will be as great a loss as it was tragic. It must have made a great impression

on the young people to whom he was speaking, when God called him so quickly.”

MOST REV. C. E. BYRNE
Bishop of Galveston

“It grieved me deeply to learn of the death of Monsignor Johnson. His was a most promising career and the Church will miss his talents and ability. I shall remember his soul in my prayers and Masses. Will you kindly extend my sympathy and condolences to his relatives and co-workers.”

MOST REV. EDMUND F. GIBBONS
Bishop of Albany

“My sincere sympathy in the death of Monsignor Johnson, whose untimely passing is such a shock to us all. May I assure you that Mass will be said for the repose of Monsignor Johnson’s soul. Deep sympathy to all at N.C.W.C. Headquarters, and especially the Department of Education which Monsignor Johnson so capably directed.”

MOST REV. WILLIAM A. GRIFFIN
Bishop of Trenton

“I wish to extend to you and to the Department of Education my expression of sincere sympathy in the death of Monsignor George Johnson, Executive Director of the N.C.W.C. Department of Education. It will be difficult to replace him. May God rest his soul.”

MOST REV. EDWARD J. KELLY
Bishop of Boise

"I want to express my deep sympathy on the death of Monsignor George Johnson, Executive Director of the N.C.W.C. Department of Education. He is a great loss to the N.C.W.C. and to the work of Catholic education in the United States."

MOST REV. JOHN J. MITTY
Archbishop of San Francisco

"We were shocked at the unexpected news of the sudden death of Monsignor Johnson. The Catholic Church in the United States has suffered a great loss through his untimely death. The mature improved views of Monsignor Johnson in matters educational exercised a tremendous influence not only on Catholics but non-Catholics as well. We shall miss him."

MOST REV. A. J. MUENCH
Bishop of Fargo

"I share with you the sorrow that must be felt by your organization in the loss of Monsignor Johnson. I have said Mass for him and sincerely hope that soon you will find a worthy successor to take up his work."

MOST REV. WALTER A. FOERY
Bishop of Syracuse

"I cannot tell you how pained and shocked I was to learn of Monsignor Johnson's death. I had written him a letter just the day before I received your telegram. He had been extraordinarily generous with his time and thought to us down here in Florida. As a matter of fact, at the time of his death,

he was preparing a survey of our educational institutions in the Diocese. His passing will be an almost irreparable loss to the Welfare Conference and to the University."

MOST REV. JOSEPH P. HURLEY
Bishop of St. Augustine

"I am so sorry to hear of George Johnson's death. This is a real loss to the Church in America. He started in Rome in third year theology when I began my first. Our paths never crossed very often but he always held my deepest respect."

MOST REV. GERALD T. BERGAN
Bishop of Des Moines

Dear Monsignor Ready:

Permit me to assure you that it was a source of great regret to learn of the sudden death of Monsignor George Johnson, Executive Director of the N.C.W.C. Department of Education.

Doctor Johnson represented a true exponent of priestly virtue as well as of Christian scholarship. He was moreover an inspirational influence in his quiet, unobtrusive manner as he gave unstintingly and unselfishly of his wise counsel and experienced judgment particularly for the promotion of the interests of education throughout our country.

I shall be mindful of him in my Mass and prayers that God may grant him eternal rest and peace of soul as a reward of his blessedly fruitful priestly life on earth.

Faithfully yours,

MOST REV. THOMAS MOLLOY
Bishop of Brooklyn

My dear Monsignor Ready:

I have been wanting for some days to express to you my deep regret and sorrow at the death of Monsignor George Johnson. Father Johnson had such a broad and sympathetic understanding, his wisdom was so true and deep, that I had come to depend increasingly on his judgment and counsel. When I brought a problem to him, I never failed to secure helpful guidance. His assistance was particularly valuable in the consideration of the educational problems which have come to the fore in connection with the reconstruction of the cultural and educational facilities of the war-torn countries. His untimely death leaves a great void.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES THOMSON
Department of State

Dear Monsignor Ready:

It is with very sincere regret that I have just learned of the sudden death of Monsignor George Johnson.

We, in this Office, have often in the past sought his wise counsel in the realm of education. His advice, so generously given, was invariably characterized by wide tolerance, prudence and understanding. Father Johnson's loss will be very real to us, and I am sure that to you his passing will be a profound sorrow indeed.

Sincerely,

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER
Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs

My dear Monsignor Ready:

Personally and in behalf of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, I wish to express to you and the staff of the N.C.W.C. sincerest sentiments of sympathy upon the great loss you have suffered at the death of Monsignor Johnson. He is not only a loss to you, but he is a loss to the whole Catholic Church in America, and not only to the Church, but the educational world.

I had the privilege and the pleasure of being in the same classes with Monsignor Johnson at the Catholic University many years ago. We also attended some courses at Columbia University. I found him to be so intelligently superior and so deeply Catholic that he has always been to me one of the most ideal Catholic leaders in America.

His untimely death has come as a shock to all of us. I have offered the sacrifice of the Mass for the repose of his soul, and I shall continue to remember him in my prayers.

With every good wish and kindest personal regards, I beg to remain,

Very sincerely yours,

L. G. LIGUTTI
*Executive Secretary, National
Catholic Rural Life Conference*

My dear Monsignor Ready:

I enclose herewith a copy of the resolution which was adopted by the Washington Central Labor Union at its last meeting.

May I add a personal word of a sense of deep loss which the death of Monsignor Johnson has given us.

Very truly yours,

FRANK J. COLEMAN

Secretary

Washington Central Labor Union

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS: Monsignor George Johnson, a noted educator and cleric, passed away today while delivering a commencement address, and

WHEREAS: Monsignor Johnson has rendered a great and rich service to the promotion of truly social concepts in and through education, and

WHEREAS: Monsignor Johnson always concerned himself for the welfare of every child, regardless of race, rank, or creed, seeking ever to help all children, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Washington Central Labor Union mourns the loss of this great public servant, and be it further

RESOLVED: That copies of this resolution be sent to the Rector of Catholic University, to the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and to the sister of Monsignor Johnson.

Right Reverend dear Monsignor:

It is with the deepest regret that I have just now learned of the recent death of Monsignor George Johnson.

During the time that I spent in graduate work at the University I was privileged to become acquainted with Monsignor Johnson's many fine qualities. In the classroom he was a stimulating professor. As an educator working closely with so many educational groups, both religious and secular, he had an unusually wide and varied knowledge of his field, and his was a genuinely heartfelt concern for the education of youth in these United States.

Above all these things Monsignor Johnson showed himself to be at all times a priest of truly noble character. His zeal for God and souls was the solid foundation of his wholehearted love of the Church and of American democracy—two great loyalties with which he inspired his students.

I know that the Education Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference will miss his leadership as well as all of us who looked forward each year to the information and guidance which he so generously gave at the superintendents' meetings. Please accept this expression of my most sincere sympathy with the National Catholic Welfare Conference in its great loss, together with the assurance of a constant remembrance in my prayers and Masses for the repose of the soul of Monsignor Johnson.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

REV. WILLIAM A. CROWLEY
Superintendent of Schools
Burlington, Vermont

Dear Monsignor Ready:

I want to express to you my deep sorrow at the death of Monsignor Johnson. He was not only a loyal servant of his church but a great American educator whose influence was ever widening and who stimulated many towards clearer thinking and more humane action in the schools.

Last year I came to know him well and we became good friends. His help and advice as one of the Vice-Presidents of The American Association for an International Office for Education, Inc., were heartening and effective. With all the many things he had to consume his time and energy, he added this activity and put himself heart and soul into it.

It is good to know that if he had to go so early, it was when he was in apparent good health and when he was functioning to best advantage in his chosen field.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES MARSHALL
*Member, Board of Education
New York*

Dear Monsignor Ready:

Will you please convey to the proper persons my deep regret at the passing of Father George Johnson. I always found him to be a delightful and gracious co-worker. He will be deeply missed in the Council and in his extremely wide circle of educational associates.

GEORGE D. STODDARD
*Commissioner of Education
of the State of New York*

Press of
Ransdell Incorporated
Washington, D. C.

