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# HUMAN PLANS ARE NOT ENOUGH



*John Carter Smyth, C.S.P.*  
*The Catholic Hour*



# HUMAN PLANS ARE NOT ENOUGH

BY

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Four addresses delivered in the nationwide Catholic Hour (produced by the National Council of Catholic Men, in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company), on December 5, 12, 19, and 26, 1943.

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## MAN'S NEED OF GOD

Address delivered on December 5, 1941

All of us are in some measure post-war planners: for it is one of the distinguishing traits of the human species that its members strive consciously to shape for the better their own destiny. We know that when the war is ended, we shall be faced by changed conditions, and that we shall be challenged by unprecedented opportunities for the betterment of mankind. It is natural therefore that men should be striving to devise ways by which that challenge can be met.

In America alone there are no fewer than 137 organizations—28 of them governmental, 109 private agencies—engaged in the study of post-war problems with a view towards guiding the future course of the nation. There is every reason to be grateful for this foresight on the part of our leaders for there will be great need of wise human planning, if we are to control the political, social, and economic forces in the days to come.

Nevertheless, it should be obvious to all of us, from our present bitter experience, that mere human plans are not enough to set the world aright. After the last war we put our trust in human ingenuity and

skill to safeguard humanity against the future, and what a tragic mistake that proved to be, for without realizing it we were sowing the seeds of another and more deadly war. And if there is to be any hope that a new order can emerge from the present chaos, and a better way of life assured mankind in the future, we shall have to go much deeper than skilled discussion and devisement of political, social, and economic changes, however radical these may be.

The primary need is that we put first things first. We need to go back to God the author of life, and to acknowledge reverently His sovereignty in the affairs of men. We have to recognize that which ought to be very evident to us now, that we live in a moral law-abiding universe where the laws of God cannot be mocked; where men reap what they sow; and where catastrophe attends upon guilt. This is a basic need if we are to have any hope for a regeneration of human society. There must be a reaffirmation by all of us of those moral laws which are part of our Christian heritage, and which we recognize as the will of God for the



right ordering of human life. If human plans for the betterment of the race are to have any validity and substance, it will be to the extent that they are inspired and sustained by those moral laws which have come to us from God through His Son Jesus Christ. As the Holy Father Pope Pius XII expresses it: "Blessed be those who realize that great work for a new and just order is not possible unless their eyes are lifted to God, keeper and ordainer of all human events, initial source, guardian and avenger of all justice and right."

The need for a deeper foundation than human plans for the re-ordering of human society also finds expression in a statement issued by eighteen Christian leaders of the United Nations, including Archbishop Downey of Liverpool: "We who issue this statement," they affirm, "are persuaded that the evils from which the world is suffering can be remedied only by a return to God the Father of all. The rivalries and strifes that do so much to ruin life, and culminate in the insensate horrors of war, spring from sources in human life too deep to be controlled by human planning. We need a vision of a world ordered according to God's purposes and law. We need the spirit of love and repentance, hum-

bly beseeching God to forgive us our past sins, and to give us the spirit of forgiveness for wrongs done ourselves."

The inadequacy of human plans to bring order to our chaotic world is recognized by others than our religious leaders. In a penetrating analysis of our present needs, Walter Lippmann says of this problem: "Modern man as turned out by our secular schools and shaped by popular culture is a being whose desires are limited only by the difficulty of getting more and more satisfaction. . . . Their desires are irrational and therefore always expanding and forever unsatisfied. Men cannot remain civilized when they no longer discipline themselves and their children in the traditions that come to them from prophets and saints who have raised western man out of barbarism. The good life," he concludes, "is an imitation of God."

Thoughtful men recognize that the only adequate gospel for a confused age which seeks to fight its way out of the mire is one that puts God back at the center of living. Human life, both individual and national, will be a disordered thing as long as the law of God has no command over the untamed desires of men. However, when it is shaped by a discipline that comes

from God through revelation and conscience and that transcends man's immediate appetites, kind can endure, and fight its way courageously out of any chaos into an ordered way of living. Without this spiritual discipline men inevitably face a demoralization within themselves that destroys all confidence and power of resolution; and it is because our secular generation has refused to believe this that life has become so desperate and confused for many of us.

We speak of the tragedy and horror of war, and rightly so, and it would be difficult to describe, much less exaggerate, the awfulness of our present catastrophe. Yet peace has its tragedies as well as war, and one of the greatest tragedies of peace, whether we consider its immediate effect on the individual or its ultimate effect upon society, is the loss of an active faith in God whose laws guide the destiny of men. This tragedy has come to many of our American people. Brought up in the secular tradition and education of our generation, too many of us have neglected the true source of moral greatness. And in the torpid hours of peace there has developed among us a rather sceptical attitude towards the whole matter of God and religion, so that many felt quite

competent of themselves to deal with the demands of life as they lived through the secure days of peace. Only a great adversity could shatter such self-complacency. And that adversity has come to us in the form of a tragic war unmatched in cruelty and suffering in the long history of mankind.

Even a vain and thoughtless man must now realize that life involves something more than blowing on one's hands and getting on with successful business. When the earth shakes under our feet, and titanic forces of evil are let loose in the world, the secular man knows his incompetence to deal with the demands life makes upon him. He feels the need of help greater than his own strength. He begins to feel the need of God. If no other good comes out of this war with all its appalling suffering, this much at least can be said of it, that it has brought many back to God who had forgotten or neglected Him in the soft days of peace.

General Arnold, Chief of Army Chaplains, said recently it was the common experience of our Chaplains to find that "as the men approached the battle front, the spirit of religion quickened in them." And the Senior Chaplain of the Allied Army in Italy affirmed that there was more religion among



troops fighting there, than among civilians back home. It is not difficult to understand why this is so. When men leave the security of peace and home, and stand face to face with death and the unknown, stripped of all human support, instinctively they turn to the dormant spiritual forces within them, and in that experience they find God, the source of life and the only hope in death.

A striking example of turning Godward under stress of adversity has been told us by an army officer who was cast adrift for twenty-one days, when Captain Rickenbacker made a forced landing in the southwest Pacific. In an article entitled *Other Hands Than Mine*, the author, Lieutenant James C. Whittaker, set forth his experience: "For me, our terrible 21 days on the Pacific represent the greatest adventure a man can have: finding his God. Before that adventure I was an agnostic; an atheist, if you will. But there can be no atheists in rubber rafts, any more than in the foxholes of Bataan. When our Flying Fortress ran out of gas and we prepared for a crash landing on the sea, Second Lieutenant De Angelis, our navigator, said, 'Do you fellows mind if I pray?' I recall feeling irritation, then. How ashamed I was to remember that

thought in the days to come!" The article goes on to relate how the author's scepticism gave way gradually before the striking manifestation of God's Providence that came as an answer to prayer. He writes, "On our 13th day . . . the sun was scorching hot. In midmorning a rain squall appeared, but it passed a quarter of a mile off. For the first time I found myself leading the others in prayer. 'God,' I said, 'You know what that water meant to us. The wind has blown it away. It is in Your power to send it back again . . . to us who will die without it!' There are some things," the officer writes, "that can't be explained by natural law. The wind did not change, but the receding curtain of rain began to come slowly toward us, *against* the wind, as though an omnipotent hand were moving it. . . . That God-sent rain helped us endure the . . . terrible days" ahead.

A second experience enlarged and confirmed Lieutenant Whittaker's faith in a Provident God. He was praying most earnestly that he might be rescued, when suddenly he sighted a distant island which he sought to reach. He writes, "Exhausted from three weeks of thirst, hunger and exposure, I accomplished a feat that would have tried a well man." "In the final burst to



reach the reef, I was *bending* those aluminum oars against the waves. It was not Jim Whittaker who bent them. I didn't have the strength to bend a pin. I was not conscious of exerting any effort; it was as though the oars worked automatically and my hands were merely following their motion. There were other hands than mine on those oars." The author concludes the narrative with a thought that has come to many who have lost God for a while, and found Him again: "It was the greatest adventure a man can have."

We do not know fully why peace and prosperity so often destroy the spiritual life of a man; and why adversity and suffering restore it again. But so it is in this strange world of ours. It would seem a universal experience that the worse the world is *without*, the deeper we all need to go *within*, and it is quite true to say that no one ever achieves a deep personal religious experience without a profound sense of need in an hour of adversity. This is why the story of this awful war is replete with the experiences of men who have found in its sufferings and horrors something greater than all else—faith in God.

One's mind instinctively goes back to an incident in the life of Christ, when two lonely disciples

were wearily making their way back to Emmaus from Jerusalem. For three unforgettable years they had followed the Savior in the high hope that through Him a new and better world would dawn. Hardly had Jesus proclaimed His message and inaugurated His ministry when it ran into violent opposition. The world would have nothing to do with Him and in the end it sent Him to the Cross. Now these two disciples were going home disillusioned and dejected. A sense of frustration was upon them. But they were wrong. There were not two of them on the road but three. God had not abandoned them. They were not alone.

Our country stands in need of many things at this time. But above all else it needs the steadying sense of God's presence at the center of the universe if we are to make progress. Human plans are needed but they are not enough unless they are inspired by the moral laws of God and buttressed by a spiritual force which can exorcise from the human heart its selfishness and greed.

It is not so much knowledge we need. We are smart enough. It is faith that we need if we are to withstand despair and find sanity and worth in life in these hard days. Faith in an Infinite God who

in the end will make all things reverence that always attends on work together unto good for those self-sufficiency. It was a flippant who believe. Faith that history is mood that could not stand the hour not a muddied stream of disconnected events, that the universe is of conflict. Today our country stands as a not a fortuitous jumble of stars citadel of law and order, of mercy and planets, and that life is not a and of charity, of justice and good twisted mass of tangled threads will among men. And in the days that can never be wrought into a to come it must be the center of divine pattern. The moment a people the revival of these virtues among ceases to possess such a faith the nations that have lost them. they turn the hands of the clock We believe this is our destiny, and back to savagery, as we today have unless we fulfill it we shall have reason to know. betrayed the hope of the world.

There have been times in the recent past when it was thought But we cannot accomplish this smart to challenge faith in the unmanifest destiny if we ignore the seen, and irreverence was deemed spiritual forces that make a people the mark of intellectual maturity. strong and enduring. A vivid active faith in a Provident God is our That day is past. It was a foolish first need, if we are to march forward and destructive attitude that manifested no brilliance but only an ir-destiny.

# THE RETURN TO MORAL DISCIPLINE

Address delivered on December 12, 1943

The Declaration of Independence is not of course a text book of theology, yet the religious implications of this historic document are so profoundly important for all of us, that we cannot afford to overlook them at this critical time. When it came to us, more than a century and a half ago, the Declaration of Independence inaugurated our freedom as a people; and what is a matter of deeper importance, it proclaimed a principle of government that placed religion at the center of national life. It recognized God as the source of those rights of man which government must respect and protect, and which the sanctity of human personality demands. It was in a very real sense a Declaration of Dependence—dependence on God as the foundation of our political, social, and economic morality.

Many of us, through a systematic ignoring of religion, have forgotten the spiritual character of our national origin. We have forgotten our dependence on God, and through that irreverence we have suffered a serious deterioration in our morals. Now, however, we recall this glorious heritage more easily, as our

countrymen suffer and die on far flung battlefields that the God-given right of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness may not perish from us. We recognize this principle as the very soul of America, and since in other lands men have denied it because they first denied God, we must fight to save this soul from a new and encompassing paganism.

After all, what are the enemies we contend against? Nazism which deifies man in the race; Fascism which deifies man in the State; Shintoism which deifies man in the god-Emperor. These are the enemies of America, but they are the enemies of God as well. Their concept of life, and man's place in life, is not only antagonistic but fatal to our way of life, and we shall have no security until they have been vanquished.

This conquest of the forces of evil we now know will be hard and costly before it issues in victory, but we have every confidence that in the end our arms will be victorious and the nation freed from the threat of a fatal aggression. Will that be the end of our struggle? Shall our way of life then be



secure? Many of us will be inclined to think so in the hour of victory. But our problem is not so simple as that. Destruction can come from within the nation as well as from without. And it is quite certain that if in the future we forget, as we have forgotten in the past, that God is the foundation of this nation and that conformity to His law is the source of our moral greatness, we shall sow the seeds of destruction from within.

We live in a morally ordered universe, and we can no more violate its ordinances without disaster than we can ignore the laws of physical well-being and not suffer the consequences. And no nation can survive, much less attain greatness, without the moral discipline that the law of God demands. It is therefore disturbing to note that in the multiplicity of plans and proposals for a reconstructed world after the war, so little thought is given to the need of moral discipline both in the individual and the nation.

The world we look forward to through the misery of war is not going to be a safe or very satisfactory world if it is bounded by political plans, the research laboratory, and the machine shop. The greatest multiplicity of material advances will never constitute "the

good life", without which right order in society is impossible.

The greatest need that faces us today is the need of moral discipline in our people. Men can endure many things but one thing they cannot endure and that is continued disorder, chaos, and anarchy. And there are only two ways in which men can achieve order in society: they can either discipline themselves from within through the exercise of a conscience enlightened by God; or they can have discipline imposed upon them from without. The first method makes for liberty and the working out of democracy, while the second is the way to enslavement and dictatorship.

If we be honest with ourselves, can we say moral discipline has been characteristic of our generation in America? In our personal morals, in our family life, in our respect for law, in our service to the common welfare, we have not been a self-controlled generation. We have let liberty turn to license and made our passions the norm of morality. This is why we are stricken today. Whenever we had a choice to make, we chose the alternative that required the least effort at the moment. When organized evil was let loose in the world, its initial victories were assured



by the lazy, self-indulgent materialism, and the lackadaisical, confused complacency of our own people and of the people of the other free nations of the western world. This is why the defense of the western civilization crumbled for a time before the onslaught of its enemies. And we know now that we cannot resist this evil force that threatens our life, nor adequately prepare for a pacified and purified world, if we continue to take, as we have taken so persistently in the past, the easy way of all things.

It might be well for all of us to recall in this tragic but pregnant hour the words of the Savior, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it" (*Matthew 7: 13-14*)! These are disturbing words, but we cannot afford to dismiss them as a mere exhortation to a better life. They assert a universal law of life with which we all have to reckon.

Of course we do not like to face the implications of this stern law. We resent restraint and repression: we want to do what we feel like doing. We want to be a law unto ourselves and make our fancies and our passions the norm of our ac-

tion. But that is a dead-end street that leads nowhere but to destruction. Experience is teaching us all the time, and now in a very painful way, that we cannot evade a law of life by neglecting it. St. Ignatius Loyola describes a man who attempts to ride a fiery horse with spurs but no bridle. Well, that is what many of us have been trying to do in this generation of ours, and that is why our national morality is today a sorry contrast to what it has been in the past.

Then religion was recognized as the well-spring of moral greatness; and the principles of Christ were a light in which the nation walked. The American home was essentially a Christian home; and membership in the church was deemed a mark of good citizenship. No education was considered adequate that neglected the higher interest of the soul. The older colleges and universities of the land owe their foundation to religion. This is our past; but what of the present? Today only fifty per cent of our people are interested enough in the things of the spirit to be members of any church. Of course there is the hoary excuse that a man can be religious without church membership. But if a man is not interested in prayer and worship, and in a mutual effort to deal with the problems

of the soul, it can be taken for granted these problems are of no great significance in his life. Our education has become profoundly secular, and many institutions that owe their origin to religion are now sources of irreligion.

The most significant deterioration however is to be found in the home of today. For what happens to the home is a certain sign of what is happening in the nation. The family is the primary unit in the nation and from it issues life or death for the people—for a nation cannot endure without sound morality, and the teaching of morality begins in the home. The integrity of a nation can be measured by its respect for the home and by its habits and customs towards that which is the foundation of the home, the marriage contract.

Judged by this standard there is every reason to be concerned about our future. The solemn contract of marriage, which under Christ is a Sacrament, and which is the foundation and guarantee of the home, is held in such light esteem by many of us that one out of every six marriages ends in divorce. Only the pagan Japanese outdo us in contempt for so sacred an institution. This is an appalling record whose full significance can be read not in the lack of respect for the

marriage contract but in the broken homes that it represents. And back of every broken home there are the broken lives of neglected children, sacrificed to the fancies and passions of undisciplined parents.

One major problem facing us at present is that of juvenile delinquency. It might be better termed parental delinquency. The Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor reports juvenile delinquency rose eighteen per cent between 1940 and 1942. And Mr. Edgar Hoover in a late statement on the growth of youthful waywardness, asserted that the arrest of young girls in the first half of 1943 had increased 64 per cent. Divorce and delinquency, both the products of undisciplined living, are breaking up homes far faster than battlefield casualties. Our great need now and in the post-war world is not so much economic adjustment as right relations in the home. We need permanent and secure homes where God-fearing parents will train their children in that moral discipline which our Christian heritage demands. Without moral order in our own homes we are in no position to bring moral order to the world about us. We cannot give that which we do not possess.

It would be a mistake to assume that the upheaval of war is respon-



sible for our present lack of moral discipline. The war merely emphasized a condition that has existed ever since we began to exclude God and His law from our lives. The father of our country warned us against the very danger that encompasses us: he wrote: "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles."

Historically it has always been true that a nation which neglects God and defies His law sows the seeds of progressive and inevitable decay. And if we are to be true to our American traditions and fulfill the destiny that is before us, we must begin to put first things first. We must put God and His moral law back at the center of our personal and national life. We like to believe that this war is a war between a Christian and a pagan way of life. And so it is. But the issue will not be settled when the enemy is defeated. It will be settled only when our people again make religion a moving force in their lives; and when the ideals and principles of Christ once more inspire and guide our conduct.

This is not the first time that the world has faced the military conquest of evil men. It has happened many times in the past and no doubt it will happen again in the future whenever the sins of the people cry to heaven, and God uses the pagan barbarian as the rod of His wrath. It will not do, then, for us merely to point with indignant righteousness to the evil of the enemy. That is real enough. But we shall miss one of the major lessons of our present sufferings unless we are humble enough to see in our present tragedy the result of our joint guilt. We shall not perceive the full implication of our pains unless we realize that our undisciplined materialistic way of living has needed the rod of God's anger that we may be turned from the broad road of destruction.

It may be true that we do not know fully why God so made the world that the road to destruction is a broad one, while the path to righteousness is narrow and straight; but this is the way He has made it, and it seems the part of wisdom to recognize this portentous fact before it is too late. Whether we like it or not, the fact remains that we do live in a moral universe where men reap what they sow and where an undisciplined and uncontrolled life has only one ending.

We do not know what the future of this country shall be, though we pray God that it shall be a great and an enduring one. But one thing we do know and it is this: If this nation of ours should ever fail and the hopes of humanity that have been placed in it fade into disillusionment, it will not be through the lack of human plans and laws and regulations. There will be a multiplicity of these for we shall try every external expedient before destruction comes. If the nation falls, it will be because there will not be found among its people men and woman who through conscience have so disciplined themselves from within that they need not be disciplined from without. It will fail because, having liberty, the people of the nation have allowed that liberty to degenerate into license; and because having known God and His laws they have denied the one and have rebelled against the other, until once more self is god and pas-

sion becomes the norm of action.

The source of a self-controlled, a self-disciplined life, is now what it has always been, faith in God and the obedient acceptance of those moral laws which govern His universe.

If we have faith, as indeed we have, that beyond the torture of these years there is a possible world, decent and peaceable, where mankind can live that better life of which it is capable, in security from the base rule of the jungle, be assured that world will be built only by morally disciplined men and nations. The place where that kind of life can begin is within each one of us and the time is now. Whatever else we can or cannot do at this critical moment in the history of the world, at least we can give it one more life that is morally disciplined to that higher life to which we are called by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



# CHRISTIAN FAITH, THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

Address delivered on December 19, 1943

There are few deeper needs in the world today than for men and women who will maintain an undiscouragable faith in the essential worth of living, in spite of the disillusionment and suffering we are all now going through. There can be no doubt about it, we are living through one of the most cruel and distracting and chaotic times in history; and the unpromising qualities of human nature, which this terrible war is bringing to the foreground, can very easily drive men to cynicism and despair.

Some time ago, returning from Washington to New York, I occupied a coach seat in the rear of two men whose vigorous conversation one could not help but overhear. Their discussion turned to the problems and difficulties they were encountering in these difficult days. One told of a son who had fought with our troops in North Africa, and who had returned home minus a leg, and so badly shocked nervously that the father feared he was a permanent invalid. The other's tragedy was not so serious but it was serious enough, for he had witnessed a successful business go to pieces as the nation turn-

ed its energies to war. It was the usual conversation one hears nowadays, but what impressed me about it was a remark made by one of the two, who, gazing pensively out of the car window, finally said, "Well, what can you expect? Human nature is a mess and you can't do anything about it." And the reply of the other was, "You said it! As a matter of fact, I think we are worse off today than ever before. There's more hate, cruelty, and destruction than ever."

No doubt there are many people who experience the same pessimistic reaction as they face the trials they are now forced to undergo, and they find themselves repeating the age old question, "Is life worth living?" It is not difficult to understand this reaction even though one does not agree with it. For one thing, many of us have been brought up in what Walter Lippmann terms, "the secular tradition of our generation." As a rule, these people have had no profounder concept of life than to harvest from each passing day some material gain, some added success in the business of living. They have felt themselves quite competent to deal

with life as it came to them. And however shallow such a view of life may be in itself, it seemed to satisfy many of our people in the days of peace. But in the demanding days of war these people are finding that that concept of life is not profound enough to see them through, and their helplessness expresses itself in an intense pessimism.

For another thing, we have to remember that our generation has lived through a whole series of national disappointments that have not been without their effect upon us. We entered the last war with a high purpose, thinking that it was a war to end war, only to find out in the end that we had but sown the seeds of another and more ghastly conflict. Many, too, had put their hope in a League of Nations which they fancied would prove a solid structure, where the peoples of the earth could meet with amity and resolve their difficulties in the light of reason and by the principles of justice. But we have lived long enough to see that hope fade as millions marched to war.

Then, in the decade of the twenties, a period of prosperity dawned upon us and we thought at long last we were on the road to a more abundant life for all the people;

but we saw that dream vanish when multitudes stood in bread lines. When men have lived through such disappointing experiences as these and when in that framework of failure they have had to bear the personal losses that are incident to every individual life, it is not difficult for us to see why a mood of cynicism, of dissillusionment, and of apathy, would be engendered in lives that have no deeper resources to draw upon than a spirit of self-competence.

Secular education, human planning, economic adjustment, in these circumstances, prove a sorry substitute for dynamic, spiritual faith, which is the only thing that sees men through such hard days. Without faith in God and without the vision and hope which the gospel of Jesus Christ gives to life, a man might well despair as he lives through these dark hours. Only a positive faith in a provident God who in the end will bring order out of chaos; only a positive faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the way and the truth and the light of man, can give men assurance and conviction that life at its worst is not a hopeless thing; and that human nature, despite the negative evidence of the present, has unlimited possibilities for development.

There is nothing so certain



as this, that Jesus, and all on faith. The thought runs like those who in the centuries since a refrain through every conversation and every incident of His life. have caught His spirit, stand a refutation to all cynicism and despair. Without faith you can do nothing, indeed this is no time for is His constant thought, and His cynicism or scepticism or materialism. one anxiety was the possibility of the loss of faith. "The Son of Man, This certainly is no time when he cometh, shall he find, think to tell men there is no God and no eternal purpose running through you, faith on earth?" (*Luke* 18:8). life, with no goal ahead, and no sense in it. How joyful He was when He came upon people that believed! "Thy is a time for Christian faith, which faith hath made thee whole" (*Matthew* 9:22). enables us to see in our present hard plight a challenge and not a man, and to another He gave assurance, "According to your faith, source of despair. The religion of be it done unto you" (*Matthew* 9:29). Jesus Christ is never so much at home as in days like these. It began with the Cross, and when we life when He spoke more intimately look at its history we see that it to His disciples, His thought once made its greatest advances and won more turned upon the question of its widest conquest over the lives believing: "You believe in God, believe of men not in prosperous hours but lieve also in me" (*John* 14:1); and in chaotic days like these. In every at the very end He could say, "these dark and desperate hour that the are written, that you may believe" world has known since Christ walk- (*John* 20:31). ed this earth, His gospel has been It is an astounding thing that the light in the darkness by which while men recognize that faith— men have gone forward to the some kind of faith—is necessary dawn. So is it today. God knows for the carrying on of almost every we have tried hard enough and phase of life, they grow cautious and long enough to do without faith in and sceptical about the highest God and in His Son Jesus Christ, form of faith, supernatural faith, which rests on the authority of and to what a sorry pass that infidelity has brought us. Indeed God and which administers to the faith in Jesus Christ is the only highest life of men. Even in the hope of the world. prosaic world of business some kind of faith is necessary for its survival. When there is faith there

It is not surprising then to note the emphasis that Jesus places up-

is progress, and when faith fails you have the inevitable panic. So too in the more intimate world of the family, faith is needed for the firm establishment of the home, and when faith goes, so does the home. In the world of science faith is a necessary principle if the scientist is to succeed in unravelling the mysteries of nature. Brought constantly in contact with the miracle of creation, the true scientist finds in his scientific pursuits the genesis of a higher form of faith—faith in God the Creator of all things. This is why the great Pasteur could affirm that his profound scientific studies had not weakened but confirmed him in his ancient faith.

It has been supposed by many that faith has been looked down upon in the world of science, but this is not true. Recently an article appeared in one of our publications entitled, *I was an Atheist Until . . .*, and in it the writer relates how faith in God and the invisible world had been restored to him through his study of the sciences. He writes, "Up to the time I was in a medical college I regarded myself as an unshakable and incontrovertible atheist, and with the brash assurance of youth, I was not at all reluctant to express my views to anyone willing to listen to me. Then one day something happened that changed my life. David Grant,

a noted anatomist was dissecting a body and lecturing to our class. Suddenly he paused, turned to us and said: 'Gentlemen, here in this human organism is a complete refutation of what is called atheism. No reasonable being can look upon the miraculous construction and arrangements of organs in this body without acknowledging that some creative power above and beyond human comprehension must have been responsible for them. It seems to me,' the anatomist continued, 'that doctors above all others should be truly religious men dealing constantly as they do with this inexplicable miracle. They should be humble prayerful men who recognize that a Supreme Power operates in human affairs.'"

Is it reasonable to suppose that as we go higher in the realm of living, and consider the profounder problems of the spirit on which the whole of life turns, we can do without the element of faith which is basic for right living in the lower spheres of life? Are we to live by faith in everything save religion? That is not only inconsistent, it is deeply perilous. The most destructive of sins is the loss of faith. Without faith in God as our Father who shapes the destiny of men; without faith in that invisible world of the spirit from which has come the finest and best that we know



in life; without faith in Jesus Christ as the revelation of God and the Redeemer of the race—we are literally lost. This is not preaching, this is a plain statement of what has actually happened to us.

And if we are to shake off the pessimism that has come to many of us about the future, if we are to rekindle our hope in the nobler possibilities in men, we must begin to have faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ, who is the way and the truth and the light of life. We have tried to build a lasting city with the expedients of men, and how miserably we have failed. Surely it is time to be done with failure which costs us so much. It is time that we turn with humility to the light that has never failed, and accept gladly the wisdom and grace that has come to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Only so shall we be able to build the kingdom of God within us, which is our peace.

As we look at the world today and see the awful catastrophe that has come to it, some may be tempted to think that Christianity has failed; and to say that Christ's way of life, beautiful and idealistic though it be, is too unworldly for this tough world of ours. How, they will ask, can you speak of love and mercy in a world of hate and

cruelty? Why speak of brotherhood and an insane nationalism? What meaning has justice in a world where might makes right, and conquest is to the strong? These are the natural thoughts of the secular man, but they represent a short-range vision of what is going on about us. As a matter of historic truth, might does not make right, and conquest is not to the strong. Brute force has never accomplished anything worthwhile, nor has it enduring power. Hear the judgment of one who ought to know, for he held the scepter of ruthless power. "Do you know," asks Napoleon in his hour of defeat, "what amazes me more than anything else? The impotence of force to organize anything. There are only two powers in the world, the spirit and the sword. In the long run," he concludes, "the sword will always be conquered by the spirit." And in the long run, too, it will be found that love is stronger than hate, and justice more enduring than injustice.

Therefore, the world's present tragic condition does not argue the failure of Christianity, but it argues the failure of everything else except Christ's principles and His way of life. If, after the last war, men had taken Christ's teaching seriously, do you think we would

be where we are today? Our present tragedy does not proclaim the failure of Christ, but it does proclaim the failure that comes to the world that rejects Christ. It is the judgment of the moral order on a Christless paganism. If we miss this lesson we are blind indeed. We have tried many substitutes for Christ's principles in the building of our social life, and they have led us from one perdition to another. And unless we now build our personal and national life upon the strong foundation of His teaching we have no reason for hope in the future. We shall build upon shifting sand if Christ be not the cornerstone of our edifice.

It would seem that our deepest need today is for a return to our Christian heritage, with a vivid and dynamic faith in Christ as the way and the truth and the light for our people. Only in Him and through Him can dispirited men

find a living hope in the highest possibilities of man, and in the worth of living. And if many of us are now confused and desperate about the future, it is because we are unwilling to make the adventure of faith in Christ Jesus. There is hope even in the most desperate circumstances for the man who believes, but there is no hope for the man who does not believe, and his deepest pessimism is justified. The Gospel says of one experience of the Savior, "He wrought not many miracles there, because of their unbelief" (*Matthew 13:58*). And St. John speaks of the light shining "in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (*John 1:5*).

In this critical hour, our deepest prayer for our country is not for light, for we have light; our fervent prayer is for faith in the hearts of our people, that the light may not shine in vain.

# THE TRAGEDY OF INHOSPITALITY

Address delivered on December 26, 1943

In the long history of mankind, there is no event so momentous for the hope and peace of men as that which we commemorate at this Christmastide—the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man. For over nineteen hundred years men of good will everywhere have recalled and repeated with unwearied regularity the simple story of the Nativity, and yet its freshness and charm are as compelling now as when it was first uttered. Indeed it may be doubted if men anywhere have ever recalled the birth of the Prince of Peace with profounder emotion or a more eager hope than they do today, when the clouds of a desperate and encircling war shadow the earth.

It is an old story and so familiar a one that it need not be repeated. However, there is one incident in the narrative that deserves our consideration, for it seems to be an epitome of the whole world's reaction to its Savior. That incident is summed up in St. Luke's saying of Christ's birth at Bethlehem: "There was no room for them in the inn" (*Luke 2:7*).

Was not that single circumstance a forecast of all Christ's subsequent career? At His birth there was no room for Him in the inn; but later on there was no room for His saving truth in the minds of His people, and no room in their souls for His cleansing spirit. The initial inhospitality that marked Christ's advent in the world was to follow Him throughout the whole of His ministry. It denied Him the service He sought to render, it hardened the hearts. He longed to change, and in the end it brought Him to Calvary's Cross. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (*John 1:11*).

Does not Christ still meet with that experience in a world which needs so desperately His truth and grace? His Saviorhood was for all men for all time, but it encounters today the same inhospitality that it found in the beginning. St. John expressed a condemnation of his generation when he wrote: "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (*John 1:5*). That judgment is true of our own generation as well.

Today from how many confused and suffering lives Christ hears the cry, "No room!" And indeed the world's present stubborn refusal to accept Him is the greater sin for have not the centuries been



witness to His Saviorhood when men have made room for Him? If at Bethlehem they had known who He was that came knocking at the door of the inn, some at least would have made way for Him. They closed the door to Jesus because they did not know who He was. We have not the excuse of their ignorance. We know the Christ. Most of us have come from Christian homes where we have learned of Him from childhood, and where His spirit has made beautiful the lives we knew and loved the best. For almost two thousand years history has been witness to His power; and the record of His three short years of active ministry and His continuing ministry in His Church have done more to regenerate mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and the exhortations, of moralists. About Him our culture our literature, and our philosophy have centered. Take out of our lives all that Christ has given us—the hymns we sing, the prayers we utter, and the worship that uplifts us—and we should be poor indeed.

Negatively too we have learned impressively of Christ and His Saviorhood from the tragedy that has stalked the lives of individuals and nations that have rejected His truth and departed from His spirit. When, then, we say to Christ as so many of us are now saying to Him,

“No room!”, it is not so much because we do not know Him as because our poverty-stricken, earth-bound spirits cannot entertain so spiritual a presence nor venture so high a hope.

The full measure of the tragedy of our inhospitality to Christ is not the rejection of the life-giving principles He has revealed for the salvation of men; it is that it denies the true character of Jesus as the Son of God—true God and true Man. The rejection of the Incarnation of the Word is the full measure of the tragedy of our inhospitality to the Christ, and when we cry “No room!” to Him as He comes knocking at the door, we cry, in truth “No room!” to God.

In the great words of St. Paul: “Christ Jesus who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the



glory of God the Father" (*Philippians* 2:5-11).

This, then, is the tragedy of today, that when men shut out Christ, they shut out God Himself. It is not merely the rejection of "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*John* 14:6); it is a rejection of Emmanuel—God with us. This is why the birth of Christ at Bethlehem is the most momentous event in the history of the human race. This is why we cannot think of it simply as something that happened long ago and which has been left behind as a remote incident in history. The Incarnation is a living and ever present reality: "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today; and the same forever" (*Hebrews* 13:8).

This is the secret of the undying life of the religion of Jesus Christ. This is the reason it has ultimately triumphed over every assault of persecution, and why nothing has been able to arrest its influence. It destroyed the paganism of the ancient world and it will destroy the newer paganism that our own time has spawned. It overthrew empires that were built on the broken lives of men, and it will continue to tear down kingdoms that a newer barbarism fashions by ruthless force. Its influence in the social life of man has been endless and is immeasurable. It has produced a distinct and world-

wide civilization that has taught us a love of humanity for which we now fight a new enslavement.

Without doubt the key to the mystery of the power and undying life of the religion of Jesus Christ is the mystery of the Incarnation. That is why those who do not accept Christ's claim to divinity find this historical figure a perpetual torment. Here is Jesus Christ, the greatest personage in history, and the founder of the most perfect religious system known to man. Here is one who not only was the most perfect man who ever lived, but who by the power and attractiveness of His personality has through the centuries won the love of innumerable hearts. Yet this perfect sinless man—even by the testimony of His enemies—constantly asserted that He was divine.

In the most formal manner and in the plainest terms Jesus Christ declares Himself to be God, not merely a son of God as some claim, but God in the strictest sense of the word, possessed of the divine nature and attributes. His assertion was clearly understood by friends of Jesus as well as by His enemies, by the learned and the simple, by the magistrates and by the people. See Him standing before the highest tribunal of the land! Solemnly the high priest puts the question: "I adjure thee by the

living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the son of God." The answer was to be decisive for life or death. All ambiguity or subterfuge would not only be a crime against conscience, but stupendous folly as well. What is the answer of Jesus? "Thou hast said it." And in confirmation He adds: "Hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." His judges well understood His answer, and the high priest rending his garments cries out: "He hath blasphemed . . . Behold now you have heard the blasphemy: What think you?" The answer of the Council is categorical: "He is guilty of death" (*Matthew* 26:63-66).

Christ most certainly claimed to be God and He sealed that affirmation by His death. Either He was what He claimed to be or He was a most vicious man in making that claim. The moral integrity of Jesus is however beyond question; and yet, unless His claim to be God is true, the greatest of all reputations and the most perfect of all religions had their origin in fraud of the lowest description. The experienced and logical mind rebels against such a conclusion. A mere man and an unworthy one should never have been able to make himself so imperishable a reputation,

and to work so gigantic a revolution for good in human affairs. Faith alone supplies the key of this enigma which without faith must remain inscrutable: The faith that Jesus Christ is very God! This is the faith that St. Peter confessed, the centurion affirmed, and the doubting Thomas proclaimed. On the rock of the divinity of Christ the whole edifice of Christianity is built, and generation upon generation, century after century comes adoring and confessing: "Jesus, thou art the Son of the living God."

With only one life here on earth to live, how profoundly important it is that we find the answer to the problem posed for us by the birth of Jesus Christ. Not to have known Him is the greatest of poverities; to have known of Him and to have missed His divinity—which alone explains His life and His work—is the greatest of tragedies. Bethlehem is not a dead historic incident. Christ still comes to the inn of men's souls; and what great things can come to those who make room for Him! St. Peter felt so unworthy of the Master whose divinity he confessed that at first he cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (*Luke* 5:8), but in the end he made room for Jesus, and by that welcome not only he but all the world has been changed. And St. Paul, hurrying



with the haste of hate along the Damascus road, gives hospitality to the Christ who calls to him, and by that graciousness all the world has become Paul's debtor. All through the centuries, since He came among men, innumerable souls have experienced the magical change Christ can work in human life when men make room for Him. Not only the great and holy have felt the touch of this power, but the simple and humble as well have known the radiance of His peace. Yes, even in these hard days, then, there is hope for us, if, when Christ comes, we make room for Him.

As it is with individuals, so is it with nations. Christ is the Savior of the individual soul, but He is Savior of the nation as well. And today when even the unreligious are discovering that the devil and his work are real, and we sense the need of an internal world of authority to substitute for the external world that is collapsing about us, what strength will come to a nation when it makes room in its life for Jesus and accepts Him as God and Savior! We are moving swiftly into situations in economic and international relationships so unprecedented that, unless the peoples of the earth give hospitality to the truth that is in Christ, the

future is dark indeed. The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the unselfish and disciplined life, the spirit of love and mercy, the blessedness of peace—these gospel truths are fundamental for a permanently well-ordered society. There was no room for Christ in the nations after the last war: and what a price we are paying for that inhospitality! The world then put its hope in realistic schemes and plans and alliances that were untouched by the spirit of Christ; and how brief and brittle a substitute they proved to be! Will history repeat itself after this ghastly conflict? It will indeed if there is no room for Christ and His truth when men write the peace. If once more unbelieving and unspiritual men turn to human wisdom and human expediency with which to shape the destinies of the world, we shall fall again from perdition to perdition.

At this holy time, can we utter a more needed prayer for our nation than this, that we may by God's grace have faith and wisdom to make room for Christ; that we may accept Him as our Savior and, guided by His principles and animated by His spirit, we may walk forward in the paths of peace, and share with Him in the redemption of the world.



# 86 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 38 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

<b>Alabama</b>	Mobile .....	WALA	1410 kc
<b>Arizona</b>	Phoenix .....	KTAR	620 kc
	Tucson .....	KVOA	1290 kc
	Yuma .....	KYUM	1240 kc
<b>Arkansas</b>	Little Rock .....	KARK*	920 kc
<b>California</b>	Fresno .....	KMJ	580 kc
	Los Angeles .....	KFI	640 kc
	San Francisco .....	KPO	680 kc
<b>Colorado</b>	Denver .....	KOA	850 kc
<b>District of Columbia</b>	Washington .....	WRC	980 kc
<b>Florida</b>	Jacksonville .....	WJAX	930 kc
	Miami .....	WIOD	610 kc
	Pensacola .....	WCOA	1370 kc
	Tampa .....	WFLA	970-620 kc
<b>Georgia</b>	Atlanta .....	WSB	750 kc
	Savannah .....	WSAV	1340 kc
<b>Idaho</b>	Boise .....	KIDO	1380 kc
<b>Illinois</b>	Chicago .....	WMAQ	670 kc
<b>Indiana</b>	Fort Wayne .....	WGL	1450 kc
	Terre Haute .....	WBOW	1230 kc
<b>Kansas</b>	Wichita .....	KANS	1240 kc
<b>Kentucky</b>	Louisville .....	WAVE*	970 kc
<b>Louisiana</b>	New Orleans .....	WSMB	1350 kc
	Shreveport .....	KTBS	1480 kc
<b>Maine</b>	Augusta .....	WRDO	1400 kc
<b>Maryland</b>	Baltimore .....	WBAL	1090 kc
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Boston .....	WBZ	1030 kc
	Springfield .....	WBZA	1030 kc
<b>Michigan</b>	Detroit .....	WWJ*	950 kc
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<b>Mississippi</b>	Jackson .....	WJDX	1300 kc
<b>Missouri</b>	Kansas City .....	WDAF	610 kc
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# 86 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 38 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

Nebraska	Omaha .....	WOW	590 kc
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	New York .....	WEAF	660 kc
	Schenectady .....	WGY	810 kc
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	Winston-Salem .....	WSJS	600 kc
North Dakota	Bismarck .....	KFYR	550 kc
	Fargo .....	WDAY	970 kc
Ohio	Cleveland .....	WTAM	1100 kc
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Oklahoma	Tulsa .....	KVOO	1170 kc
Oregon	Portland .....	KGW*	620 kc
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	Altoona .....	WFBG	1340 kc
	Johnstown .....	WJAC	1400 kc
	Lewistown .....	WMRF	1490 kc
	Philadelphia .....	KYW	1060 kc
	Pittsburgh .....	KDKA	1020 kc
	Reading .....	WRAW	1340 kc
	Wilkes-Barre .....	WBRE	1340 kc
	Providence .....	WJAR	920 kc
Rhode Island	Providence .....	WJAR	920 kc
South Carolina	Charleston .....	WTMA	1250 kc
	Columbia .....	WIS	560 kc
	Greenville .....	WFBC	1330 kc
South Dakota	Sioux Falls .....	KSOO-KELO	1140-1230 kc
Tennessee	Kingsport .....	WKPT	1400 kc
	Nashville .....	WSM*	650 kc
Texas	Amarillo .....	KGNC	1440 kc
	Dallas .....	WFAA	820 kc
	El Paso .....	KTSM	1380 kc
	Fort Worth .....	WBAP*	820 kc
	Houston .....	KPRC	950 kc
	San Antonio .....	WOAI	1200 kc
	Weslaco .....	KRGV	1290 kc
Virginia	Norfolk .....	WJAR*	790 kc
	Richmond .....	WMBG	1380 kc
Washington	Seattle .....	KOMO	950 kc
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