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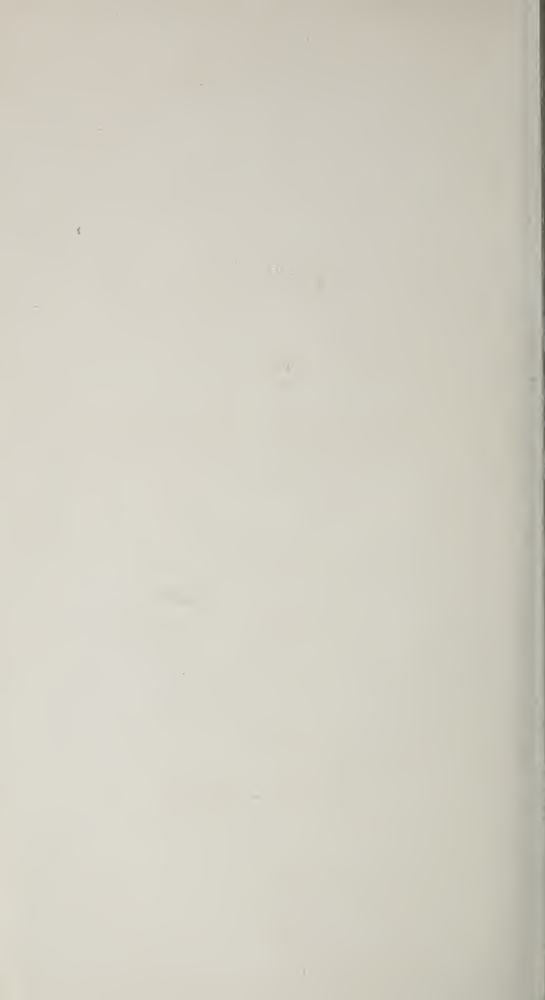


FIELDS
for
CATHOLIC ACTION

FAITH
MORALS
EDUCATION
PRESS
SOCIAL ORDER

By

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FIELDS FOR CATHOLIC ACTION

As professed followers of Christ, as registered soldiers of His Kingdom, as co-laborers with the Hierarchy in Catholic Action, our primary objective must be that for which our Divine Saviour prayed: "Ut omnes unum sint."—"That all may be one."

As devotees of the American Republic, as loyal citizens of its many contributory commonwealths, our primary objective must be that which the Constitutional Fathers decreed must be the motto of our nation: "E pluribus unum"—"One to grow out of many."

Universal unity in faith, in the observance of the moral law, in Christian charity, unity among all Christians against the enemies of God and the forces destructive of civilization, is certainly a lofty objective for which to strive; and the realization of it would cure all the ills which create momentous problems for governments throughout the world.

The union of forty-eight states in our one Republic is akin to, but less perfect than, the union of nearly as many nations in the one universal Kingdom of Christ. The difference is that which must be noted between unity and union; and, of course, between the benefits supernatural derived from the one, and the benefits natural derived from the other.

*Citizenship in Christ's and Caesar's
Kingdom*

The Creator intended that everyone born into this world should be a citizen both in the country of his nativity and in the Kingdom of Christ; that the State occupy itself with the temporal and the Kingdom of Christ with the eternal welfare of the same individual.

Recently our President made a plea for unity of effort to conquer our national ills. The Holy Father pleads for unity of effort to subdue our moral ills. Cooperation of the whole citizenry of the Kingdom of Christ;

cooperation of the entire citizenry of the State, each for the welfare, spiritual or material of the same people, is the supremest need.

There need be no conflict of interests or obligations, no matter how far the spirit of nationalism be carried in any given country, if only all citizens be allowed by Caesar to exercise, unhampered, their inalienable right to liberty both religious and civil, to the pursuit of happiness both eternal and temporal.

Our Duties in Christ's Kingdom

As members of the universal kingdom of Jesus our interests must be world-wide. As soldiers in this kingdom we must labor for its spread, and for the general adoption of its lofty moral code, even for the benefit and glory of the nations themselves.

But we, of this country, are naturally expected to center our efforts and to exert our zeal primarily here. The field, vast and in need of cultivation, offers wonderful opportunities to an

apostolate conducted by an army of workers, willing and ready to accept a mandate from their Hierarchy.

Every Catholic can find profitable employment in one of the many departments of this business of God; indeed there is room for all in the advertising and sales departments alone—for there are 100,000,000 prospective customers and patrons. Throughout the long life of Christ's Kingdom, beginning with the days of the Apostles, Catholic women have done much for souls and for society principally through the apostolate of prayer, example and instruction. Their services are now needed in a wider field, because so many of their sex are on the side of the world, the flesh and the devil; because the family can be best strengthened by their help; because so many social evils cry to morally-minded women for correction.

Fields in Which to Work

The ills, and therefore the needs of America are practically all to be found in the *Five Fields of Faith*,

Morals, Education, the Press, the Social Order. Therefore permit me to make a brief survey of these fields, and then to observe whether they will lend themselves to profitable cultivation through Catholic Action.

FAITH IN THE UNITED STATES:

According to the 1926 Census on Religious Denominations, gathered under government auspices, there are 70,000,000 of our fellow-citizens unaffiliated with any Christian organization. Though for the most part sympathetic towards Christianity, few of them were ever baptized, and hence live their lives separated from the supernatural. No less than the advanced pagans of Paul's time they are in need of instruction on the "Unknown God", on the Personal God Who, if known and served, would "give joy to their youth", inspiration and power to their middle age and comfort to their senility.

Twenty-six millions among the other 50,000,000 lay claim to the de-

signation "Protestant Christians", although their allegiance is divided among more than two hundred groups or sects. Fundamentalists and Modernists, they are all Individualists; that is, they recognize no universal spiritual leader on earth, no accredited spokesman for God, no guide towards salvation save the Holy Scriptures, which they accept solely on the authority of our Church, and then subject it in turn to their own private authority—a rule of faith so illogical and confusing that it, more than anything else, is responsible for the predominance of religious indifferentism among the 70,000,000 who remain aloof from church membership.

After deducting 4,000,000, who are racial descendants of God's people in the Old Dispensation, there are 20,000,000 left. These hold membership in the one undivided Catholic and Apostolic faith, and are of one mind and of one heart with 300,000,000 others, who constitute the universal, the historic Christian Church.

MORALITY IN THE UNITED STATES

We are told, and I believe reliably, that more money is spent in policing the United States, in hunting the criminal, in maintaining prisons, in protecting people in their life and property rights, than is spent in the conduct of our national and our forty-eight state governments. The amount is estimated at \$15,000,000,000.

According to official figures published last June, New York City, which houses about five per cent of our nation's population, employs 20,000 police who effect 500,000 arrests yearly, or more than 1,500 a day, more than one for every minute of the day and night. Multiply that record nineteen times and you will have some idea of the prevalence of crime in our land.

The United States leads the world in the nefarious work of home-destruction through divorce, with 3,000 courts lending their willing coopera-

tion, and many of them actually competing for the trade.

In defiance of the law, and with widespread encouragement, 300 firms are engaged in a business, whose wares are designed to check human and immortal life at its very source. Such wholesale supply, we are told, is exacted by a commensurate demand, for which our easy divorce laws are principally responsible.

If the family be Society's unit—and all agree that it is—what sort of Society is now in the making with the rapidly increasing disintegration of existing family life and the quite general conspiracy against its very inception? A nation will never become strong with the encouragement, on the part of the civil government, of practices calculated to weaken it. There existed once powerful nations, now only a memory, whose passing was due to the destruction of family life and self-indulgence under the sanction or with the connivance of the law.

American Statesmen and Social Re-

formers seem never to show concern for the future, but direct all their programs to present-day situations. The prospects of a top-heavy, aged population, of the old American stock disappearing entirely, even of Negro predominance, are not even considered. The statesmen of Europe are ever thinking of the future, for whose solidity and glory quantity of a homogeneous population is regarded as imperative.

The character of motion pictures, long supported by the American public, offers probably the best barometer of the state of morals in our country. One hundred million people—tantamount to the whole population in the United States above six years of age—have been wont to patronize the movies once a week and to applaud the portrayal of crime, of marital infidelity, of lax morals among the unmarried.

EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES:

With few exceptions only Catholic children are receiving instruction in

religion and moral principles in the classroom. This means that the children among the 70,000,000 unchurched, as well as among the 30,000,000 Protestants, are receiving an education purely secular and calculated to promote solely their temporal interests.

Enrolled in these purely secular schools are more than 2,000,000 Catholic children, for whom parochial schools have not been provided, either because the cost was prohibitive or because they live too widely scattered in rural areas.

The natural consequences of this educational policy are a spiritually illiterate people, and an indifferentism in matters religious more harmful to faith than would be actual opposition arising from a large minority group, because opposition would make the believers in the eternal verities more vocal, assertive and militant. Indifference to religious truth begets indifference to the moral law, which, in turn, leads to contempt of all authority, of all law, and produces the

juvenile criminal so conspicuous among us.

Far worse off than the little ones, who were never taught of God, are the youths, Catholic and non-Catholic, who go for a higher education to the average secular college and university, where influences most prejudicial to religion, morality and spirituality, are admittedly at work.

THE PRESS IN THE UNITED STATES

The chief sources of information for the generality of people after school days are the metropolitan daily newspapers, which enter nearly every home; the monthly secular magazines, in which the human interests of the day are treated from both sane and insane viewpoints; the story periodicals, and the novel, which cater, for the most part, to the lower instincts of the reader. Not one of these publications is helpful to the cause of religion and morality, while most of them are positively detrimental. When they do not actually promote

irreligion, they tend to foster skepticism, radicalism, an elastic conscience, and certainly confusion in relation to the better things.

Today's paper is primarily a record of yesterday's strife, sin and crime, as the same have come to the notice of the news-gatherer. In Sunday supplements of papers of huge circulation are usually exploited the wild theories or loose moral views of persons, who are out of all sympathy with Christian ideals. The character of the best-seller story book may be gauged by the condemned motion picture, for this latter is nothing more nor less than the book translated to the screen.

If numerous magazines are denied the privilege of the mail; if some forty may not even be displayed from the shelves of bookshops because of their immoral and carnal appeal, and yet are sufficiently widely read to warrant the continuation of their publication at a time when the common people have little money to spare, then evidently the press of America is do-

ing incalculably more harm than good.

SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Those who voice approval of the New Deal as applied to Economics, as well as those who fear to encourage it lest a bad situation become worse, are agreed that drastic reforms are needed in the economic structure within our nation.

The wealth of the nation, the land of the nation, are too unevenly divided to warrant general contentment. Industrial profits have been too large, wages too low, rents too steep, taxes, which are always indirectly the burden of the laborer and of the small property holder, have been too high.

Our country's banks, which certainly should enjoy the confidence of the people, because to them are entrusted the thrift savings of the masses, have been wont, in too many instances, to prey on the funds entrusted to them. Their agents, who should always be trustworthy, have too often, by misre-

presentation, unloaded on the public all sorts of unsound and almost worthless securities.

Mass production of commodities through labor saving machinery, with greed as the propelling motive, has created such a disparity between output and consumption that millions of willing and deserving men may not hope to be employed even during prosperous eras. Such a situation must needs breed discontent, which logically manifests itself in rebellion of labor against capital, in communistic sympathies, especially among youths whose ambitions are thwarted. Under such circumstances also the abnormal burden must be imposed on the civil authorities, federal, state and municipal, of housing, feeding and clothing the vast army of the unemployed and their families.

Base Plans On This Picture

This bird's eye view, this snapshot picture of American life and habits, is presented to you, as a chart or graph, for the guidance it

might offer for a program of action to be sponsored by Catholic organizations.

But are there any worth while results which Catholics can hope to achieve in the face of influences so powerful, of religious indifferentism so widespread, of un-Christian practices so long-standing, of a century-old, and even now idolized, public school system, of a secular-minded, if not irreligious, press, of an industrial system so entrenched?

Yes, I am confident that prospects are not only favorable, but bright, and I should, of course, very briefly declare why I am optimistic.

(1) *As to Our Faith:*

The people of the United States and of the world have quite generally accepted the principle on which our faith rests, the principle of leadership and authority. Do they not accept this principle in every other field, notably for light and guidance in the darkness and chaos produced by the

present economic situation? Why should they not be even more favorable to the acceptance of the same principle in the realm of religious belief and practice, especially since it must be clear that knowledge of the divine will can be learned with certainty only on authority? They certainly would not be following half as blindly as they now are if they heeded the voice of the only one who even pretends to speak with divine authority.

(2) *As to Morality:*

Christian ethical standards command the respect of all whose hearts are clean. Of the desire of the American heart to be clean, we had ample evidence in the almost universal response to the demand of the Catholic Hierarchy that the motion picture may no longer debauch our youth. Do not millions of non-Catholics approve the attitude of the Catholic Church towards Divorce, Birth Prevention by artificial contrivances,

indecent Magazines, Intemperance, Social Injustice?

Credit people of whatever environment or antecedents with a modicum of intelligence, and you will be disposed to believe that they would accept the truth that social practices should be controlled by norms of morality rather than that moral standards grow out of social practices.

(3) *As to Education:*

While the American people are wedded to the idea of a public school system as such, and to the idea that, because we have separation of Church and State, the public educational system must be purely secular, yet they practically all see the need of supplementary effort on the part of the churches, on the part of various organizations and clubs, to train the character of school children. What is the purpose of the Boy Scout Movement, of the Girl Scout Movement, of Vacation Bible Schools, of week-day religious instruction outside of school

hours, of the Y. M. C. A., of the Y. W. C. A., and many other organizations, of regular radio broadcasts over a national hook-up designed to interest adults in guiding the morals of youth?

Do these activities not offer evidence sufficient that non-Catholics quite generally subscribe to the Catholic *principle* on which the parochial school system is based? The vast majority of Americans seem not, however, to be convinced, as the father of our country was convinced, that morality must be based on religious principles, that consistent moral and religious practice must have religious belief as a foundation.

Our political leaders tell us that they are waging war against the depression, against the old industrial system, against crime. Then why does it never occur to them to improve and strengthen the official public training schools of youth by introducing the moral law and forming the consciences of the future citizens

in accordance with it, as the best preventive of crime?

However, I believe that our non-Catholic brethren, by the millions, would support a movement, not initiated by Catholics, to apply the New Deal to the schools; also the code of the universally recognized greatest moral influence of the ages—Christ.

Why should it be assumed that a New Deal should be applied to everything else except education? Why should the contrary not rather be assumed, namely, that an educational plan one hundred years old should be adjusted to the needs of our day? When the Horace Mann policy was adopted nearly a century ago, ours was a church-going, a spiritually-minded people—but it is no more.

While our civil government recognizes the right of parents to send their children to other than State schools, it penalizes those who do so by demanding that they carry a double burden of school taxation, yes, in some states, a triple burden. It is

probably the only instance in which the State returns to us evil for good bestowed. If the United States crime bill is \$15,000,000,000 annually and it could be reduced materially by getting religion into the child's life, would it not be real business economy to recognize, at least on an equal basis, the schools which actually instill religious and moral principles? One-fifth of the money needed to pay the nation's crime bill would pay its entire school bill.

(4) *As to the Press:*

Would not consistency in the American people demand that they oppose the exploitation of crime and of filth in print as well as on the screen? Would not even those who have little religion themselves prefer to see their children imbued with reverence for God, for religion, for those in authority, whether religious or civil? Would they not much prefer that the daily newspapers should be on the side of religion and morality

than on the side of agnosticism and infidelity? Would they not like to think of the editor of their local paper as sincere and honest and helpful rather than as controlled by political and commercial interests? Would they not like to read more news about the good which numerous organizations and individuals are doing, to counterbalance somewhat the news of crime and dishonesty?

(5) *As to Social Justice.*

In this field no constructive leadership is even known outside of the Catholic Church, whose economic program must be sound because it is based on the eternal principles of justice and morality. Nothing has come out of a hundred conferences, national and international, attended by those who are reputed to be the expert economists of their respective countries. They seem to be as much in a maze and in the dark concerning the causes of our economic ills and of their cure as the ordinary man of the

street. They fail because their theories are purely materialistic, born of a philosophy which is materialistic, a philosophy which takes no account of human rights, but only of selfish ends, which identifies might with right, the power to control with the right to control.

During the past fifty years the Popes alone have presented for the consideration of humanity sound economic programs. Encyclicals of Leo XIII and of Pius XI have proffered light to people in darkness, but the selfish captains of industry, on whom the light was principally turned, remained so enveloped in the fog of their own materialistic minds that they could not see it. Today most of them—and many good among them—feel the industrial depression far more keenly than those who served them with insufficient benefit to themselves.

But the attitude of the American public towards the economic philosophy of the Catholic Church is favorable. This is evident from the mil-

lions, who manifest their interest in the national broadcasts of a Catholic priest, and who have most recently approved of the selection of Catholic clergymen as mediators in disputes between capital and labor.

Although economics are only indirectly related to religion, they so affect the welfare of every man, woman and child in our nation, that the Church must take cognizance of them, and throw her influence on the side of social justice.

The outstanding sociologists of our country today are Catholics, and the Catholic people should become acquainted with their sound teachings, and do their utmost to acquaint the non-Catholics of their respective communities with them.

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE CONDITIONS?

Granting the existence of the evils I have outlined, granting the amenability of the American people to the correction of these evils, the next

consideration must be: *How* can our Catholic people, a minority group amid our general population, do much for their correction?

By organized apostolic zeal. Any movement promoted among 100,000,000, or even 300,000,000, people by 20,000,000 apostles should certainly accomplish wonders. It is not power we lack, but the organization which gives power to a crusade. Avowed enemies of Christianity were never numerous, but they have often succeeded, even in our day, in achieving the seemingly impossible, because they organized and became intensely active.

It must be remembered that in a few states we constitute one-half the total population; that in most large cities, east of the Mississippi and north of the Mason and Dixon Line, we represent from one-third to one-half of all the people. Would anybody defend the theory that in such states and in such cities, where one-half of all the people in the United States live, the Catholic body, imbued with definite

religious convictions, committed to a definite moral code, and organized behind a definite Catholic Action program, could not by their earnestness, their zeal, their prayers and their example, do much to stimulate interest in their faith, in decent morals, in loftier social ideals, in sounder economic standards?

Follow Their Example

If the Catholics of every community imitated Narberth, Pa.; if they emulated the example of the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia; if Catholic women everywhere sought out the apostates, as did the Diocesan Council of Women of Mobile; if all Catholic men had the zeal of the followers of St. Vincent de Paul; if every Catholic family supported, read, and then passed on to Protestant neighbors an instructive Catholic paper; if every Catholic signed and lived up to the Pledge of the Legion of Decency; if Catholics were united against political corruption, against abuses sanctioned under our new

liquor laws; if they all strove to be "the light of the world; the salt of the earth," soldiers of Jesus Christ, co-workers with the Hierarchy in the Apostolate of Catholic Action; if, in a word, they insisted on leading instead of following, how could we doubt that the United States would, with the grace of God, be won for the Kingdom of Christ, and, in addition, become a land of peace and happiness and prosperity?

Our Ills Are World Ills

The *Religious, Moral, Educational, Press and Social Justice* needs of the United States are equally the needs of the world, and can be met only by a world-teacher, to whom the interests of all people are equally dear, whose heart has no national preference, who holds a divine commission to feed the entire flock of the universal Kingdom of Christ, who has often restored order out of political and economic chaos, often returned peace to nations. If he, like his Master, has been in the world without the world knowing

him, with the world actually repudiating him, then is it not the duty of Catholics to make him truly known and recognized and heeded?

Never did the world so much need the Catholic Church as today. Nations everywhere need sympathy, but they do not receive it from one another; they conspire to injure one another. They need spiritual guidance, but "to whom should they go who has the words of eternal life"?

We boast of the number of our conversions, but Central Africa had three times as many as we counted in the United States last year. China had more last year than we, so also did India. The impetus to comparatively few of our conversions was given by the Catholic laity, most of whom, it would seem, could have one conversion to their credit every year if they were true to their profession.

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