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1. The Religious Vacation School—Organization
2. The Religious Vacation School in Action
3. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

By the
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Director, Rural Life Bureau
National Catholic Welfare Conference
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

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The Abbey Student Press
St. Benedict's College
Atchison, Kansas

Declassified

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CHILD

CATHOLIC elementary schools in this country are today reaching 2,222,598 children, according to statistics compiled by the Department of Education, National Catholic Welfare Conference. This great army of little ones, therefore, enjoys the benefit of systematic instruction in the fundamentals of the Catholic religion. The Church glories in this splendid achievement. Moreover, her zeal further to extend her parochial school system as circumstances permit remains unabated.

Meanwhile, however, there are about as many more Catholic children in this country who are not privileged to attend parochial schools. Contrasting these with the former group one may very properly speak of them as religiously under-privileged. Very many of their number are not receiving satisfactory religious training. Many are spiritually starved. It is a highly significant consideration, moreover, that within a dozen years two million and more children will represent a large percentage of the Catholic manhood and womanhood of our land. What will be the religious attitudes of the four or five million who will be born of these future men and women? These are questions of no small moment and point to a problem of tremendous magnitude still facing the Church in this country, a problem of religious instruction of such vast proportions that spasmodic or haphazard efforts will do little to meet it.

What is actually being done towards the solution of this problem? What steps are being taken towards providing religious instruction for these masses of children not in parochial schools? What can be expected of the various agencies now being made use of in various places in an effort to bring the benefits of organized and systematic instruction to this multitude of religiously under-privileged little ones?

An accurate answer cannot be given these questions. We have not even thoroughly and comprehensively studied the actual situation. Still, the evidence at hand furnishes us with at least some of the main outlines of the picture.

Present Agencies of Instruction

Perhaps the chief agencies that are being made use of at present are Sunday schools, week-day religion classes, religious correspondence courses, religious vacation schools, Confraternities of Christian Doctrine, and catechetical centers such as those established by the Catechists of Victory-Noll.

The Sunday school is undoubtedly the oldest of these agencies in point of use in the United States, and while it has in the past reached many Catholic children, it has tended to decline somewhat in recent years. It is, of course, needless to point out that the few meager hours of Sunday school instruction cannot possibly approach in effectiveness a systematic day by day training that is received in the parish school. This same criticism also holds good in the case of the week-day religion classes that are being held in some cities for Catholic children attending public schools. These classes often provide less than an hour of instruction per week the year round. Moreover, while showing a noteworthy increase in a number of cities during the past few years, they are still reaching but a comparatively small number of children. This "criticism" is not to suggest, that both of these agencies—the Sunday school and the week-day religion class—have not genuine value or are not to be most heartily encouraged.

The religious correspondence course, which reaches directly into the home, has been in use for approximately a decade. It is particularly useful in the case of Catholic children who live in outlying districts quite beyond the reach of the other media of instruction. It has been used effectively in several dioceses, but to date has enjoyed no striking popularity. If the movement to establish residential centers or temporary boarding schools for religious instruction shows much growth, the need for the correspondence course may gradually lessen.

Perhaps the most outstanding among the agencies of religious instruction other than parochial schools are

religious vacation schools and Confraternities of Christian Doctrine. Both of these have doubled in number within the past two years and both have fully proved their effectiveness and value as media of religious instruction.

THE RELIGIOUS VACATION SCHOOLS

WHAT might be called the standard type of religious vacation school may be defined as an organized school of religion conducted during the forenoon, five days of the week for four weeks during the period of public school vacation. It is an organized school in a genuine sense. A regular schedule is observed; the work is carefully systematized. Nevertheless, there is less formal routine and, consequently less monotony than there is in the common school system.

Most of the religious vacation schools are in session during the month of July. In a smaller number of instances the children are assembled in June or in August.

Experience has shown that there are a number of advantages in confining the sessions to the forenoon. Among these are the fact that the extreme heat of the day is avoided and that the teachers are assured reasonable rest and recreation. Then, too, if children are dismissed in time to go home for lunch, they can be of some service at home during the remainder of the day. This is a matter of no small consequence in rural districts. Experience has also shown that a better attendance results when morning sessions are the rule. There are, of course, exceptional cases. A number of successful schools have been conducted in the afternoon and even a few in the evening.

The Teachers

Only competent teachers, that is, such as have a knowledge of the Catholic religion and a capacity for teaching children, should be placed in charge of religious

vacation schools. Sisters of the teaching orders ordinarily possess these qualifications and they achieve splendid results. Moreover, experience shows that the Sisters thoroughly enjoy this work and also derive spiritual benefit from it. It is a genuine spiritual work of mercy, a species of missionary enterprise that appeals to them. Reports show that members of approximately one hundred different religious communities were engaged in this work the past summer. After they have once taken up the work, the Sisters are eager to enlist for it again and again.

Seminarians in ever increasing numbers have also been responding to the call for teachers. It is, of course, but natural that this particular work should appeal to students for the priesthood. It should not only prove spiritually beneficial to them, but also enrich them with a store of experience that will prove invaluable to them in their future pastoral work. In far outlying missions, particularly where there are many inconveniences and unusual hardships to be endured, seminarians can perhaps labor more effectively than Sisters.

Regarding the use of seminarians in this work a supervisor of religious vacation schools in the South recently wrote: "My experience of last summer was that seminarians are very well prepared to participate in the organization and teaching of religious vacation schools. Not only are they willing, but they are also as a rule very eager to sacrifice a month of their vacation time to this noble work." The vacation school records show several instances in which the establishment of a new parish resulted from summer vacation schools conducted by seminarians.

In some instances, well trained students of normal schools and colleges have also been engaged as teachers in these schools. Some of these have been placed in full charge of schools, others have been assigned to specialized tasks. Particularly does the organization of the religious vacation school provide an opening for teachers who are competent in the fields of music, organized recreation and handwork. In several dioceses the majority of schools are conducted by qualified lay teachers. Perhaps the most of these are now trained through the instrumentality of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

A Manual of Religious Vacation Schools, based on a

wide range of experience, has been prepared for the teachers and is very generally used by them. It serves to give them a definite program and to coordinate their work year by year.

In accordance with the outline of this *Manual*, the daily program ordinarily begins with morning prayers and Mass. Then follow fifteen minutes of explanation of the meaning of the words and phrases of the simple prayers which the children should know by heart, then a period of fifteen minutes devoted to picture study, introducing some sacred pictures which will illustrate the lessons in catechism and bible history for the morning. A half hour is given over to catechism and an equal period to stories from the Bible and from the lives of the Saints. After an intervening recess there follow the practice of sacred hymns and a lesson in liturgy. Finally, a period is devoted to training the boys to serve Mass and to initiating the girls in ways of making, mending, and laundering altar linens, caring for the vestments, and decorating the altar. This diversified religious program invariably awakens and holds the interest of the pupils. In the great majority of schools there is a slight variation on certain days to allow for a brief period of health instruction.

Financing the Schools

Not an unimportant consideration in favor of the vacation schools is the fact that the financial burden of conducting them is relatively small. There is no question here of erecting a modern school building or of paying a staff of teachers throughout an entire school year. Still, there are certain essentials that must be provided. Among these are a suitable place for classes, necessary books and supplies, the transportation, board, and lodging of the teachers. In a number of dioceses, those who conduct the schools are also given a small remuneration for their services, this in spite of the fact that the work is commonly looked upon more as an outlet for missionary zeal than as a means of making a living. The following are some of the ways and means made use of in supporting religious vacation schools: parish funds, special collections, voluntary contributions by individuals, free will offerings of parents, small assessments, for instance, by way of tuition

or enrollment fee, pastors (some even relinquishing part of their salaries for the cause), bishops, organizations such as the Diocesan Councils of Catholic Women, Confraternities of Christian Doctrine, Councils of Knights of Columbus, Christian Mothers' Association, small donations out of a grant from the Home Mission Board, distributed through the Catholic Rural Life Conference.

Various organizations have given other than financial help to this cause. Perhaps outstanding among their services have been the following: finding a convenient and suitable home for the Sisters where a convent is not available, listing families, with names of all children who are or should be Catholics and who attend public schools, offering the pastor the good offices of one or more tactful women for the purpose of calling upon and interesting such of these families as he may designate, providing for transportation or convenient lodging for children too remote from the center otherwise to attend the vacation school, assisting in carrying on a health program where necessary or desirable, salvaging material and preparing handwork courses for the children—books, illustrating the course in religion, containing artistic pictures, scrap books, posters, charts, and many types of religious articles are easily made and add to the profit and joy of the pupils—and interesting small groups of lay women—public school teachers and others who have had teacher training—to prepare to supplement the work of religious in the work of actual teaching.

Buildings

It is interesting to note what kinds of buildings serve as "schools" in this work. Very frequently the Church building is made use of. In some ways it serves the purpose very well; in others it is not as handy as a school building with the usual equipment. Typical of other buildings besides churches and schools that are used are the following, listed in a report from the Denver Diocese: private homes, pool halls, dance halls, Mexican hut, abandoned saloon, ice plant, and dormitory of a sugar company.

A unique method of housing religious vacation schools is used in the Charleston Diocese. Two large camps there

serve as boarding schools for children who are brought together from outlying districts where paucity of numbers does not permit the establishment of schools. The following brief description recently given of one of the camps shows how well it is equipped for its purpose: "Long rows of army tents for boys and girls, an enclosed dining room and kitchen, a power plant to provide an electric lighting system and to pump water from artesian wells into the kitchen and showers, a chapel tent and hospital tent, an augmented staff to meet medical, recreational, and other purposes—these are some of the permanent additions made this year to provide a suitable environment for children, leaving little to be desired in the way of study, recreation, and health."

There is no longer any question regarding the practicability of the religious vacation school. Nor is there any question regarding its efficacy. Bishops, Priests, Sisters, and laity are unanimous in proclaiming it an efficient instrument of religious instruction. Pastors who have zealously and faithfully conducted religion classes for the children of their parishes for years agree that these schools are both feasible and advisable. "While nothing can take the place of the parochial school," writes the Most Reverend Bishop of Charleston, "I nevertheless feel that the vacation school idea is the most hopeful thing that has happened in the field of religious education for mission children." And the following from a director of religious vacation schools in a southern diocese: "I will always regret that I became acquainted so late with the best substitute for Catholic schools in these mission dioceses of the United States." Here, then, is an agency that should be made the most of in our efforts to reach the vast number of religiously under-privileged children of this country. It can be used with good effect in both rural and urban parts.

THE RELIGIOUS VACATION SCHOOL IN ACTION

WITHIN the short space of a decade a veritable network of religious vacation schools has been spread over the length and breadth of the land. While there are still a few dioceses that do not report any vacation schools, there is no ecclesiastical province in which there are not annually conducted a considerable number of them. Some weeks ago the writer estimated a total of 1,500 schools with an enrollment of 100,000 children during the summer of 1932. At the present writing, although reports have been received from only 65 dioceses, this number has already been exceeded.

This is not surprising when one notes the great number of schools in single dioceses or provinces. In the Diocese of Los Angeles and San Diego, for example, there were 191 schools with an enrollment of approximately 20,000 children. With one diocese in the Province of San Francisco not yet heard from, reports show over 25,000 children under instruction there the past summer. (1932) In the neighboring Province of Portland approximately 20,000 children were reached by the vacation school. In all likelihood the Province of Cincinnati even surpasses these figures since the Diocese of Cleveland alone registered 14,084 children.

All in all, the greatest growth of the religious vacation school during the past year took place in the far western and southwestern states. In the more centrally located states, such as Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, and Colorado, these schools had already been established in considerable numbers for some years past. Apparently the most striking growth in this territory during the past year was in the Diocese of Lincoln.

While not found in such large numbers in the South, there are few dioceses there that do not have at least several vacation schools every summer. Reports suggest

that the largest advances in this section during the past summer were made in the Diocese of Charleston and in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. More schools have always been held in the North than in the South. One already gets some idea of the activity in this part of the country from the fact that students from St. Paul's Seminary taught vacation schools in eleven different dioceses the past year.

Among the cities in which these schools are now well established are Hartford, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland, San Antonio, and New Orleans.

An army of some seven or eight thousand teachers do the catechizing in the vacation schools. Over and above this group there are a great number of other individuals who help along in various capacities. Members of the sisterhoods continue to do the teaching in the greater number of the schools. With the growth of the Fraternity of Christian Doctrine, however, lay people in ever increasing numbers are taking part in the work of catechizing. The great majority of these lay catechists are either public or private school teachers or college students. Seminarians also continue to carry on much of the catechetical work. Their usual number was considerably augmented the past summer by the 118 from Our Lady of the Lake Seminary who centered their efforts entirely in the Diocese of Cleveland.

Various Catholic organizations are helping in sundry ways to foster the vacation school movement. Diocesan Councils of Catholic Women, for instance, rendered various services to the cause in 35 dioceses during the past summer. The report of the Catholic Daughters of America's National Religious Vacation School Committee showed that the C. D. A. sponsored 185 schools in 15 states at an outlay of more than \$6,000 for incidental needs such as supplies, transportation, et cetera. The report adds, furthermore, that close to 18,000 children were enrolled in these schools and that members of the organization to the number of 700 aided in some capacity, from teaching down to local committee in charge of securing maintenance and other aids. Other organizations that contributed their services were: Daughters of Isabella, Christ Child Society, Catholic Youth Organization, Society for the Propagation of

the Faith, and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

It is apparent, then, that the vacation school movement has opened up a vast field for Catholic Action on the part of large numbers of zealous workers, both religious and lay.

Special Groups

A rather novel growth in the vacation school movement the past year or two has been the number of schools conducted for various racial groups, such as Indians, Mexicans, and Negroes. Schools for Indians were found particularly in the Pacific and Mountain States. In his vacation school report the Reverend A. F. Loeser, of the Baker City Diocese, briefly refers to one of these schools which he himself conducted the past summer. "All the children," he writes, "were Piute Indians near Burns, Oregon. At all the instructions there were also on the average twenty adult Indians in attendance. Also twelve visiting Piute Indians from Warm Springs, Oregon, attended the instructions off and on. One of these Indians, on request, was baptized. I did practically all the teaching, using large wall charts for the purpose."

A great number of schools in the Southwest were conducted for Mexicans. Many Mexican children in this territory are much in need of instruction. A report from the Reverend Francis J. Green, of the Diocese of Tuscon, gives some idea of this need. "This school," he writes, "is conducted in the midst of the Mexican settlement. Many of the children have had no previous religious instruction. Under the circumstances it was decided to carry on the school work throughout the summer, but to limit the school period of each day to one hour and a half. The children," he adds, "have been very faithful in attending and the work accomplished is very encouraging." Many other reports show that this example is fairly typical of conditions found among the Mexican children of the Southwest.

Unique in a number of ways was the vacation school conducted by the Reverend August Vandebilt, at Houma, Louisiana. One exceptional feature, for example, was that the great majority of children who attended were non-Catholics, many of them, it is true, descendants of

Catholics who had fallen away. They now practiced no religion. "Of 233 pupils," says Father Vandebilt, "only twenty were Catholics, and of the Catholics only one had made her First Communion. Many of the families were found to be descendants of Catholics. These colored of Houma," he adds, "do not belong to the Creole type but many of them are descended from Indians and Virginia Negroes. Two little girls, aged five, were baptized during the vacation school. Classes for instruction were organized and are to be continued under the supervision of the pastor. From three to four every afternoon special instructions were given to the high school pupils who attended the morning sessions."

The only other vacation school reported to the Rural Life Bureau, *National Catholic Welfare Conference*, in which non-Catholic children predominated was one for Negro children at Wichita, Kansas, supervised by the Reverend Leon McNeill. This school has now been functioning for three successive summers and has always been followed up with regular instructions on Sundays throughout the year. Many baptisms have resulted and the nucleus of a thriving little parish has been formed.

While these examples of schools for non-Catholics are exceptional, it is true, nevertheless, that other schools permit non-Catholic children to attend when they wish to do so. There are a great number of children in this country that possess no religious belief whatever. Naturally, a certain number of conversions result. Baptisms mentioned in the reports of 1932 would probably total about 150. The usual vacation school, however, continues its original purpose, namely, the providing of religious instruction for Catholic children who are not privileged to attend Catholic schools.

Many nationalities are reached by the vacation schools conducted in cities. A Catholic press item the past summer, for example, pointed out that in the city of Chicago alone, children of fifty-two nationalities were enrolled in these schools. At Crivitz, Wisconsin, in the Green Bay Diocese, instructions are given in both the English and Polish language. Incidentally, the pastor of this parish, the Reverend Boleslaus Walejko, reports that a vacation school has been conducted there every year since the

beginning of the vacation school movement in 1921. Approximately one hundred children attend the school and the work begun during the summer is followed up throughout the year by an hour and a half of instruction every Saturday. Further instructions are added during the Season of Lent.

Need for Vacation Schools

The great need for systematic religious instruction such as that provided by the religious vacation school readily becomes apparent from some of the descriptions of conditions met with by those who conduct these schools in various parts of the country. We have already referred to one striking example in the South. Similar cases are found in the West. And for that matter, they are not entirely lacking in the very heart of our great urban sections. The several examples that follow, while not typical of conditions generally in this country, do show very plainly that not all neglected souls live in China or Africa or in some other distant land.

One pastor from a Pacific State writes as follows: "There were about 175 children in our school, though less than one hundred attended regularly. We have forty-one First Communions. Some of these First Communicants were as old as fifteen or sixteen years. As a result of the school I baptized four children ranging between eight and ten years, parents of whom were indifferent Catholics. We have in this parish about 2,500 souls who should be Catholics, but only about 300 go to Church. Naturally our work is at times very discouraging. If only we could have the Sisters here, I believe things would soon be very different."

The Corpus Christi Carmelite Sisters, who not only conduct vacation schools but also do other catechetical work in rural sections, often using farm homes as centers for their activities, speak in their *Chronicle* of many small communities where Catholics even dread to be known as Catholics because of the bigotry and anti-Catholic spirit manifested in these localities. "The parents," they write, "have been so long away from contact with their religion in some cases that they have lost their love for it and all sense of its importance. They are living hard lives, and

in some instances not only do they not want it known that they are Catholics, but urge their children to conceal the fact, telling them that they will not get on if they are known as Catholics."

It is true, however, that these Sisters also show a more pleasing side of the picture. "There are families," they say, "that are just the opposite. They seem to love their faith the more for the difficulties they have in practicing it. They will drive long distances to hear Mass, fast till late in the morning for the chance of receiving Communion, strive to get their children instructed, and even make unheard of sacrifices to send their children away to Catholic schools and colleges."

Enthusiasm for the Vacation School Continues

The same enthusiasm for the religious vacation school that characterized the movement in its first years still continues unabated today. Pastors continue to express themselves as highly satisfied with their schools, even where they are held under most unfavorable and unpromising circumstances. The underlying reason for this is, of course, that they bring results.

"When one stops to think that these schools extend over a period of only four weeks," writes the Reverend Joseph M. Coulombe, of Montegut, Louisiana, "one is at a loss to explain their wonderful results." And the following from a pastor in the West who had just finished his school which he had organized and conducted under very difficult circumstances: "The vacation school can be made a magnificent thing." A host of others express the same sentiments.

An Example

Perhaps the best way of seeing the religious vacation school in action is to cite an actual case of a school in considerable detail. The example that follows was sent in by a priest of the Spokane Diocese. It is chosen because of the particular circumstances under which it was conducted and because of the thoroughness of the description given.

The parish in which the school was held is thirty by sixty miles in size and extends over a territory that was once in the heart of a rich silver and gold mining country.

Religious services were few and far between in the boom days and many of the people, though of Irish-Catholic stock, drifted away from the Church. The place is now a "Ghost Camp" and only about 250 individuals remain in the territory. Of these perhaps ninety are practical Catholics. Some fifty go to Mass occasionally, and the rest are fallen-aways. The story of the vacation school follows in the pastor's own words.

"It was with much misgiving that I established a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine the past June and opened a religious vacation school. We hoped to have about twenty-five children—certainly not more than forty. I gathered my most zealous faithful around me. These became the officers of the parish Confraternity. They met a number of times and prepared the groundwork. Each was assigned a special task and made responsible for it. They canvassed the entire parish for available children to attend the school. They arranged for transportation, for places for the children to stay, and procured all necessary supplies. Children from the surrounding country up to about fourteen miles were brought in daily, different people furnishing cars and drivers. Those from greater distances were provided vacant shacks where they lived with their mothers during the school. Five local women, three of them public school teachers, were thoroughly prepared to assist the two Holy Name Sisters who came to conduct the school. Eighty-seven children enrolled the first day and the average for the term was ninety-one. Of these forty-six might be called practical Catholics, fourteen weak, seventeen fallen-aways, and fourteen non-Catholics who begged to be allowed to come. There being no suitable building available, classes were held in the Church, the Sacristy, and in a near-by vacant house. Many of these children knew little indeed about religion. Some had never said a prayer. Some few had not even been inside a church. At the close of the school thirteen were baptized, and on Sunday twenty-seven made their First Holy Communion. All the other children likewise received.

"It is still early to gauge the permanent results. All indications, however, are very promising. There is a much better attendance at Mass. A number of parents

have returned to the Sacraments. Several invalidly married couples are taking steps to have their marriages rectified. A number of girls have been trained as sacristans and are caring for the altar. A group of boys have learned to serve Mass correctly. Each Sunday the children sing hymns during Low Mass under the leadership of one of the older ones. Two boys have even felt the stirrings of a vocation and have left to prepare themselves for the priesthood. There seems to be a new spiritual life in the parish. All in all, the results to date are most gratifying."

Taking the country as a whole, this instance is, of course, exceptional rather than typical. Yet examples of a like nature can be found in many different parts. Just recently, for example, a case was brought to light in one of our large Catholic centers of a group of 300 Catholic children attending a public school who did not even know where the Church was located which they were supposed to attend.

The vacation school can go a long way towards answering the religious needs of such children. It can do much for Catholic children generally who are not privileged to attend parochial schools. It holds out a most inviting and promising field for fruitful activity on the part of all who are interested in the spiritual welfare of our great number of religiously under-privileged children.

THE CONFRATERNITY of CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

ANOTHER agency that is well suited for providing religious instruction for the many Catholic children not privileged to attend parochial schools is the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Canon Law mentions this organization together with the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, in Canon 711 of the Code. "It is the duty of diocesan Ordinaries," reads Section II of this Canon, "to see to it that Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament and of Christian Doctrine be established in every parish."

It is, therefore, an approved and sanctioned agency of the Church.

Origins of the Confraternity

In its origins the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine dates back to the Council of Trent. Since that time pontifical approval and encouragement have repeatedly been given to its work. It is only recently, however, that we meet with it in any of the dioceses of this country. Apparently the Confraternity of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, established in 1908, was the first to be erected here. During the past few years it has enjoyed a rapid growth and at present is also to be found in the following archdioceses and dioceses: Santa Fe, Dubuque, Los Angeles and San Diego, Brooklyn, Providence, Monterey-Fresno, Great Falls, Helena, Spokane, Reno, and Sioux City. The many inquiries at the Rural Life Bureau, National Catholic Welfare Conference, during the past year, regarding the organization suggest that we are on the verge of a notable growth of the Confraternity in this country. This is unquestionably a very significant and encouraging development since it is difficult to conceive of any better instrumentality for reaching the masses of our religiously under-privileged children in city and in country than a nation-wide network of Confraternities of Christian Doctrine.

Purposes and Activities

The prime purpose of the Confraternity is the providing of religious instruction for Catholic children. Various means are made use of in carrying out this underlying purpose. Some of these extend considerably beyond the immediate sphere of religious instruction, yet all minister to this one common end. The more specific purposes sought through the organization are well indicated in the Constitution of Local Branches and Parish Units of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the Diocese of Helena. The second Article of this Constitution reads:

“The objects of this organization shall be:

“Sec. 1. To provide religious instruction for Catholic children attending the public schools, and for boys and girls over school age, especially through the Religious

Vacation School and on Sundays throughout the year.

"Sec. 2. To carry out the following program in Missions on Sundays when the priest is not present to say Mass:

"Recitation of the Rosary and Litany.

"Congregational singing of hymns.

"Reading and explanation of the Epistle and Gospel of the day.

"Sunday school for children.

"Study of the Mass or Liturgy for adults.

"Sec. 3. To maintain at the church or assembly hall a book rack containing inexpensive pamphlets on Catholic doctrine and teachings. A committee shall be appointed to promote same.

"Sec. 4. To promote distribution of the Catholic Register, Western Montana Edition.

"Sec. 5. To promote correspondence courses in Christian Doctrine.

"In order to carry out these general purposes, the members shall:

"1. Assist Pastors and Sisters in catechetical work.

"2. See that persons are enlisted for this work, both to teach the classes and to visit the homes.

"3. Encourage the formation of clubs or societies in order to provide instruction and wholesome recreation for the older boys and girls.

"4. Provide a means for training teachers."

Several years ago the Board of Directors of the Catholic Rural Life Conference recommended that religious vacation schools be conducted under the auspices of diocesan Confraternities of Christian Doctrine and in quite a few of the recently established Confraternities the first task assigned the workers was the conduct of these schools.

This method of combining the two agencies in question is proving highly effective. "It is my opinion," writes the pastor of a large scattered population in the West, "that where the Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine is established and the Religious Vacation School is well prepared for and carried out, the results will far outweigh those of any other single effort. I have tried missions and Sunday instructions with little effect but am convinced that the school we had last summer has started

the making of this parish. It has awakened a wonderful religious and even missionary spirit within its limits."

Another priest from the same territory reports as follows regarding a school that had an attendance of 80 pupils, some of whom had no previous instruction whatever. "The classes were held under the direction of the Reverend pastor and religious teachers. In order, however, to carry out the great work of the Vacation School more extensively and efficiently, additional help was needed. Lay teachers responded to the call, manifesting a fine spirit of cooperation throughout. They supervised the recreation periods, taught prayers, and had charge of the project work. The members of the Confraternity also rendered invaluable services. Besides the many home calls to urge attendance, they collected and prepared the necessary materials, furnished transportation, provided clothes, and raised funds." Six children of this group, it was pointed out, were baptized and forty-four received the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion for the first time.

Immediately following the vacation school steps are usually taken by the Confraternity to continue throughout the year the work of instruction begun by them. In the Brooklyn Diocese week-day religion classes constitute the chief work of the Confraternity. In the Pittsburgh Diocese efforts are chiefly centered in Sunday school classes. The religious correspondence course mentioned in the constitution of the Helena Confraternity originated in the diocese in question, but has also spread to a number of other dioceses.

A certain amount of social work and club work is also carried on under the auspices of the Confraternity in some parts of the country. In the Los Angeles and San Diego Diocese, for instance, the Confraternity cooperates directly in its social work with the Diocesan Catholic Welfare League. Peculiar to the Confraternity of Monterey-Fresno is the work of promoting Retreats through its members.

Still further activities are indicated by an enumeration of the various classes of active members that are included in the organization. Very commonly the following groups of workers are distinguished: teachers, home visitors or

“fishers,” club workers, distributors of literature, and a transportation committee. The members of the transportation committee help to transport both teachers and pupils when necessary. The club workers combine the work of religion with arts and crafts work and even with recreational activities. Highly important is the work of the home visitors, or “fishers,” so-called. It is the duty of these workers to canvass a locality when a branch of the Confraternity is to be established in order to investigate the religious condition of the Catholic children in that territory. Even after a Confraternity has been established, must the work of “fishing” be continued if a satisfactory attendance at the catechetical instructions is to be expected. Frequently the teachers themselves act as fishers. They “go out into the highways and lanes and compel them to come in.”

Besides these various classes of active members there are also in some Confraternities associate members, individuals, namely, who help the organization by contributing financially to its work. Practically all, therefore, who wish to do so can find some way of helping to promote the various activities of the Confraternity.

The Teachers and Their Training

While ultimately the work of religious instruction remains under the guidance and supervision of the Church's official teachers of religion, the members of the clergy, much of the actual catechetical work that is carried on under the auspices of the Confraternity is done by lay teachers. Not a few of these are Catholic teachers in public schools. The latter have the two-fold advantage of being able easily to reach the children and of having the necessary experience to do effective teaching. This type of catechist is particularly characteristic of the Brooklyn Confraternity. In many dioceses, however, the teachers must in great part be recruited from among those who have had no previous teaching experience. Wherever that is the case the need for careful preparation naturally presents itself.

Various means are made use of in preparing teachers. In the Archdiocese of Santa Fe the trained Missionary Catechists of Victory-Noll conduct Catechetical Institutes

extending usually over a period of two months. At these Institutes intensive training in catechetics is given young women who volunteer for teaching work in their own parishes. In the Great Falls Diocese special training classes are held throughout the diocese twice a month for three or four successive months. Diplomas for faithful preparation are then issued to the teachers by the Most Reverend Bishop. In the Pittsburgh Diocese four priests who devote their full time to Confraternity activities prepare the teachers. They give instruction twice a month in the various diocesan centers or branches of the Confraternity.

Regarding the training of inexperienced teachers the director of the Los Angeles and San Diego Confraternity points out that it is well to simplify the catechetical matter for them. While zealous and enthusiastic, they have little knowledge of scientific methods of teaching religion. A special booklet entitled, "Model Lessons in Catechism" has been published in this diocese as a guide for the teachers.

In not a few dioceses in which the Confraternity is established its work is carried forward by members of religious orders of women. For instance, in the Diocese of Monterey-Fresno there are several communities that devote all their time to the work of catechizing.

Organization and Officers

An outstanding feature of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is its flexibility. The details of organization are left in very great part to the local authority. This makes it readily adaptable to the varying needs and conditions of different dioceses. We find, as a matter of fact, considerable variation in the Confraternities that have been established in this country. In broad outline, nevertheless, there is not a little similarity among them.

Very commonly the parish is the basis for the local units of the diocesan organization. Perhaps the chief variation from this system is found in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, where the parish unit plan has been superseded by the present Missionary Confraternity which works out of the city of Pittsburgh and out of nine other widely scattered centers. The Los Angeles and San Diego

organization, while based on the parish as the unit, also has a Missionary Confraternity in some parishes. The members of these missionary units work outside their own parish limits. In the latter diocese, too, there are inter-parish units with officers similar to those of the diocesan unit.

Where the parish unit system is found in a diocese there are both diocesan and parochial officials. Commonly there is a diocesan director appointed by the bishop. In the Great Falls Diocese the Most Reverend Bishop himself is the acting director while much of the detail work is handled by a salaried lay executive secretary. In the Los Angeles and San Diego Confraternity the spiritual director is assisted by an Executive Board of lay people annually appointed by him. The director of the Pittsburgh Confraternity has three priests assisting him in his work. The customary officials in the parish units are director, president, vice-president, and treasurer. As a rule, the local director is the pastor or some priest appointed by the bishop.

Aggregation

Section II of Canon 711, besides urging the erection of Confraternities in all parishes, also provides for their aggregation or affiliation with the organization at Rome. "Once legitimately erected," the Canon reads, "these Confraternities are *ipso facto* aggregated to the Archconfraternities of the same name (Blessed Sacrament and Christian Doctrine) established by the Cardinal Vicar in the city of Rome." The parish and mission Confraternities become affiliated with the diocesan Confraternity and with the Archconfraternity in Rome when the secretary enters the names of the local members on the membership roll. This enrollment makes the various workers integral parts of the larger organization and privileges them to partake of the many indulgences, both partial and plenary, with which the Confraternity has been enriched.

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, therefore, is an approved agency for coordinating and promoting religious instruction activities on a diocesan-wide basis. It has proved itself a very efficient agency for this purpose in the dioceses of this country in which it has been es-

tablished. A network of these Confraternities scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land would undoubtedly go far towards solving the instruction problem created by the vast army of our religiously under-privileged children.

