

Ferree, William
Introduction to...
ADP 1153

790517

INTRODUCTION
TO
CATHOLIC
ACTION



THE YOUTH DEPARTMENT
National Catholic Welfare Conference
1312 Massachusetts Ave., N. W.,
Washington, D. C.



Introduction to Catholic Action



Youth Series No. 8

BY REV. WILLIAM FERREE, S.M.

Published by
The Youth Dept., N.C.W.C.
1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D. C.

PREFACE

The Youth Department welcomes Father Ferree's "Introduction to Catholic Action" to its pamphlet list.

Almost a decade ago, in commending Civardi's classic "Manual of Catholic Action" the Apostolic Delegate observed:

"He (the Holy Father) has always been most solicitous that Catholic Action is rightly understood, properly put into practice, and definitely confined to its own field, which is that of the Gospel. The Holy Father deprecates, therefore, the thoughtless, irresponsible use of the term 'Catholic Action.' Such careless use only beclouds its meaning in the minds of the faithful and prevents them from understanding and carrying out its high, definite and sacred purpose."

The sole motive in our sponsoring this pamphlet is to safeguarding our youth groups from the too current thoughtless, irresponsible use of the term 'Catholic Action' and by cultivating an exact understanding of Catholic Action to inspire them to carry out its high, definite and sacred purpose.

PAUL F. TANNER
Director, Youth Department
N.C.W.C.

INTRODUCTION

In his very first Encyclical on Catholic Action, *Ubi Arcano*, Pope Pius XI stated that he wished to see Catholic Action develop above all among Catholic youth; and he frequently referred to the youth section of Catholic Action as "the apple of his eye."

The youth of the Catholic world have been worthy of this trust and affection of the great "Pope of Catholic Action." In almost every country the youth organizations have responded first, and have responded most generously, in the revolution of thought and method that the theory and practice of Catholic Action make necessary.

The youth of the United States are no exception. They are asking constantly for clear ideas on what they should do with their organizations and methods to live up to their high assignment of forming in themselves the Catholic leaders of the future. It is for them that the present pamphlet is written, and it is because of their generosity and interest that no attempt has been made to "write down to their level." Other pamphlets may follow to make the different aspects of Catholic Action clearer, and to apply them to our national conditions. The purpose of this one is to outline briefly the theory of Catholic Action, in a way that will indicate the whole ground to be covered, without going too much into detail. For this reason the present exposition will attempt to sketch not only the aspects of Catholic Action which are immediately applicable in local work, but also those which are not immediately applicable, and which must wait until the accumulated effects of all the centers of local work can make themselves felt on diocesan and national levels, and even in Christendom as a whole.

It is important to notice, however, that in the accepted language of Catholic Action, "Youth" embraces the age group 16 to 28 or 30. The groups below 16 are regarded as preparatory to Catholic Action. This fact will explain the freedom with which more difficult phases of Catholic Action theory are included in an exposition intended primarily for youth groups.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lesson	Page
I Notion and Importance	6
II Fundamental Distinctions—The Problem	10
III Fundamental Distinctions—Pontifical Texts	16
IV The Issues Involved	22
V Definition and Characteristics of Catholic Action	26
VI The First Characteristic of Catholic Action— A Work of Laymen	29
VII Corollaries of the First Characteristic	33
VIII The Second Great Characteristic of Catholic Action—It is an APOSTOLATE	39
IX How Big a Job is the Apostolate?	43
X Corollaries of the Second Great Characteristic of Catholic Action	48
XI The Third Great Characteristic of Catholic Action: Organization, Its Implications	51
XII The Form of Organization and Its Results	54
XIII The Fourth Great Characteristic of Catholic Action: Authority of the Hierarchy	61
XIV The Practical Exercise of This Authority and Its Results	64
XV Conclusion	67
APPENDIX I—Bibliography	71
APPENDIX II—Official Documents	78

LESSON I

Notion and Importance

1. Growing Interest in Catholic Action:

Catholic Action is at last beginning to stir profoundly the minds and hearts of Catholics in the United States. As a general rule Catholic Action makes its way more slowly in a country with a highly organized Catholic life than in one which suffers from a lack of organization; and the extraordinarily well-developed parish, institutional, and organizational life of the United States has resulted in slow acceptance of the new methods of action.

It is easy to see how such a situation could arise in a country where a strong tradition of "Catholic Activity" exists. New ideas must be interpreted in the light of what one already is doing, and the temptation is strong—Pope Pius XI warned against it explicitly—to study what one is already doing instead of the new ideas. In this way the new words become current, even intensely popular, (as the words "Catholic Action" are certainly popular), but simply as new labels for old methods which remain substantially unchanged.

At a later period, however, if the new ideas are really powerful enough, they gradually make themselves felt despite the fact that they have been partly misunderstood,—they "bore from within" so to say, in the very organizations that have misapplied them to their own work—and after a few years secure the attention and study that they failed to receive at first.

2. Get the Words Straight:

At the very beginning let us be clear about the very phrase "Catholic Action." There is a misunderstanding which has been almost incorporated into its use in English so that it is very hard to remove. You have all heard of the political organization known as "Action Francaise" whose publication of the same name was on the Index and was only recently removed. When this organization or paper was referred to in English, its name was never translated, for if we called it "French Action" the phrase would not bring to our minds an **organization** as it should, but some sort of general activity of Frenchmen, with which it has no connection. There are other organizations which in the past have carried

this name of "Action" of one kind or another, but English has been consistent in its treatment of them; speaking of them always with the foreign terminology and not translating the title into English words. Now when the "Azione Cattolica" of Italy and the "Action Catholique" of France and Belgium came to be spoken of in English, this translation was unfortunately made because of the fact that although "French Action" sounds like non-sense, "Catholic Action" really does seem to mean something.

Let us then be clear in our own use of the word. When we say "Catholic Action" we do not mean all activities that happen to be carried on by Catholics, but a definite and special and distinct kind of organization and a definite set of methods and principles of action. Thus "Catholic Action" is not only an abstract noun; but it is also, and in a certain sense primarily, a concrete noun—the proper name of an organization. Moreover, this organization is a unique organization, set off from every other organization whatever by its universality which it shares with the Church itself.

3. Importance:

With initial misunderstandings out of the way, let us give our attention briefly to the importance of this organization, and set of methods and principles of action, which has become known in English as "Catholic Action." In so brief an exposition as this we must limit ourselves to two points. First, that the official and unofficial statements of Pope Pius XI on Catholic Action for only the first ten years of his reign fill a closely printed volume of about six hundred pages, and certainly his statements during the last part of his reign were almost as numerous. His first encyclical letter "Ubi Arcano" was a general call to Catholic Action, and the last letter of his life, published on the very eve of his death, was an insistent exhortation to the Hierarchy of the Philippines to strengthen their organization of Catholic Action.

We might notice that such unremitting and intense insistence on a single idea by the Papacy is something which is without parallel in the history of the Church. The closest approach to it is to be found in the preaching of the crusades, but even that hardly exhibited such an intense singleness of purpose. Catholic Action certainly must have been something very important in the eyes of Pius XI to have led him to such unprecedented insistence; and his successor Pope Pius XII is continuing that insistence despite his immense preoccupation with the present world crisis.

The second point which we will notice in considering the importance of Catholic Action is the direct statement of Pope Pius XI that he considered Catholic Action an inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of a new era in the history of the Church.

Of course, the best way to have a real idea of its importance is to know exactly what it is and what it can do.

In a certain sense that is the purpose of this pamphlet, but it should be recognized from the outset that a pamphlet is too small a scale to accomplish such a purpose satisfactorily.

Notes and Questions, Lesson I

1. Growing Interest in Catholic Action.

a. How did the Church in the U. S. compare with other countries in Catholic organizations and activities when Pope Pius XI began his Pontificate? Examine especially the points indicated by Pope Pius XII in his letter *Sertum Laetitiae* to the American Hierarchy; attendance at church service, frequent Communion, closed retreats, vocations; number of dioceses, of seminaries and churches, of schools from grades to universities, of hospitals, of asylums for poor, of monasteries; missionary associations, Catholic charities, lay associations, NCWC.

b. According to the general rule, then, should development of Catholic Action in the United States have been rapid or slow?

c. As a matter of fact people from other countries frequently reproach the Catholics of the United States for their slowness in conforming to the directions of Catholic Action. Would the above two questions suggest an adequate answer to such reproaches?

d. Granting that it would, and that a Catholic life so highly organized as ours will require many years of practical transition into the "new forms" laid down by Pius XI for the "modern apostolate," would this justification hold good also for our lack of knowledge of Catholic Action? Specifically, would it justify us for not having produced a technical "Literature of Catholic Action" comparable to the excellent books available in the French, Italian, and Spanish languages?

e. In the new attitude of sincere inquiry into the nature of Catholic Action that is spreading in this country, one would naturally expect (from the way things have developed in other countries) that the youth groups will take the lead. Can you give some of the reasons for this expectation?

2. Get the Words Straight

a. In an excellent book called *L'Unité d'action des catholiques*, the author, Andre Richard, makes a careful distinction between "Action Catholique" (capitalized) and "action catholique" (with small letters). In English attempts have been made to copy this practice, but with less success because English usage demands that the word "Catholic" be capitalized in both cases. The ordinary way of driving home the same idea in English is to adopt the phrase: "Official Catholic Action" when correcting

someone who wants to insist that "anything Catholic is Catholic Action." What lies behind these distinctions?

b. Granting that it is legitimate to speak of any Catholic activity at all as "Catholic action" (with a small "a"), does this seem likely to lead to clear ideas when the great majority of Catholics in a country are still under the misapprehension that any Catholic activity at all is "Catholic Action" (with a capital "A")?

c. Many theorists of Catholic Action try to popularize the phrase "Catholic Activities" to designate any lay Catholic work which does not conform fully to the definition of "Catholic Action" (with a capital "A"). Wouldn't it be a good idea to adopt this clearer phraseology as widely as possible and call everything which is not "Official Catholic Action" by the name "Catholic Activity"?

3. Importance

a. In several articles published recently it is stated that Pope Pius XI's complete statements on Catholic Action comprise a volume of 600 pages. (The volume is a French one: *L'Action Catholique; Documents Pontificaux*; La Bonne Presse, Paris, 1933). But since Pope Pius XI died in 1939, does this book tell the whole story?

b. In a book entitled "Pius XI and American Public Opinion," Mr. Robert Cuddihy and Mr. George Shuster gathered together most of the appreciations of the work of Pius XI which appeared in the U. S. Press and on the radio after the death of the Holy Father. In it there is no chapter on Catholic Action and only eight references (in passing) to the words: three of them to the so-called "Encyclical on Catholic Action," "Non Abbiamo Bisogno" which by the way, is not one of the principal texts on Catholic Action (it is on Fascist opposition to Catholic Action). This book is probably a faithful portrayal of the extent of understanding in this country of the work of Pope Pius XI:—do you think Pope Pius himself would be satisfied with that understanding, after he himself had referred repeatedly to Catholic Action as "the apple of his eye" and "the thing most dear to his heart"?

Note: One of the handiest pamphlets in English for studying official texts of Pope Pius XI on Catholic Action is *Directives for Catholic Action* by Rev. James D. Loeffler, Central Bureau Press, St. Louis Missouri, 25c. (We have recently been informed, however, that this is now out of print. A new and more complete pamphlet containing the most important official texts is being planned.)

LESSON II

Fundamental Distinctions The Problem:

4. Spiritual Action—Temporal Action—Catholic Action

It is repeatedly stated in official documents that Catholic Action is necessary and that it cannot be substituted by any other form of action whatever. These "other forms of action" fall naturally into two large classifications: **Catholic Religious or Spiritual Action** on the one hand, and **Catholic Temporal Action** on the other.

"Temporal," is here used for the "social-economic" action frequently referred to in Latin and Italian documents on Catholic Action. The commonly accepted English word for the same idea is "Social" Action, but it is difficult to use it because it must be **contrasted** with Catholic Action, and in many pontifical documents Catholic Action is called "a social action also." It is to avoid this confusing use of the phrase "social action" in two radically different senses (one referring to means and ends, the other to organization and effects), that the phrase "temporal action" is here adopted, for it does not seem likely that the rather cumbersome "social-economic action" would ever receive wide acceptance in English usage, and besides it is not entirely exact. "Temporal action" is at once more exact (being able to include technical, civic, cultural, and professional action, as well as properly "economic action") and is already in use in English in phrases referring to the "Spiritual and Temporal Powers."

"Secular" action might perhaps be even more satisfactory from the purely logical point of view, but it has unpleasant implications which make it difficult to translate the often-recurring phrase "Catholic social-economic action" by "Catholic secular action." "Catholic temporal action" is free from these implications and seems to be a satisfactory substitute for the "Catholic social action" which would be the natural expression of the idea in English, but which unfortunately is ambiguous as noted above.

We might follow the theorists of Catholic Action in their distinction between "Spiritual" and "Temporal" action in order to acquire a sort of preliminary idea of Catholic Action. This brings us immediately to the more fundamental distinction between the spiritual and temporal ends of man.

5. The Great Problem of History:

The "Problem of the Two Powers" is one of the most fundamental in the history of the Christian era. In fact, almost the whole history of Christendom could be interpreted in terms of this problem and of the struggles which have arisen from attempts at its solution. We have not the time even to trace this history, but we might glance rapidly at the problem.

The end of the spiritual power is eternal salvation, the end of the temporal power is man's welfare here on earth. These powers are differentiated and distinct and each has means **not possessed by the other** for arriving at its own peculiar ends in its own distinct sphere. Yet, somehow, the temporal power must be regulated by the spiritual because the spiritual end is ultimate even for the temporal order, and any temporal system which would prevent the attainment of man's spiritual end would be false and unjust, so that in the very words "social order" we have implied a certain subservience of the temporal to the spiritual power and to spiritual ends. There you have the problem: Somehow the spiritual power **must direct the temporal order** and yet we have just noted that it has **no means at its disposal which are adequate** to this order as such. These means are possessed properly by the temporal power only, and the means of the spiritual are directed towards an entirely different end—the eternal salvation of man. If the spiritual power works **directly** in the temporal order, it works in a field where it possesses no adequate means, and has no assurance at all of not compromising its authority by serious mistakes.

6. Digression: An Example of Confusion of Spiritual and Temporal.

Perhaps an example is the only way to make the point clear in a brief exposition. Some time ago I read of a parish savings bank somewhere in Europe which had been robbed of many thousands of dollars. In this particular bank the pastor himself seems to have been directly in charge. Now for a bank to lose its money is a fairly common event in the history of banking, and when we have invested in a bank which fails for some reason or other, we take it to be a bit of misfortune which is regrettable indeed but final, like a wreck or a fire. In this particular case, however, when the parish bank failed, the parishioners did not seem to think that that was the end of the matter. They said that the priest had asked them to put their money in the bank, that they had given the money to him, and that now they wanted it back from him. Somehow or other they were unwilling to

admit that the case was closed as they certainly would have admitted if an ordinary bank had been robbed and had failed as a result. Threats of violence were made against the priest and a fair number of the parishioners lost confidence in the church because they said it had robbed them. This is a rather elementary example, but it illustrates the point. The priest had really compromised his spiritual power by being directly in charge of a temporal work where risk of failure was unavoidable; and the people blamed him, not as a banker, but as a priest, when disaster came. They were confused, of course, in doing so, but that is just the point: The situation was one that laid itself open to confusion.

7. Still Digressing: Another Example:

We can illustrate the point again by the familiar saying that "priests should not be in politics," meaning, of course, party politics. Now from the political point of view, there is no possible reason why priests should not be in politics, and politicians and anti-clericals who use this expression are simply insincere; because from the political point of view every citizen is equal and has an equal right to engage in political activity. It is only the friends of priests who can use that expression honestly for it is only from the spiritual point of view that it has any meaning.

What, as a matter of fact, do we mean by politics in its usual sense of party struggles? We mean that we expect all politicians to be wrong, at least half of the time, because there are always at least two parties with opposing ideas. When one of the parties, in the judgment of a sufficient number of people, piles up a sufficient number of mistakes, it gets defeated; and the other party takes over until it in turn loses its popularity through its own mistakes. Thus we could say rather facetiously, that to be a politician is by definition to be at least half wrong.

Now we can see why it would be dangerous for a priest to be engaged in politics. He would necessarily make the same sort of mistakes that all other politicians necessarily make; but whereas, for other people, mistakes are taken as a matter of course, for the priest they would be considered somehow a fault. He is not supposed to be wrong in his own work of spiritual teaching and of sacramental administration, and people transfer this requirement to any political activity in which he may engage, blaming him bitterly for his mistakes. Moreover, through the same confusion noted above, this blame does not attach to him as an individual but as a representative of the Church, and it is the whole Church

which is compromised by the political mistakes of its ministers—mistakes, once more, which are of the very essence of politics and which will be made, sooner or later, no matter how clever, or learned, or devoted, or sincere the man may be who engages in politics.

The reason this is so is that in the field of the temporal every decision carries inevitably with it certain **consequences which men cannot foresee**, and every decision in this field is thus to a certain extent a “leap in the dark.” One doesn’t have to be a mathematician to know that a certain percentage of “leaps in the dark” will be, in the long run, unfortunate!

From these examples which were purposely chosen because they are simple, we can see the meaning of the statement that the spiritual and the temporal powers are differentiated and distinct. Though they must always work in close harmony, yet they can never be directly joined together without confusion, and, in the long run, without disaster. This is fundamentally the message of Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical “*Immortale Dei*.” It is surely not necessary here to show what utter confusion would result if the temporal power would assume direct authority in spiritual things so we need give no “examples” of that.

8. Now, Don't Get the Wrong Idea:

A short explanation such as this is always in danger of creating a wrong impression instead of the merely incomplete one at which it is aiming. It is important therefore not to mistake the purpose of these examples. The idea is **not** that such work in economics or politics may never be undertaken by the clergy—in fact, circumstances might conceivably arise where such work might become a **duty** for them during a period of crisis or transition; and at all times a real, useful, and necessary “Catholic Social Action” by the clergy has existed. In these cases the dangers of “confusion” of temporal and spiritual must be guarded against as best one can—but the dangers are always there. The point of the two examples here given is that in Catholic Action we will find a new clergy-laity relation through which the dangers are **removed**—not just guarded against—and that Catholic Action is a definite **advance in technique and effectiveness** over direct temporal action by the clergy. But evidently, if Catholic Action is not understood, or if particular circumstances should make other approaches to the problem ineffective, such direct action by the clergy, despite its dangers, may be the only thing left to do. Of course, we are speaking here only of the

action of the clergy: direct "Catholic temporal action" by the laity is at all times normal and imperative.

We should now have a fair working knowledge of the nature of Catholic Spiritual Action on one hand, and of Catholic Temporal Action on the other. With these two different kinds of action before us, we will be better able in the next lessons to grasp the meaning of Catholic Action, which is different from both of them.

Notes and Questions, Lesson II

4. Spiritual Action—Temporal Action—Catholic Action.

a. When it is stated (see Section 4) that no "other form of action" can take the place of Catholic Action, what is meant by "other form of action"—something which is Protestant or pagan; or something which is Catholic but not Catholic Action?

b. From the next lesson—or, better, from the Encyclical "Sertum Laetitiae" of Pope Pius XII to the American Hierarchy—make a list of some of these "other forms of action," dividing them into the two groups (spiritual and temporal) into which they naturally fall.

c. What is the commonly accepted English word for those Catholic activities which the Holy Father referred to as "Social-Economic Action?" Why is the word "Temporal Action" suggested here as a more satisfactory name?

5. The Great Problem of History

a. Give some examples of historical conflicts between "the two Powers."

b. In these times of aggressive "totalitarian" governments and reactions to them, are these conflicts likely to increase?

c. If Catholic Action is a new solution to this most difficult problem, is not its "adaptation to modern needs" very providential?

Note: For the distinction between the Spiritual and Temporal Powers, and the best statement, up to his time, of the relationship that should exist between them, study Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Immortale Dei*. Afterwards it will be possible to see how Pope Pius XI's solution goes beyond this.

6. Example of Confusion between Spiritual and Temporal:

a. Here is another example which happened quite recently: A man was complaining bitterly of employment agencies, saying that all they did for people over 40 was to give them forms to fill out, and to send them on "wild goose chases" where they wouldn't be hired anyhow because of their age. He complained also about the priests, saying that they would do a whole lot better if they got jobs for people instead of preaching "because a man had to live before he could practice religion."

Now here are some interesting questions: If the priests would get into the employment service, could they persuade the employers to "accept men over 40?" And supposing they couldn't, would this man (considering his

attitude towards the employment agencies) blame the employers or the priests? And would his bitterness towards the priests who send him on "wild goose chases" be more or less than his present bitterness toward the employment agencies? What effect would this bitterness probably have on his religious life? Yet it would not have the same effect if the priests had encouraged Catholic laymen to set up an employment office. Why not?

b. Is it true to say that in any temporal work "the risk of failure is unavoidable?" If you think it isn't, how about the possibility of accidents, fires, wars, earthquakes, etc.? Do they ever spoil well-laid plans?

7. Another Example

Is it true to say that mistakes in politics "will be made sooner or later, no matter how clever, or learned, or devoted or sincere the man may be who engages in politics?" For instance: Suppose a politician would decide to enact a law imposing a "Family Living Wage" on industry, so that men with large families would receive higher wages than single men. Is it not entirely possible that the law might "back-fire" and result in industry's hiring only single men, so that the large families would be worse off rather than better? Would not every human law present the same possibility of "back-firing" despite the best attempts of legislation to plan well from the beginning? If these laws were to be made by priests and bishops, would they still present that danger?

8. Now don't get the wrong idea!

a. After the disintegration of the Roman Empire in Europe, the Bishops came to possess great temporal powers, for the Church was almost the only stabilizing social force which survived the destruction of the ancient world. Even though many grave difficulties (Warrior-Bishops, lay investiture, intrusion of political favorites into ecclesiastical posts, struggles between Popes and emperors, etc.) came from this temporary identification of spiritual and temporal, was it not nevertheless necessary for the Church to assume leadership when other organized forces failed?

b. In a certain sense was not the profound economic disorganization which struck the working classes after the "Industrial Revolution" somewhat similar to the political disorganization which succeeded the barbarian invasions? Were not the Popes, from Leo XIII on, fully justified therefore, in stepping into the field of Industrial Relations?

c. **Note:** In Pope Pius X's time, the phrase "Catholic Action" could be used for what is here called "Catholic Temporal Action," as can be seen from Pope Pius X's statement: "Catholic Action is the Christian solution of the Social Problem." The redefinition of "Catholic Action" in the sense used in these studies is the work of Pope Pius XI, done, as he himself says, "not without divine inspiration."

Yet even after this redefinition, the Holy Father himself wrote encyclicals with directions for Catholics—including the clergy—to engage in "Catholic Temporal Action": *Quadragesimo Anno*, on the reconstruction of Social Order, and *Nova Impendet* on the economic crisis, unemployment, and increase in armaments.

LESSON III

Fundamental Distinctions: Pontifical Texts

9. Catholic Action is Different

Before showing how Catholic Action is different, both from Catholic Spiritual Action on the one hand, and from Catholic Temporal Action on the other, it will be helpful to give specific examples of both of these "other forms of action." The Hierarchical apostolate itself is, of course, the very type of Spiritual action, but it does not enter directly into this discussion because we are limiting our attention to forms of action open to the laity. Certain forms of action, which belong directly and entirely to the Church herself are, however, open to the laity (e.g. Catechetics, Missionary Works, works for the Preservation of the Faith, Liturgical Music, etc.), and these do come under our classification of "Catholic Spiritual Action." Under it also are the three groups of societies of laymen mentioned in Canon Law: Third Orders, Confraternities, and Pious Unions.

Practical examples of such works are Sodalties, Retreat Movements, Evidence Guilds, Holy Name Societies, Works of Charity (though these last may sometimes belong rather to Catholic Temporal Action). It is these works of spiritual Action which the Holy Father has in mind when he speaks of the "Providential Auxiliaries of Catholic Action."

Over against these are the works of "Catholic Temporal Action": Parish Credit Unions, Catholic Cooperative movements, Maternity Guilds, Labor Movements, Civic organizations, fraternal societies, recreational or cultural groups.

Now Catholic Action is not temporal action because: 1) it is under the direct authority of the hierarchy—of the Spiritual Power, and 2) it does not work directly in the temporal order. At the same time, however, it is not purely Religious or Spiritual Action because 1) it is specifically the work of laymen and of lay responsibility, and 2) some of its most obvious effects are felt in the temporal order, although its direct action is spiritual. A very brief summary of these ideas could be put in the phrase that "Catholic Action is Spiritual in its nature, yet temporal in its effects." It is because of this peculiar position, in a certain sense **between** purely spiritual action and temporal action (like a bridge

over a chasm) that it constitutes, as we are soon to see, a new approach to the "Great Problems of History."

10. What Headaches Could be Avoided

Now from everything else Catholic Action is different, and a world of misunderstanding, misguided effort, suspicion, and disappointment could be avoided if only this elementary fact would be frankly recognized and accepted both by works of Catholic Spiritual Action and by those of Catholic Temporal Action! So important is this point that it may be worth while to sacrifice the brief space at our disposal by inserting direct quotations from Pontifical Documents:

11. "Rome Has Spoken"

First, a letter of Pope Pius XII, then Cardinal Secretary of State, to the President of Italian Catholic Action, March 30, 1930: "Besides Catholic Action properly so called, there exist other institutions, associations, and movements which tend, with an admirable variety of organizational forms, either to a more intense ascetical training, or to the practices of piety and religion, and especially to the apostolate of prayer, or to the exercise of Christian Charity in all its forms and applications, thus devoting themselves in fact to a broad and efficacious apostolate which is both individual and social, with forms of organization both varied and well adapted to personal initiative—but by that very fact different from the organization which is proper to Catholic Action. These therefore are works which one cannot identify with Catholic Action, although they can and ought to be regarded as its true and providential auxiliaries."

Speaking to members of the Sodality on the same day that this letter was written, Pope Pius XI himself added his insistence that the letter had been thought over for a long time and prepared with special prayer.

12. Again and Again

A year later, in a letter addressed to the Bishops of Argentina (Feb. 4, 1941) the Holy Father returns to the subject:

"Alongside of this great organization which may be termed official Catholic Action, there are, as we have seen, other associations devoted to spiritual formation, charity, and good works. We have had occasion to refer to them of late as the auxiliaries of Catholic Action. Each of them in its own way is invaluable in the preparation and support which it can and must provide. . ."

And on October 27, 1935, in a letter to Cardinal Cintra, he once more takes up the problem—this time with a certain impatience which reflects perhaps the persistent misunderstanding or disregard which his earlier explicit utterances had encountered in certain quarters:

“It is therefore incongruous and gravely injurious if in parishes or dioceses other societies of the faithful are established to accomplish practically the very purpose proposed for Catholic Action, that is, societies which are not joined together by any link whatsoever and which have nothing in common with Catholic Action, or what is worse, enter into sorry competition with it. For thus the particular advantage which such societies might bring to a small number of the faithful are truly nullified by the very serious damages which flow from conflict or from the dispersal and division of Catholic forces . . . ”

The present Holy Father, in his Letter to the Hierarchy of the United States (Nov. 1, 1939), indicates indirectly that these important distinctions which he himself had so carefully outlined under the direction of his predecessor (see first quotation above) are as valid now, and in this country, as in any other time or place. He singles out for attention, besides our well organized ecclesiastical life and educational system, the closed retreat movement, the Missionary societies, Catholic Charities, and “Associations of the laity,” among which latter (“too long a list to allow of complete enumeration”) he calls especial attention to Catholic Action, the Marian Sodality, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and the Holy Name Society. It will be noticed immediately that Catholic Action is mentioned separately from the others, not as a kind of heading under which they all fit. All the “other works” here mentioned are of “Catholic Spiritual Action,” and later on in the encyclical, where the Holy Father treats of American problems, some indications are to be found for “Catholic Temporal Action” also.

13. But the Case is Not Closed

Rome has spoken, indeed, but the argument goes on and on. It would be amusing, if the fact were not so “incongruous and gravely injurious,” to recount how otherwise estimable and devoted people tenaciously insist that Catholic Action cannot possibly be anything more than whatever it is they themselves already happen to be doing.

It is unfortunate that it is necessary to give so much space to what is, after all, only a most elementary and superficial misunderstanding. Let us hope that the time will come

when it will be sufficient simply to state once for all that Catholic Action is different from all other forms of action whatever, and then get on with the real issues.

Notes and Questions, Lesson III

9. Catholic Action is Different

a. Make a list of the Catholic Organizations you know personally, and try to divide them according to the three kinds of "action" treated here. Keep the list for checking after you are more familiar with the basis of classification.

b. In a book about Pope Pius XI, the following sentence occurs: "The charter of Catholic Action may be seen well outlined in his letter on Catholic Action, on Reconstruction, on Education, on Spain, on Ephesus, on the Reunion of the Eastern Churches, on the Saints Augustine and Wenceslaus and on the New Pontifical University, as well as in the reorganization of the Papal Academy of science." Compare this statement with the present paragraph (9) and also with paragraph 20 of this pamphlet.

c. With the same paragraphs, compare this statement made by a speaker: "Catholic Action is a renewal and intensification of Catholic life, it is nothing that requires long and complicated explanations. The sodalities are Catholic Action, the Retreat movement is Catholic Action, St. Vincent de Paul Societies are Catholic Action, the Third Orders are Catholic Action—everything vitally Catholic is Catholic Action." Do you think his contribution to the discussion was a helpful one?

10. What Headaches could be Avoided

a. It is a fact that many people who direct works of Catholic Spiritual Action or of Catholic Temporal Action are deeply resentful of statements which seem to indicate that what they are doing is "not Catholic Action." How would this mental attitude lead to a "world of misunderstanding, misguided effort, suspicion, and disappointments?"

b. Such people evidently are under the impression that if they are "not Catholic Action," then their work is somehow branded as being defective. Could you set these people right? (cf. Quotation in Section 11 and first quotation in Section 12.) But on what condition would their work be defective and blameworthy in respect to Catholic Action? (cf. 2nd quotation in Section 12.)

11. Rome Has Spoken

a. On what point ("By that very fact——") does the Holy Father here insist, in pointing out the difference between these "other institutions, associations, and movements" and Catholic Action? Is it the same point stressed in the second paragraph of Section 12 ("That is, Societies which ——")?

Note: Keep this "problem of unity" well in mind as it is one of the most fundamental ideas of Catholic Action (as can be seen from the fact that it is here chosen by the Popes from all the characteristics of Catholic Action—(cf. Section 20)—to be a sort of criterion for distinguishing what

is and what is not Catholic Action); yet it is especially liable to be overlooked in countries like the United States where the development of Catholic Action must be prepared slowly "from below" instead of being imposed officially "from above" (Because of the already highly organized state of Catholic life—cf. questions on Section 1, above).

b. From the last sentence in the quotation in this section (Section 11) point out what should be the attitude of these "other works" towards Catholic Action. Would they be faithful to this attitude if they insisted that they themselves were Catholic Action? Wouldn't they have to study Catholic Action in order to maintain the proper attitude?

12. Again and Again

Note: In the second quotation (Oct. 27, 1935, to Cardinal Cintra) observe that the Holy Father's words seem intended to include all "other forms of action." Those societies which "have nothing to do with Catholic Action" would be "Catholic Temporal Action" and those which "enter into sorry competition with it" could only be "Catholic Spiritual Action." Both fail by "not being joined together by any link whatsoever," for only Catholic Action shares the universality of the Church. Notice the extraordinary implication that the common possession of the Catholic Faith by all these "other societies" is **not in itself a link among them**. This is profoundly true, and much of the disunity of Catholic effort has come about precisely because Catholic leaders made the mistake of thinking that unity of principle made it unnecessary to work for **practical unity**.

a. Isn't this disunity rather clearly indicated by the fact that the word "parochialism" which should stand for a method of organization of the **universal Church**, means also in English (and in any other language for that matter) "narrowness or pettiness of interests or opinions." (Webster).

b. Could you indicate a few examples of this lack of practical unity among Catholics who are perfectly agreed on principles? How much collaboration would you expect between two Catholic organizations in the same field? between two competing Catholic universities in the same city? Wouldn't they have to make a conscious effort to prevent their **immediate rivalry** from influencing their attitude toward each other much more than their **common Catholic purposes**?

Note that Catholic Action makes this conscious effort, not only for parishes, and organizations, but for dioceses, nations, and continents. (cf. Section 51)

Note: The question might arise as to whether these "other works" could not recognize frankly that they are **not Catholic Action** in their present state, and would they try to bring about changes in their present state so that later on they could **become Catholic Action**.

Of course, it is not excluded that in some dioceses circumstances may make it necessary or advisable for the Bishop to give an "official mandate of Catholic Action" to an organization. (e.g. Holy Name Society, Evidence Guild, etc.) which in itself could be only an "auxiliary of Catholic Action" according to the explanations of the Holy Father. In such case the organization then becomes juridically Catholic Action, no matter what it was before, for the Bishop's power in this matter is complete. The organization then acquires, however, a **new official status and a new set of purposes and**

methods which it must set itself to understand and exploit. This will mean two important things:

1. The organization in question will have to undergo gradually a **profound transformation** in order to meet its new purpose of Catholic Action.
2. If its **former work was important**, and it probably was to have merited such confidence from the Bishop, then a new "Auxiliary of Catholic Action" will have to be set up to take care of that former work; for Catholic Action cannot be substituted for these auxiliaries which are as necessary in their own way as Catholic Action is in its way.

It is for this latter reason that it is obviously the **normal** procedure to "build up" Catholic Action from the beginning, and not to try to "transform" the auxiliaries into it. Such a transformation is the normal procedure only when there is question of already existing "Diocesan Councils" of Men, of Women, and of Youth which are not yet entirely in the line of Catholic Action. Here the transformation is mostly a matter of greatly improved methods and principles of action and organization, while in other cases it is a radical shifting of fundamental purposes.

LESSON IV

The Issues Involved

14. Christianizing the World

For the real issues involved are tremendous: One of the clearest statements on the subject lies tucked away in "**Quadregesimo Anno**" where (because this encyclical is not one dealing explicitly with Catholic Action) it has perhaps not been sufficiently integrated with other documents on Catholic Action: "We believe that to attain this last named lofty purpose (Christian Social Order) for the true and permanent advantage of the common good, there is need before and above all else of the blessing of God, and, in the second place, of the **cooperation of all men of good will**. We believe, moreover, as a necessary consequence, that the end intended will be more certainly attained, **the greater the contribution furnished by men of technical, commercial, and social competence, and, more still, by Catholic principles and their application**. We look for this contribution, **not to Catholic Action** (which has no intention of displaying any strictly syndical or political activities) **but to Our Sons, whom Catholic Action imbues with these principles and trains for the Apostolate under the guidance and direction of the Church**, of the Church, we say, which in the above mentioned sphere [note that this means in the temporal], as in all others where moral questions are discussed and regulated, cannot forget or neglect its mandate as custodian and teacher, given it by God." (Bold face and note added.)

15. What Does This Imply?

It will be remembered that in Lesson II of these studies it was pointed out that the temporal and spiritual powers were essentially distinct and differentiated, but that somehow the temporal has to be subordinated to spiritual ends—and that this constitutes the great problem of history: the age-long struggle between the temporal and spiritual powers, a struggle that is far from finished in our own world of militant totalitarianism.

Now the new idea—or rather the long neglected truth—which Catholic Action has insistently brought to the world's attention, is that there is just one point in the world where the spiritual and temporal are, so to say, identical; and there-

fore just one point where the problem can ultimately be solved. This one point is in the **personal responsibility of the Christian laity**, whose life, led in the world is still a Christian, i.e. a **fully spiritual life**. The whole thing can be put briefly by saying that the Christian works out his salvation, with the help of Divine Grace, through the duties of his state of life.

Thus in the life of every Catholic Layman, whose duties of state lie in the temporal order, we have a material identification of temporal and spiritual values.

16. The Greatness of Pope Pius XI

Now it is the genius of Pope Pius XI to have singled out this one point in the entire universe where spiritual and temporal meet, to place precisely upon it the whole vast weight of social reform and of the rechristianization of human society.

Let us put it this way: No matter how many good sermons would be preached in the world, no matter how many good books were published, no matter how holy or devoted the priests and religious would be in their own lives, there would still be no Christian life in the temporal order **until the laymen took it there**. There can be no Christian homes until the people in them are Christian; there can be no Christian factories until the workmen in them are Christian; there can be no Christian professions until the doctors and lawyers and scientists in them are Christian; there can be no Christian State until the politicians and statesmen who rule them are Christians. **Until the Christian laity assumes its own responsibilities, Christianity can have no adequate "grip" on the world!**

17. "The Participation of the Laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy"

Now the full import of the passage quoted from **Quadragesimo Anno** should be clear: The new solution of the age-old problem of the Spiritual and Temporal is going to be worked out in the **personal responsibility of all Catholic laymen**; and Catholic Action is that whole vast complex of formation and of organization, of principles of action and of techniques and methods, by which this responsibility is to be engaged and implemented in the temporal order, and directed by Ecclesiastical authority in the spiritual order. And for this great task, the old methods and organizations simply do not suffice.

And keeping in mind what has just been explained about the inability of sermons, religious books, the action of the clergy, taken strictly in themselves, to penetrate and inform the temporal (which is what is meant by "Christianization"), the full force of Pope Pius XI's marvelous definition of Catholic Action begins to become clear: "The participation of the laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy." It becomes clear also why the Pope liked to quote the designation of the laity as a "royal priesthood" taken from the second epistle of St. Peter: "royal" because its effects are in the temporal, and "priesthood" because it is a spiritual ministry.

Notes and Questions, Lesson IV

14. Christianizing the World

Note that the same doctrine was taught by the present Sovereign Pontiff while he was yet Secretary of State:

"It is true that socio-economic activity as such, must not be confused with Catholic Action strictly considered; but it is also true that the faithful, well formed in the ranks of Catholic Action, will know, in turn, how to give life to opportune works for the assistance of the working classes, which works, while retaining their own special character and responsibility in whatever refers to the purely economic and social aspects, will inspire themselves in the moral and religious order, by the superior directives inculcated by Catholic Action, with which latter they ought always to maintain a very useful and fitting collaboration."—(Letter of Cardinal Pacelli to the Chilean Hierarchy.)

a. Why is it stated that "Quadragesimo Anno" does not deal expressly with Catholic Action? With what kind of Action does it deal? (cf. Sections 4-9)

b. When Pope Pius XI speaks of "men of technical, commercial, and social competence" does he have in mind the clergy or the laity? Referring to section 5 of this pamphlet, to which of the "two Powers" does this "competence" belong?

c. The Holy Father says that he "looks for this contribution not from Catholic Action but from Our Sons whom Catholic Action . . . trains" is he just quibbling? What would be the difference between looking for a new social order:

a) from Catholic Action directly, or

b) from Catholic laymen whom Catholic Action has trained?

(Refer once more to the doctrine of "the two powers" for your answer.)

d. How about this for a solution: responsibility for social order (i.e. responsibility for the temporal) cannot rest on Catholic Action (which is essentially spiritual) but can very well rest—in fact must rest—on the laymen. (cf. Sections 15 and 16)

15. What does this imply?

Note: "Material identification" means that the same matter has both

spiritual value and temporal value; for instance: when a father provides for his family his act has not only an economic value, but also the value of Christian virtue—Justice and Charity—and is meritorious for heaven. If he obstinately refused to provide for his family he would be seriously unjust and uncharitable, and would not get to heaven.

Perhaps the most striking way of illustrating this fact is to cite Our Lord's description of the Last Judgment: "Come ye blessed of my Father ——" Note that every one of the things which Our Lord mentions at this supreme moment are things which you can do with your hands! (Matthew XXV. 31 to 46)

a. Why is the personal responsibility of the Christian Laity the only point where the problem of the relation of the Spiritual and temporal Powers can ultimately be solved?

b. Once this is understood, is the layman's role in the Christianization of society an active or a passive one?

16. The Greatness of Pope Pius XI

a. Where did Pope Pius XI place the burden of Social Reconstruction?

b. Can you suggest a reason why the Encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" (on Reconstruction of Social Order) is addressed not only (as all encyclicals are) to the Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops in Union with the Apostolic See, but also (a very unusual thing) "to all the faithful of the Catholic world?"

c. In order to place this responsibility on the laymen, will the Holy Father have to bring them into more intimate union with Spiritual authority—i.e. with the Hierarchy? (cf. Sections 27, and 56 to 62)

17. "The Participation of the Laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy"

a. Do you think Catholic Action is going to be something so simple that everybody can understand it at first glance, if it is really "that whole vast complex of formation and organization, of principles of action, and of techniques and methods" as stated in this section?

b. Yet there are innumerable Catholics who take it for granted that they understand everything about Catholic Action, even though they have never taken the trouble to study it. Without even bothering to ask such a person what his idea of Catholic Action is, what would be your guess as to whether or not it would be correct?

c. Pope Pius XI always insisted that Catholic action was in essence as old as Christianity itself, and something new only in the modern form which he gave it. Was this "participation of the Laity" in the Apostolate really a characteristic of Christianity from the beginning? Why?

d. For a note on the words "Participation" or "collaboration," see notes to Section 34.

LESSON V

Definition and Characteristics of Catholic Action

18. The Work of Understanding

It may be wondered why we have spent so much time insisting that Catholic Action is different from all other forms of action, without having given as yet any precise indication of what Catholic Action is. The reason is in Pope Pius XI's own statement that Catholic Action was difficult to understand—a clear idea, he called it, but a difficult one; so that it could not be understood unless it were approached **without preconceived ideas**. Up to now we have been preoccupied in these studies with removing preconceived ideas.

We are now ready to begin the real work of understanding, and in fact have already quoted the classical definition of Catholic Action given by Pope Pius XI: "The participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy."

19. What Use is a Definition?

It is important to notice that like all definitions this one has meaning only for those who have already studied carefully the meaning of its terms; for definitions are never intended to be an adequate explanation of something not yet known, but only a summary statement of what is already known. Anyone who could read a dictionary, for instance, could know that "chemistry is the science which treats of the relations and affinities of matter considered as composed of atoms," but this would not qualify him for a job in a laboratory.

Those people therefore who take this definition of Pius XI and pretend that from it alone, without any further study, they can understand Catholic Action, are simply deceiving themselves and leading others astray.

20. The Characteristics of Catholic Action

Writers on Catholic Action, analyzing the definition, are in the habit of pointing out four great characteristics which must exist **together** before Catholic Action can be present. These characteristics and their principal implications are outlined in the following table which will indicate the future development of these studies.

- I. Catholic Action is the work of laymen.
 - a. of lay responsibility, and hence of intense personal formation.
 - b. of lay responsibility in and to one's own "natural medium" of life.
- II. Catholic Action is an apostolate.
 - a. an apostolate of like by like.
 - b. a social apostolate.
 - c. and at the same time a universal apostolate.
- III. Catholic Action is organized in a definite way.
 - a. in a way determined by hierarchical authority.
 - b. and fitting into a universal plan of world organization.
 - c. characterized by "milieu-specialization."
 - d. and by "cell-technique."
- IV. Catholic Action is under the direct authority of the hierarchy.
 - a. mandated by the Bishop, and subordinate to him.
 - b. and thus possessing an official status in the Church's apostolate.

All other Catholic activities whatever will possess one or more of these characteristics but **only** Catholic Action unites them all. Let us now examine them in order.

Notes and Questions, Lesson V

18. The Work of Understanding

- a. Are you of the opinion now that Catholic Action will require real study and effort before it can be set up and developed? Why?
- b. Do you think it will be worth that effort? Why?
- c. What is meant by "approaching Catholic Action without preconceived ideas?"
- d. Would it be a "preconceived idea" to insist that "Catholic Action is what we have been doing all along"?
- e. How would you now answer a person who had this idea? Write your answer down and keep it till after these studies are finished; then see if you can't then improve on your answer.

19. What Use is a Definition?

- a. Why is it that you must know the meaning of the terms of a definition before you can say that you know the definition?
- b. Are all forms of Lay Apostolate Catholic Action? (cf. Section 11)

20. The Characteristics of Catholic Action

a. Pope Pius XI, in explaining why he gave the name "auxiliaries of Catholic Action" to the "other forms of action" (especially Spiritual and Charitable), gave three reasons:

1. "they correspond in their purpose to many of the ends of Catholic Action."
2. "they prepare the way for Catholic Action," and
3. "they supply the active elements of Catholic Action."

Now, in the light of this explanation, isn't it to be expected that in certain respects the "auxiliaries" will resemble Catholic Action quite closely?

b. When confronted with a confusion, therefore, between Catholic Action and its "auxiliaries" should you allow the discussion to be limited to one or the other isolated characteristic, or should you insist that it extend to all the characteristics **together**?

c. Would an organization be "Catholic Action":

1. When it has **one** of the characteristics here outlined?
2. When it has **all but one**?
3. When it has **all without exception**?

d. Note, however, that many of the characteristics can exist in a more or less rudimentary stage, but since the mandate from the Bishops must be officially expressed and specific for Catholic Action, it is always clearly present or absent. Wouldn't this, therefore, be, on the whole, the best single point on which to judge?

LESSON VI

The First Characteristic of Catholic Action —A Work of Laymen

21. A Work of Laymen

First, Catholic Action is the work of laymen. It is by definition the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy. Here it is important to recall what was said at the beginning of these studies about the misunderstanding which exists in the very name "Catholic Action" in English.

22. No Hysterics

Some people cry out in horror at the very idea that Catholic Action is the work of laymen. "Are the clergy excluded?" they ask. "Are the Bishops outside? Cannot the Pope engage in Catholic Action?" It will be immediately evident that all of these hysterics come from the idea that the word "action" is here used in a general sense of **any activity at all**, and not in the limited technical sense of a definite form of organization and a definite set of **methods and principles**. It is quite easy to understand how an organization can be entirely Catholic without all the Bishops and the Holy Father belonging to it. The difficulty arises only when the idea of a definite organization is lost sight of, with the subsequent ridiculous inference that the Bishops and the Pope are being excluded from Catholicism as a whole.

23. Necessity of the Lay Apostolate

Now let us look at the necessity for this particular work of laymen which is known as "Catholic Action." It is a participation of the laity in the apostolate. If it is necessary, therefore, it must imply that the clergy are somehow insufficient, when alone, to carry on the complete apostolate of the Church.

24. More Hysterics

This also arouses opposition to Catholic Action among certain people who think it is an unjust reflection upon the divine institution of the hierarchy. There is a rather famous French pun which expresses the idea rather cleverly, saying that the object of Catholic Action is to "*remedier a l'insuffisance du clerge par la suffisance des laics,*" where

“insuffisance” and “suffisance” really mean respectively “incompetence” and “inpertinence” instead of “insufficiency” and “sufficiency,” as might at first appear.

25. But the Clergy Really Can't Do It All

But no such reflection on the divine institution of the hierarchy is implied in the necessity of Catholic Action. As a matter of fact it is true in three different ways that the clergy alone are insufficient for the needs of the apostolate. The first of these ways is easily understood, and is as old as Christianity itself; for Our Lord, Himself, complained that the fields were white to the harvest, but that the laborers were few. And there has been no time since when the Church was delivered from this shortage of her apostolic workers.

To this matter of simple numbers we can add another kind of insufficiency of the clergy which is easily understood—that is, their inability to conquer directly a strongly entrenched hostility to their work. There are large sections of modern society which distrust the clergy and resist their efforts, so that their direct influence is rendered almost impossible, since the apostolate must always either find or make a sympathetic audience before it is effective. In both of the above cases it is evident that laymen can and should help the clergy in the apostolate, and that in thus helping they make up for a very real “insufficiency.”

26. Something More Profound

But there is another “insufficiency” which is more profound, and perhaps for that very reason, less understood. Here we can employ the ideas set forth at the beginning of these studies on the distinction between the spiritual and temporal power, and on the difficulties that arise if one of them tries to work directly in the field of the other. Now insofar as the apostolate has as its object the formation, not only of Christian individuals, but also, though indirectly, of a Christian social order—of “the City of God on Earth”—it must somehow be entrusted, not only to the clergy who wield the spiritual power, but also to the laymen who are directly concerned with the temporal. It will at once be recognized that this carrying over of Christian principles **into the details of secular life**, which alone can ultimately constitute a Christian society, is beyond the direct action of the clergy, as has already been pointed out in these studies; so that the laity, in supplying this “grip” of Christianity on the temporal order, are, in a very real

sense, "collaborating" in the apostolate which Our Lord gave to His apostles when He told them to go forth into the whole world.

Notes and Questions, Lesson VI

21. Work of Laymen

- a. What misunderstanding is referred to here (cf. Section 2)?
- b. Why should it be particularly important here to recall this (see Section 22)?

22. No Hysterics

a. What kind of apostolate do the Bishops have in comparison with the apostolate of Catholic Action? (cf. the definition in Section 18)

b. Point out some ways in which the priest's apostolate is different from that of Catholic Action on these points:

1. Possession of the "power of Orders"?
2. Delegation of the "powers of jurisdiction"?

(Consult the Catholic Encyclopedia—article Hierarchy)

3. Competence in the spiritual or temporal field of the one who exercises the apostolate? (cf. Section 16)

4. Kind of action (cf. Section 9)

Note: Religious Brothers and Sisters also do not have that particular form of "Participation in the Apostolate" which is known as "Catholic Action." They form an intermediate group between the "Laity" and the "clergy" and in Catholic Action theory, are classed in a broad sense, with the latter.

23. Necessity of the Lay Apostolate

a. From the time of Pope Leo XIII on, the modern Popes have all insisted on the importance of rallying the Catholic laity to work with the Bishops and priests. Can you suggest any historical reasons which explain this insistence?

b. Can you suggest any reasons that flow from the very nature of the apostolate? (cf. Sections 25, 26)

c. Did lay men and women take part in the apostolate from the beginning? (cf. Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, Chapter XVI; I Corinthians XVI, 19; II Timothy IV, 19 to 21; Titus III, 13)

- d. Note the following passage:

With his deep understanding of the needs of the Church, Pius X often had views of rare accuracy. Happening to be one day amidst a group of Cardinals, the Holy Father said to them: "What is the thing most necessary at the present time to save society?" "Build Catholic Schools," said one. "No." "Multiply Churches," replied another. "No again." "Increase the recruiting of the clergy," said a third. "No, no," replied the Pope. "What is most necessary at the present time, is to have in each parish a group of laymen at the same time virtuous, enlightened, determined, and really apostolic."

Other details enable us to affirm that this holy pope at the end of his life counted, for the salvation of the world, on the training, by the zeal of the clergy, of Catholics devoting themselves to the apostolate by word and action, but above all, by example. In the dioceses in which he exercised the ministry before becoming Pope, he attached less importance to the census of parishioners than to the list of those capable of radiating an apostolic influence. He considered that in any class whatever, chosen ones could be formed.

From Chautard: *The Soul of the Apostolate*, Gethsemani, 1941, p. 161-162.

24. More Hysterics

Note: The pun quoted here is a take-off on this text of Pope Pius XI: "Catholic Action is not only legitimate and necessary, but it is indispensable—as legitimate and necessary as the (Hierarchical) apostolate itself, which has need of it. And this need of the Hierarchical Apostolate cannot fail to be an indispensable right . . . (i.e. of the Hierarchy to the collaboration of the laity.) It is God Himself Who demands this aid which thus constitutes not only a right but a need, the most transcendent need that can be imagined, a need that is legitimate, that is necessary.

"It is necessary because the Episcopal Apostolate of today, the continuation of the primitive apostolate of the Twelve, cannot be sufficient unto itself: it experiences an imperious necessity to multiply its own action with the help of the multiple hands, arms, and lips, the multiple hearts and wills (of the laity)!" (Pius XI, Discourse to Catholic Association of Rome, March 19, 1931)

This can indeed be summed up by the phrase "make up for the insufficiency of the clergy (for the needs of the apostolate) by the resources of the laity;" but the French pun quoted in Section 24 twists this into "remedy the incompetence of the clergy by the arrogance and presumption of the laity." Evidently the clever person who thought that one up didn't trust the laity; but do you think he was approaching Catholic Action "without preconceived ideas"? (cf. Section 18)

25. But the Clergy Really Can't Do It All.

a. Point out examples in the Gospels where Our Lord Himself accepted the aid of others than the Apostles in the spread of His teachings and influence.

b. Are there certain classes of modern society which are more open to the lay apostolate than to the action of the priest?

c. In times of persecution the role of the laity in the apostolate always increases. Isn't this an indication that they have possibilities of apostolic action even when freedom of action is denied to the regular ministers of religion?

26. Something More Profound.

a. What is meant by the "grip" of Christianity on the temporal order? (cf. Sections 16, 17)

b. Why is this necessary before there can be a Christian Social Order?

Note: The above considerations (25, 26) on the necessity of Catholic Action are also true of the "Lay Apostolate" in general. (Catholic Activities as well as Catholic Action.)

LESSON VII

Corollaries of the First Characteristic

27. Responsibility of the Laymen—Authority of the Hierarchy

This brings us immediately to the question of lay responsibility which is so important in any understanding of Catholic Action. Since this mission of setting up a Christian social order is directly the work of laymen, it is they and only they, who have the direct responsibility of bringing it about. The clergy—more specifically the Hierarchy—have the authority, as part of their apostolate, to declare whether a given social institution is, or is not, conformable to Christian principles; and to direct that it be reformed if it is un-Christian. But the actual work of social reform or of social construction rests entirely on the responsibility of the laymen. It is precisely when they exercise this responsibility in a way deliberately calculated to render more effective the authority of the Hierarchy, that they can truly be said to participate in this aspect also of the latter's apostolate and it is in this sense that their responsibility becomes a part of Catholic Action theory, although the actual work which they do in the temporal order lies outside Catholic Action.

28. Danger!

It is almost dangerous to speak of "responsibility of the laity under the authority of the Hierarchy" without further explanation and examples, for obviously there is room for serious misunderstanding on both the limits and the interrelations of this authority and of this responsibility; and misunderstanding here is dynamite. But we must leave aside such explanations because of the limitations of space imposed upon this study. Let it be sufficient to warn once more that this is no place for hysterics—what is really needed is study.

29. Responsibility in and to One's Own "Natural Medium" of Life

This personal responsibility has a corollary which is one of the most publicized features of Catholic Action. Since this participation in the apostolate is thus a matter of personal responsibility, it must be exercised in the ordinary field of one's personal responsibility; that is to say, in one's

regular daily life, with its family, professional, and civic tasks and duties. This is the meaning of the famous responsibility "to one's own milieu." This French word "milieu" is sometimes translated in English by "surroundings—environment—one's own place," but none of these words is satisfactory. The real translation is "medium" in such a sentence as this: "Air is the **medium** in which we live, whereas water is the medium of the fish." Notice that it thus means much more than mere surroundings: the air as our "natural medium" not only surrounds us, but penetrates us, supports our very life; so that without it that life would be impossible. The idea is that our lives, since we are social beings, are inextricably bound up with one another, so that we would possess no fully human life in complete isolation, and our life is always strongly influenced by the lives of those with whom we are constantly associated.

Thus each one's personal responsibility extends beyond his own life to the lives of those with whom his own existence is intimately bound up. Workers are responsible for the christianization of the working class, professional men are responsible for christianization of the professions, students and professors are responsible for the christianization of the universities, etc. We will come back to this point later, when we discuss the organization of Catholic Action; but for the moment it will suffice to say that this responsibility to each one's own "natural medium" of life is one of the most fruitful and profound ideas of Catholic Action.

30. Intense Personal Formation

Personal responsibility has still another corollary, and that is **intense personal formation**. It is really a serious defect that in such a general outline as this, we cannot give full attention to this question of personal formation. The only excuse is that this is not a complete and practical outline, but only a brief exposition of the theory of Catholic Action. It will be evident at once that without this intense personal formation, all the fine theories in the world have no practical value.

31. Spiritual First—Professional, Civic, etc., Also:

It should be further evident that this personal formation must, above all, embrace the spiritual life since Catholic Action is, in its nature, a spiritual work. In addition, it must prepare the one who engages in Catholic Action for his work in his family life, in his professional life, and in

his civic life. This point is so important that you will find that many people who attempt to explain Catholic Action seem almost to limit themselves entirely to this question of personal formation. It is really a mistake so to limit Catholic Action, but it is not a mistake to say that **personal formation can never be emphasized enough in Catholic Action.**

32. The Method of Responsibility—"Observe, Judge, Act"

This personal formation can never be a matter of mere instruction and information: its task at all times is to awaken and engage the sense of personal responsibility in the Christianization of one's own "natural medium" of life. Now off-hand one would be tempted to say that the easiest thing in the world would be to gear one's responsibility closely to the problems of one's own daily life, since those problems should be the most obvious and pressing of all. As a matter of fact, they are nothing of the sort: the same trick of human nature that makes it so much easier to see others' faults than one's own, is a standing temptation to work on every one else's problems except one's own. How many exemplary people there are who have constituted themselves apostolic crusaders to the world at large, and who completely neglect the black sheep in their own family! And what about the doctor who will lecture to workers on Communism at the drop of a hat, but is not disturbed by the mounting paganism of sterilization, euthanasia, and birth-control clinics within his own profession? Or the worker whose only preoccupation is to reform the capitalists, who in their turn live and breathe only to protect the workers from Communism and anarchy? It would be funny if it were not so tragic: nobody sweeping before his own door because everybody is out leading or joining a crusade to keep the city clean!

Catholic Action has had to develop a special technique to get the problems of one's own "natural medium" of life out into the open and attach responsibility to them. It is called the "Inquiry Method" and consists of three successive steps of common action in small groups or cells: **Observe, Judge, Act.** It is the first two of these steps which have for their purpose to fix responsibility; the third step will be considered later. This method is so profound and difficult to grasp completely that it deserves a whole series of studies similar to this one, all to itself; but our purpose in this "Introduction to Catholic Action" is simply to point out the important things, not to explain them.

33. Danger Again—Great Danger!

As a final remark in this section on Catholic Action as a work of the laity, it is in place to warn against the dangers that are likely to arise. Catholic Action is not well received in many quarters because too many laymen have seized on it as their justification for many organized activities which have nothing to do with Catholic Action, or may even be positively dangerous to the Church. This comes about by an unbalanced insistence in these men's minds on this single first point that Catholic Action is the work of the laity, with perhaps also some attention to the second point, that it is an apostolate; but with **no attention at all** to the final two essential points which we are to examine: that it is organized in a definite official way and that it is under the direct authority of the Hierarchy. There are cases on record where laymen have even refused to obey a direct order of ecclesiastical authority on the ground that what they were doing was Catholic Action and within their rights as laymen. Evidently such an attitude is against the very definition of Catholic Action, and those who take it are working in the most effective way possible to destroy Catholic Action.

Notes and Questions, Lesson VII

27. Responsibility of Laymen—Authority of the Hierarchy.

a. Point out the phrases in the quotation in Section 14 which indicates that "the responsibility of the laymen is a part of Catholic Action Theory, although the actual work which they do in the temporal order lies outside Catholic Action."

b. What is the meaning of the phrase "to exercise this responsibility in a way to render more effective the authority of the hierarchy"? (cf. Sections 60, 61)

c. We speak of the responsibility of the Hierarchy in the temporal order as an "indirect responsibility," the word "indirect" meaning that it is exercised directly only on some intermediary which in its turn is directly responsible. What is this intermediary?

28. Danger

a. In order to arrive at a proper understanding of "both the limits and the inter-relations of this authority and of this responsibility," would it be better for the Clergy and laity to work close together, or each separated from the other?

b. How does Catholic Action solve this problem? (cf. Sections 57, 59, 60)

29. Responsibility In and To One's Own "Natural Medium" of Life.

a. The Philosophers say that man is "by nature" a social being. What is the meaning of "by nature"?

b. St. Paul says that "we are all members, one of another." What does he mean?

c. In the light of these truths of Philosophy and Faith, which of these ideals is the truly Christian one:

1. I am going to be good in spite of my surroundings.

2. I am going to be good in surroundings that I have made better.

d. People who do know the theory of Catholic Action sometimes like to trip up those who don't by asking them a curious question. "If you had a gold-fish pond," they say, "and the water became polluted, would you rescue your fish with a hook or with a net?"

When most people get pulled in and answer, "Why with the net, of course," the questioner suggests the proposal that it would be better still just to change the water and leave the fish in it!

Once you have got the idea, it is startling to see how much of our Catholic activity and education is of either the "hook" or the "net" variety. Catholic Action goes in a big way for "changing the water" in all the pools there are. We won't have space to discuss this point very much in these pages, but it is intimately bound up with the "inquiry Method" (Section 32) and the "Cell Technique." (Sections 49, 50)

30. Intense Personal Formation.

a. Pope Pius XI in defining Catholic Action said that it "consists not merely in the pursuit of personal Christian perfection, which is, however, before all others its first and greatest end, but it also consists of a true apostolate . . ."

Why would the "pursuit of personal Christian perfection" necessarily be the first and greatest end of a "true apostolate"?

b. There are some people very "active" by inclination who seem to work on the theory that they can make up by doing good for not being good. Even granting that good works are a means of grace for the person who does them, and hence that they are to a certain extent a means of personal formation, what would be the effect of substituting "doing good" for "being good":

1. On the efficacy of the "good" that is done (example, force of conviction, discipline.)

2. On the ability of such an "apostle" to tackle the really hard jobs of Christianization which demand the highest degree of sacrifice and self-abnegation.

3. On the sincerity—and therefore, on the whole character—of one who would consciously preach what he does not practice.

4. On his perseverance in "doing good."

31. Spiritual First—Professional, Civic, etc., Also.

a. What light is thrown on the necessity of spiritual formation by our Lord's treatment of the Pharisees? (cf. Mark VII, Matthew XV)

b. By our Lord's teaching of the necessity of "abiding in Him" to be fruitful? (John XV)

c. By our Lord's discourse on the "Good Shepherd"? (John X)

d. What do you think was wrong with those who claimed to have preached and prophesied and worked miracles in the name of Christ, but to whom Our Lord answered: "I never knew you!" (Matt. VII, 22, 23)?

e. Why was "The Great Apostle," St. Paul, still afraid "lest having preached to others, I myself become a castaway"?

32. The Method of training—"Observe, judge, act."

a. Why aren't "mere instruction and information" enough? For instance, suppose a man who cannot play a piano studies physics and specializes in sound, where he learns more about the theoretical aspects of the piano than any concert pianist would ever be expected to know. Would he then be able to play better than the concert pianist—or, for that matter, would he be able to play at all—without a totally different kind of training from the one he had received?

b. Is there perhaps a lesson in this for much of our teaching of religion? Why do you think the Holy Father once referred to Catholic Action as the "natural complement of Christian Education"?

c. Go through the program of the Catholic Activities you know personally, to see how much of their work is aimed at discovering and correcting defects in the Christian life of each member himself, and how much of it is aimed at converting "the rest of the members" (not each one himself), or doing good to people entirely outside the organization.

Such work, of course, is necessary, BUT:

1. Is it sufficient?

2. Is it primary?

d. Note the place of the "Inquiry Method" in this whole study on Catholic Action. The Inquiry Method is tremendously important, as it is just about the only way we know of, at the present time to develop the intense personal responsibility necessary for Catholic Action. But when this fact becomes clear to people who are working towards Catholic Action, they become so enthusiastic over it that they are in danger of giving the impression that it and the correlative "cell technique" are the whole of Catholic Action! A special effort must be made here to keep one's head, and see the Theory of Catholic Action as a whole.

33. Danger Again—Great Danger!

a. What are the layman's "rights" to Catholic Action?

(To answer this question, it is necessary to remember once more the important distinctions between the general "lay apostolate" and that specific form of lay apostolate which is an official participation in the Hierarchical Apostolate.)

b. Do laymen have a duty, and therefore, a right to apostolic effort. (cf. Sections 35 and 36)?

c. Now read Sections 56, 57, 58. Can you say the same thing about Catholic Action: 1. Before the Bishop's "mandate"? 2. After the Bishop's mandate?

d. What are the reasons for the difference?

LESSON VIII

The Second Great Characteristic of Catholic Action—It is an APOSTOLATE

34. It is an Apostolate

We now come to the second great characteristic of Catholic Action: the fact that it is an apostolate. To go back once more to the definition, it is the "Participation of the laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy." It is essentially, dynamically an apostolate, carried on by the Christian laity.

35. Old as Christendom

We might notice immediately that in this essential aspect Catholic Action is nothing new, but has existed from the very beginning of the Church. It is as old as the idea **Christianus alter Christus**: "The Christian is another Christ." When by baptism and the other sacraments of the Church we are incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ, our life, so to say, takes on the same purpose that Christ's life had on earth. We live His life in the life of grace, and to a certain extent we live it for the same purpose. Now what was Christ's purpose in His Incarnation and in His life on earth? It was the salvation of mankind. So every Christian, by the very fact that he is a Christian and leads the life of Christ, has as the purpose of that life the salvation of mankind as well as his own salvation. It must be admitted, however, that this has not always been fully realized by Christians, and that especially in modern times Catholics have been manoeuvred by a triumphant secularism into a passive and defensive attitude which is anything but apostolic and dynamic.

36. Digression: Why are Communists Revolutionary?

We might draw a little parallel. Suppose we heard someone exclaiming in great astonishment over the fact that a number of Communists were agitating for revolution. Would we not simply ask such a person what in the world he expects from Communists; since it is quite evident that people become Communists only for that purpose, and we would be surprised only if they did not agitate for revolution. Now it is no great compliment to our understanding of what Christianity means that we can conceive it as something which is not apostolic in exactly as vigorous and essential a

way as Communism is revolutionary. Just as it is hard to explain why a man should become a Communist if he is not interested in revolution, so it is hard, even impossible, to understand why a man should become a Christian if he is not interested in the apostolate. Why else in fact should he become "another Christ"?

37. The Apostolate Is a Complicated Business

Now this apostolate is somewhat more difficult and more complicated than most people give it credit for being. We might penetrate its complexity in a summary sort of way by breaking it down into three degrees or stages.

Notes and Questions, Lesson VIII

34. It Is An Apostolate.

a. Referring back to Section 19, is it clearer now, after having examined only one of the characteristics of Catholic Action, how the bare-definition alone is not enough to understand Catholic Action?

b. Would you, for instance, have been able to answer the fundamental question just asked concerning Section 33, if you had only the definition to judge from?

c. Since Catholic Action is a participation in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy, there should be in a complete study a chapter on the nature of the Hierarchical Apostolate itself. A short study like this must take such knowledge for granted, but a study group could turn to some good modern text on the Church for material. Books published even as long ago as the "Catholic Encyclopedia" (1915) are likely to be exceedingly disappointing in direct reference to the "Apostolate."

Note on "Participation": Some people for one reason or another pretend to see in Pope Pius XII's consistent use of the words "co-operation" and "collaboration" in the Hierarchy's Apostolate (instead of Pope Pius XI's favorite word "participation") an effort "to put the laity back again in their proper place," and to modify the whole theory of Catholic Action. What do you think of this pretension in view of the following facts?

1. Pope Pius XI also used the words "cooperation" and "collaboration," and in the same context as "participation."

2. It is thus dangerous to say the least to build a whole theory of Catholic life on the employment of one or the other of a group of synonyms thus employed in the same context with apparently equivalent meaning.

3. Pope Pius XI's doctrine on the great dignity of the laity in the Apostolate of Catholic Action does not rest on any interpretation of a single word—he developed it explicitly, clearly, and often; as, for example in the Encyclical "Miserentissimus Redemptor" (where he bases the obligation of Reparation to the Sacred Heart on the fact of the incorporation of all into Christ, and the association of all Christians

in his priesthood:) "The Apostle admonishes us . . . that having become partakers of His body and eternal Priesthood, we should offer up 'gifts and sacrifices for sins' (Heb. 5:1). For not only are they partakers in the mystery of this priesthood and in the duty of offering sacrifices and satisfaction to God, who have been appointed by Jesus Christ the High Priest as the minister of such sacrifices . . . but also those Christians called, and rightly so, by the Prince of the Apostles 'a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood' (I Peter 2:9), and who are called to offer 'sacrifices for sin' (Heb. 5:1), not only for themselves but for all mankind, and this in much the same way as every priest."

Original text: A.A.S., 20 (1928), 165.

Quoted in *Lay Participation in Christ's Priesthood*, by Rev. William Kavanagh, S.T.D., The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1935.

4. Pope Pius XII uses the same word "cooperation" in speaking of:

a. The Apostolate of the Church Herself

(Note that in this usage Christ is the Great Apostle—"As the Father hath sent me"—and all human agents, even the Church as a whole, are collaborators and cooperators in that Apostolate—"I also send you.")

5. Pope Pius XII has several times spoken of Catholic Action as the "most precious heritage" which he received from his illustrious predecessor, and one which he will "always have at heart."

6. And finally, Pius XII used the word "Participation" in his Encyclical "Summi Pontificatus" p. 38 (N.C.W.C. edition). The whole discussion on this point should be dropped.

a. Refer once more to the texts indicated in Question 23 "c".

b. Young people who work in Catholic Action like to use the expression "plonger le Christ dans le milieu." English usage does not permit us to be quite so vivid; so we soften it to "introduce Christ into one's natural medium of life." It is important to grasp the full significance of what they mean. To "introduce Christ into one's natural medium of life" is simply to go there oneself and "act natural," for as a Christian each one is "another Christ," and will therefore have the same sort of influence on those around him that Christ Himself had while on earth. Thus the great preoccupation of the Christian always is this: Are those around me being changed for the better as they would certainly be if Christ were personally here with them instead of my being here? If they are not, then I am not "living up" to my incorporation in Christ, for insofar as I do live up to it, Christ is actually here, and Christ could not be here without changing things!

Now do you ever place yourself face to face with this tremendous significance of what it is to "be a Christian?" Do you think you still have some work to do before you, by your very presence there, can "Introduce Christ into your natural medium of life?" But can you begin right now? Can you pretend to be a real Christian if you don't?

36. Why are Communists Revolutionary?

a. Do you think the parallel drawn in this section is justified?

b. Yet do you not know many Christians who are not at all apostolic? How about yourself, perhaps?

c. Do you think the reason assigned in the last sentence of Section 35 is correct?

d. Can you give some other reasons?

37. The Apostolate is a Complicated Business.

What is the common opinion among your acquaintances of the apostolate? Is it looked on as something which "everybody understands," or as something which really requires intense study? Keep a sort of record of your conclusions to be referred to after studying the next chapter. It will help you to discover whether your own idea of the Apostolate is complete.

LESSON IX

How Big a Job is the Apostolate?

38. The First Stage: This is Elementary

The first one is the **apostolate of conversion** which we all understand, and to which, unfortunately, most of us limit the meaning of the word "apostolate." It means getting someone else who is not a Christian, or has ceased to live up to his Faith, to become a Christian or to return to the Church.

39. Something Harder—the Second Stage

But there is still something to do after conversion, and this brings us to the second stage of the apostolate—the **apostolate of personal perfection**, whether of one's self or of those with whom he lives. And here we return once more by another route to that question of intense personal formation which is the most necessary thing in Catholic Action and which cannot be emphasized enough. It will be seen immediately that in comparison with this stage, the first stage (the apostolate of conversion) is only a **beginning** which, if allowed to stop there, is practically fruitless; for it will have no depth and solidity. Both new converts and those who are already Catholics must be given that sense of personal responsibility for Christianity in their own lives and in their "natural medium" of which we have already spoken; and this engaging of Christian responsibility is in itself a real apostolate of Christian perfection.

40. More Complicated Still: Third Stage.

But even this second stage of Christian perfection is not the whole story, it touches directly only the individual conscience and individual perfection. There is still the great field—much more complex, much more difficult to work in—of the Christian social order; of the building up of social morality; of **forming the conscience, so to say of society**. It is this third stage which contains some of the greatest difficulties in the **understanding** of Catholic Action (as distinguished from the great difficulties of **practice** in the second) for it is the place where the distinction between temporal and the spiritual is most difficult to grasp. Since we cannot take time for real explanations now, we might play with words a bit and say that in so far as it is a

question of social morality, it is spiritual; but in so far as it is a question of social order, it is temporal.

41. Caution, Please!

This, of course, is not very clear but what is clear enough is that the theorists of Catholic Action are very cautious about their approach to this third stage. The ordinary way of explaining it is to say that a Christian social order is not included in Catholic Action, but is the effect of Catholic Action. It will suffice for our present purposes to recall what was said at the beginning of this series about the differences between Catholic Spiritual Action, Catholic Temporal Action and "Catholic Action"; and to point out that Catholic Action constitutes a sort of bridge from the spiritual to the temporal. Here we see the end of the bridge, so to say, which is anchored in the temporal, in the social order.

Notes and Questions, Lesson IX

38. The First Stage—This is Elementary.

a. Looked at just in itself, the Church in the United States has a fairly good record of conversions—over 70,000 a year now, and still increasing. But when you consider that there are between twenty and twenty-five millions of Catholics in the country, each one of them (except the very young and the hopelessly incapacitated) capable of making converts year after year, is our achievement so glorious? It may be an embarrassing question, but how many converts have you made so far?

b. Among all your acquaintances—and especially among your intimate friends—are there not some good prospects for conversion to the Faith?

c. Do you have any plan of campaign by which you can act as "another Christ," bringing those acquaintances and friends to the Faith?

d. If not, why not?

39. Something Harder—the Second Stage.

a. Why is the "Apostolate of Conversion" only a beginning? What remains to be done?

b. What is the "depth and solidity" of the Christian life which must still be acquired?

c. Is "living the life of Christ" and then "introducing Christ (i.e. oneself, living this life of Christ) into one's "natural medium" simply a matter of "good intention," or does it require real and solid work?

40. More Complicated Still: Third Stage.

a. Did you ever meet a young person who started out with high ideals, and after "bucking" the prevailing mediocrity around him for a few years, simply gave up trying?

b. Isn't it true that all of us are more or less in this situation when we feel ourselves fighting as "one against the field" in our efforts to be good?

c. Look carefully at the emphasized parts of this quotation from Pius XI (in the Encyclical on Atheistic Communism): "It happens all too frequently, however, under the salary system, that individuals are helpless to insure justice unless, with a view to its practice they organize institutions the object of which is to prevent competition incompatible with fair treatment for the workers. Where this is true it is the duty of contractors and employers to support and promote such necessary organizations as normal instruments enabling them to fulfill their obligations of justice." (Bold face added).

d. What does the Holy Father say about the power of isolated individuals to insure justice in the face of an unjust system? Does he say this is a rare or a frequent situation?

e. In suggesting the organization of institutions isn't he really saying "fight institutions (the unjust system) with institutions, and not as individuals"?

f. How does this compare with a phrase that is sometimes met in Catholic Action literature: "We must fight on even terms, and not one against the field?" (cf. Sections 46 to 55 on "Organization").

g. Does the Holy Father propose this "institutional action" as a mere counsel, or as a real duty?

h. What is the connection between this duty and the fact that such "institutional action" is in the Holy Father's words the normal instrument which makes justice possible?

NOTE: We have here touched on another point where the genius of Pius XI permitted him to see things so clearly that our befuddled world hasn't suspected yet what he was talking about—his addition of a whole new chapter on "Social Justice" to what he himself called the "pastoral theology of another day" ("The pastoral theology of another day will now no longer suffice"). A great many people who speak of Social Justice are "talking through their hat" even more than a great many of the people who speak of Catholic Action without having studied it.

It is far too vast a subject to go into here, but a glimpse of the real issues is possible by noting that in the above passage, where the individual is helpless in the face of established disorder to observe what we call "individual justice," he is still perfectly able to correct the "established disorder" by "social (organizational, institutional) justice," and then, with the disorder removed, he will once more be able to practice "individual justice."

Let us illustrate with an excerpt from a recent sermon:

"I know many business men, lawyers, physicians who lament the trend to the unethical in the special worlds in which they operate. They tell me that the tide is running against them, that too many of their rivals have reduced business ethics and professional ethics to three principles:

'Everybody's doing it.'

'If I don't do it, someone else will,' and

'You can't do business nowadays on old-fashioned principles.'

"Especially in metropolitan cities, they say the ethical degeneration is obvious. They blame this set of persons or that, but they all seem agreed that decline, if not actual decay, is upon us.

" 'It is easy enough,' they add, 'for you preachers to tell us to stand firm, to hew to the line, and all that. But, we have families to support, homes to maintain, food and clothing to buy. To do business on the morals of a past generation is as impossible as to do business with the methods of a past generation. We must do what the others do or be sunk. The crowd is running all one way; we cannot forever buck the stream!'"

Now notice here, transferred from the industrial field to that of professional and business life, exactly the situation described by Pope Pius XI:— It happens all too frequently under the present system that individuals are helpless to insure justice, i.e. they must do what their competitors do or be sunk. Now what was the answer the preacher gave to this lament of his business and professional friends? Just this:

"Right is right if nobody does it. Wrong is wrong if everybody does it."

Now this reply is not the complete answer. When a business man says, "In the present system I as an individual am helpless to insure justice. I know the system is unjust and I detest it, but I simply don't know how to buck it," it is almost mockery to reply to him that "there is a right and there is a wrong." If he didn't know that perfectly well already he wouldn't be calling the system unjust! What he wants to know is how to buck it, and he has a right to an answer to that problem, and not to the self-evident one of whether or not there is such a thing as right or wrong!

Thus the individual in the face of an unjust system may indeed be—in the words of Pius XI "all too frequently is"—helpless to insure justice, but he is never helpless to correct the system by organized and institutional action ("Social" Justice).

This is powerful doctrine, but we must confess that it has been largely overlooked—perhaps even ignored. We can be quite sure that it will never be widely accepted until Pius XI's other great idea, "Catholic Action," has been accepted, for it is only this latter which, by its organization and "institutionalizing" of Catholic life itself in each one's own "natural medium," can form that "social mentality" or "social conscience" which is essential to "Social Justice." (cf. Section 44). Otherwise we are helpless individuals trying to "rescue" each other "with a hook or with a net."

People who don't know Catholic Action are definitely afraid of this doctrine on the individual's "duty to correct the system" by organized and institutional action. They fear it is a "blank check for the crackpots and revolutionaries" (meaning those who lack the virtues of Prudence and Obedience respectively) who make more than enough trouble in the world already without being supplied with new and powerful temptations to "fly off the handle." We don't want to go too deeply into the problem here, but you ought to be able to give an answer to

this difficulty from what you already know of the relationship which must exist between personal responsibility and legitimate authority—one of the principle preoccupations of Catholic Action .(cf. Sections 27, 28, 33; and 56 to 61.)

41. Caution, Please!

a. Is the setting up of organizations and institutions as outlined by Pius XI for Social Justice, a direct work of Catholic Action, or is it "Catholic Temporal Action"? (cf. the passage quoted in Section 14).

b. But Pius XI thought that it could not be done **without** Catholic Action. Can you suggest some of his reasons for thinking so:—e.g.

1. Hopelessly individualistic outlook of older organizations and ideas of reform.
2. Need for engaging lay responsibility much more than in the past.
3. Need for greater union of effort.
4. Need for increased social consciousness ("working in one's own natural medium of life").

LESSON X

Corollaries of the Second Great Characteristic of Catholic Action

42. Let Our Own Ideas of the Apostolate be Complete:

Now it is unfortunate that so many people who talk glibly of the apostolate of Catholic Action really limit their ideas of it to the first stage of the apostolate, or perhaps to the first and second. It is really in the second and third stages that some of the greatest problems are to be faced. We can take this occasion to notice once more the necessity for personal formation in the third stage. For without a thorough knowledge of professional and civic problems, as well as those of the family and of other institutions, it is worse than futile to talk about Christianizing them and building up a Christian social order; for here of all places, **good intentions alone are not enough.**

43. Therefore Each One Should be an Apostle There Where He is Competent:

In his own "natural medium" of life, every man is, so to say, "a professional," that is, one with special competence for that state of life. People outside that "natural medium" are "amateurs" towards it, no matter how much competence they may have in their own fields. Hence everyone's first field of apostolate is there where he—and often he alone—is competent, i. e. in his own life, and towards those whose lives are intimately bound up with his. This field of each one's competence and first duty is what must be Christianized by each one: this is the meaning of the famous "apostolate of like by like."

44. A Social Apostolate:

"If each one sweeps before his own door the city will be clean." This is often said in an individualistic sort of way, as if each one had to look out only for himself alone; but Catholic Action does not mean it so. Remember what was said just above about each one's first field of apostolate being in his own life and towards those whose life is intimately bound up with his. This duty towards those whose lives are intimately bound up with ours—i. e. towards all those in our own "natural medium" of life—makes Catholic Action anything but individualistic. It is a work of **solidarity and of**

union, a social work as Pope Pius XI repeatedly called it. It is important not to get this expression "a social work" mixed up with what we are calling in these studies "temporal action"; Catholic Action is not "temporal action," but it is a "social work." This means that it works with organized and institutional means on men as they live in society—in their "natural medium" of life. One of the principal methods of apostolate of Catholic Action is that known as "cell technique" or "cell growth," an intensely social form of action which goes hand in hand with the "inquiry method" already referred to. A more complete study of Catholic Action would require a long discussion of this powerful method of apostolate, but in this summary study we can do no more than refer to it almost in passing. By its use Catholic Action achieves specific objectives in a permanent and efficacious way by the direct conquest of persons and of their personal responsibility; whereas the "Catholic Activities" must often be content with superficial and transient results since they are devoted to the specific objectives directly and often have only a casual effect in the conquest of persons.

45. A Universal Apostolate:

One of the consequences of this "Social" character of the apostolate of Catholic Action is that this apostolate is a universal one: Universal in the sense that it pertains to each milieu as a whole and universal in the sense that if each one Christianizes his own milieu, then the whole world will be Christian. We will see later, in the section on Organization (Parish, Diocese, Nation, World) how literally universal Catholic Action really is, and what consequences this has on the Catholic consciousness.

Notes and Questions, Lesson X

42. Let our own ideas of the Apostolate be complete:

a. After reading the above three sections with their notes and questions, are you agreed that "it is in the second and third stages of the Apostolate that the greatest problems are to be faced"?

b. What have you meant up to now when you yourself spoke of "the apostolate"?

c. Why are good intentions alone not enough? (cf. Section 14).

d. Try to outline the different fields of personal formation that Catholic Action would require of its members. (cf. Section 31)

43. Therefore, each one should be an apostle there where he is competent.

a. Will it be easy or difficult to keep each one working above all "there where he is competent." (cf. Section 32)

b. Take a typical high school religious activities program, and see how much energy is centered on the students and the campus; how much is centered off the campus (paper drives, basket collections, stamps for the missions, subscription drives, labor problems, international peace, etc., etc., etc.)

c. Now granting—even insisting—that both forms of action are necessary; which one is primary and which one is secondary?

d. But in your analysis of the year's program which one had received most attention?

e. Make the same analysis of the program of some adult organization you know well.

f. Now, if you are wise, you will have noticed that most present organizations are built for this secondary sort of work, and couldn't hold their noses down to the primary, essential sort of work without losing most of their members. Would this explain why Pius XI did not try to change them, but instead set up a whole new system of organization, "Catholic Action," which was to exist alongside the old organizations, but with a privileged position in regard to them?

44. A Social Apostolate.

a. Why the warning not to get "social work" mixed up with "temporal work." (cf. Section 4)

b. What is meant by "working with organized and institutional means or men as they live in society." Have we met this expression before in these studies? (cf. the long note on "Social Justice" after Section 40)

Note: It is almost impossible to give an adequate idea, in a pamphlet, of the great issues covered by this Section 44. Simply by way of suggestion it may be useful to insert here that a "cell" has meaning only inside a "body"—i.e. within the official organization of Catholic Action. A number of "cells" have been started in this country as isolated and self-sufficient ventures. Their proper place is within the official lay organizations of the diocese, where they have a role to play of "preparation for Catholic Action" in the event that "Official Catholic Action" has not yet been set up.

45. A Universal Apostolate

a. What is meant by saying that the apostolate of Catholic Action pertains to each "milieu" as a whole?

b. Would any aspects of Catholic life escape from it?

c. Would any social class be excluded from it?

d. Would any region of the world be excused from it?

e. For the form and consequences of this universality see Sections 51 to 55.

LESSON XI

The Third Great Characteristic of Catholic Action: Organization. Its Implications

46. The Third Great Characteristic of Catholic Action: Organization

We have already seen that Catholic Action is the work of laymen and is essentially an apostolate. We have also seen that the "Social" character of Catholic Action implies organization. We now wish to examine this characteristic of organization and the special forms demanded by Catholic Action.

47. Introductory:

Organization is one of the great lessons of modern times. Society has become increasingly complex so that many things which formerly could have been done by individual effort now can be accomplished **only** by the common and united efforts of great numbers. As a rule Catholics have been rather slow to learn this lesson of organization. The reason probably is to be found partly in too great a confidence in what we might call the "juridical" (as opposed to "practical" or "effective") organization of the Church, and partly in Catholic emphasis on the moral responsibility of the individual which has tended to obscure for us the fact that certain forms of social responsibility are so complex in their relationship to the individual that it is almost impossible for the individual to judge clearly the extent of this responsibility and its relation with the virtue of prudence. This whole field, which we haven't the time now to delineate carefully, is much more open to organized effort than to any individual effort at all. But as we said before, we Catholics have been rather slow to recognize this and by the same token, much of the opposition that Catholic Action has had to face has been directed precisely against this feature of its rigid organization.

48. Not Only Organization, But Order Also:

In examining the organization of Catholic Action let us once more break up our study into three stages, the first two of which might better be called "order" than organization.

49. Do Your Own Work, Not Everybody Else's:

Catholic Action introduces order into its apostolate in two

ways. In the first place it demands a reasonable **specialization**. Far too many of our Catholic organizations take as their province the whole of life, dispersing their efforts in a field which is much too broad for them to cover effectively. Catholic Action, as we have just seen, requires that each one work in the natural and ordinary field of his own life; and hence its very organization aims at making this the ordinary method of action: Catholic Action is, as we say, "specialized Action." It is specialized first by ages and sexes into the four great "branches" of Catholic Action—men, women, young men, young women; and within these may be further specialized by occupation or "natural medium" of life. For instance, in the youth sections there would be special groupings for young workers, for students, for rural youth, and so forth. Notice that this is a "milieu-specialization," i.e. it takes in the whole life of a definite part of society, and is altogether different from "activity-specialization" which takes in some definite activity or group of activities—a part of life only—of many or all sections of society. This last form of specialization is more characteristic of what are often called "Catholic Activities" (i. e. Catholic Spiritual Action or Catholic Temporal Action) to distinguish them from Catholic Action.

50. Elite and Mass:

There is another way in which order is introduced into the apostolate of Catholic Action, and that is in the difficult relation between "the elite" and "the mass." We have numerous organizations which strive exclusively after one or the other of these methods of work. Yet it is obvious that pure movements of the elite are too restricted in their influence for reconstructing a whole Christian society, and if left to themselves often become sterile; while pure movements of the mass are superficial at best and always potentially dangerous. In Catholic Action there is an organized attempt to form both the elite and the mass at the same time, and in relationship to one another. The organizational technique for assuring proper emphasis on both elite and mass is the "cell technique" which we have already seen in considering the "apostolate" of Catholic Action. The cells of "militants" have as their primary function to spread out and multiply within all larger organizations of Catholic life. Thus Catholic Action becomes "a special sort of elite—one that tends to become as large as possible," and is radically different from the old idea of an "elite" which turned its energies inward upon its own per-

fection and often lost its way by getting "out of touch" with the world it was trying to convert.

Notes and Questions, Lesson XI

46. Organization

a. The word "Organization" does not actually occur in the definition of Catholic Action (Section 18), but the other three great characteristics do (Laity, Apostolate, Hierarchy). On what basis, therefore, can we say that Organization is essential?

Suggestions:—

1. Is organization essential to the "third stage" of the Apostolate? (cf. Section 40)
2. Is organization characteristic of the Hierarchy? What influence would this have on Catholic Action, which "participate" in the apostolate of the Hierarchy? (cf. Section 57)
3. Does the definition speak of laymen (individually) or of the laity (organized)?

47. Introductory

a. What is meant by "juridical" and "practical" organization (cf. Sections 52, 53)

b. What would be the probable result if we should become so trustful in the "juridical" organization that we would cease to work at the "practical" one?

c. Look again at questions "a" and "b" to Section 12—can you think of some other "embarrassing questions" that fall within your personal experience?

d. What does the long note to Section 40 offer to an understanding of the second half of this Section (47).

48. Not only Organization, but Order also

a. Is there a close relation between "order" and "organization"?

b. Do you think "order" could be safeguarded in so "complicated a business" as the apostolate without a rather strong organization?

49. Do your own work, not everybody else's

a. Why is specialization necessary for order in the apostolate? (cf. Section 32)

b. Discuss at some length the distinction between "milieu ('natural medium of life') specialization" and "activity specialization." These are very important distinctions, but not well recognized in this country where the first sort of specialization is not well known.

c. What clue do you find in this distinction for the use of the terms "Catholic Action" and "Catholic Activities" (cf. question "c" to Section 2).

50. Elite and Mass

a. Discuss the limitations pointed out for "pure movements of the elite" and "pure movements of the mass." Try to find historical or actual examples.

LESSON XII

The Form of Organization and Its Results

51. Organization: Parish, Diocese, Nation, World.

Pope Pius XI always insisted very strongly on the need for a rather rigid organization. Under his guidance the "typical" organization of Catholic Action (if one can speak of "typical" where so many national and racial differences are concerned) is something like the following: In each parish of the diocese there are four divisions (men, women, young men, young women) and in some countries six (university men and women in separate groups). Then in the diocese itself the heads of these parish groups are brought together as a diocesan council of Catholic Action; and in the whole nation the heads or representatives of the diocesan councils form the national council, with addition by appointment at each level of certain qualified individuals. In each of these groups, parish, diocese, and nation, an ecclesiastical assistant works with the laymen to guide and advise them. And, of course, there is a still vaster grouping in the union of the Catholic Actions of all the nations under the guidance of the Holy Father himself, who appoints a central office at the Vatican to be a clearing house of information, and in a rather broad sense, the "ecclesiastical assistant" for the world organization, without interfering in any way with the complete authority of the local Bishops.

All the "Catholic Activities" now existing, and others which might be founded to meet new special needs as they arise, would continue to exist side by side with this "Official Catholic Action." The active Catholic would belong **both** to Catholic Action and to such "Catholic Activities" as meet his special interests, so that all the latter would go on much as they are now; but all their members would be united in a higher unity—that of Official Catholic Action. Moreover the "Activities" as such would be affiliated to Catholic Action, and their officers would ordinarily be the "qualified individuals" referred to in the paragraph above as being "added" to the Councils of Catholic Action at each level.

52. The Church is One—But How United Is It?

It has frequently been said that the Church is the most

admirable international organization in the world. This is indeed true in the juridical or an essential sort of way, but in the practical order we may wonder if this organization is always as effective as its theoretical completeness would suggest. Certainly the fiercest attacks on the Church in modern times have been launched from strong international organizations: Free-masonry; Atheistic Communism; the various international revolutionary movements; and these organizations have succeeded in capturing for their own purposes the very institutions of international life. This was possible only because the international organizations of Catholics have been very weak, even in those few fields where they actually existed. Thus Catholics form in a juridical way the greatest of all international organizations, but in a practical way, one of the weakest. Nor is this weakness, let it be noticed, the result of any lack of individual effort; for Catholics are as active as other people; rather it results from a lack of coordination, whereby many admirable Catholic efforts in all parts of the world fail to exert any cumulative effect on society, and may even cancel each other out, by petty differences of method or questions of local or group prestige.

53. In Union There is Strength.

Now in the ideal world-wide organization of Catholic Action we would not have any specifically new influences, for in every single diocese in every country of the world, the organization of Catholic Action, as well as the already existing Catholic organizations, would be under the authority of the local Bishops even as now, and yet there would be a tremendous difference in the whole effect; for all diocesan organizations would really be working together; would really feel the mutual support that they have a right to expect from one another; would really add their efforts together, instead of frequently cancelling out one another's efforts by differences of method or of immediate ends.

54. It Gets in One's Blood.

It has been said that people really live their organizations. To take an example: the citizen of a vast empire has a somehow different personality from a native of some tiny principality with no particular history behind it. Or, to take an example which is closer home: Stephen Leacock has said in one of his articles that one of the reasons for which he likes the Americans is the way they toss their scenery around with such nonchalance, making rivers flow over mountains, or simply moving the mountains if they

are not in what they think is the best place. Now it is evident that not all of us engage in the engineering feats which prompted Leacock's observation, yet I believe he is right in implying that the personality of all citizens of the country somehow bears the stamp of this nonchalance in the face of great natural obstacles that are to be overcome in so vast a country. Foreign languages are full of jokes about the way the American tourist judges everything from the standpoint of bigness and speed.

Now just as this business has, so to say, "got into our blood," or as the history of a great empire gets into the very personality of the empire's citizens, can we not see that if Catholics would really live their vast organization; would really feel their combined strength in the spiritual order, and even in the temporal order when there is a real question of morals; if they could look, not only to a long history of past achievement, but to a **better record in their influence** on contemporary society—if all this were true, can we not see that we would have a new kind of Catholic, a new and greater one, realizing much more fully the force and beauty of the Christian ideal?

55. How Real is the "Mystical Body," Even Psychologically?

A Catholic living in this kind of society would not only know in an academic sort of way that he is a member of the "Mystical Body of Christ," but he would feel the very life, so to say, of this "Mystical Body" coursing through his own veins and entering into his own consciousness.

Notes and Questions, Lesson XII

51. Organization: Parish, Diocese, Nation, World

Note: The National Catholic Welfare Conference, which carries on many of the functions which are assigned to the National Office of Catholic Action in those countries where a National Catholic Action has been officially established, was organized in September, 1919, more than three full years before the first Encyclical of Pius XI on Catholic Action—the *Ubi Arcano Dei* of December, 1922—and almost ten years before the first really complete explanation by the Holy Father—the Letter to Cardinal Bertram of 1928.

Because of this fact, it is evidently not to be expected that it will conform in all respects with Catholic Action as elaborated by the Holy Father. It is nevertheless quite obvious that as Catholic Action develops it will fall within the present framework of the N.C.W.C., particularly within the National Council of Catholic Men, the National Council of Catholic Women, and the National Catholic Youth Council.

Moreover, the Hierarchy of the United States in 1935 issued a joint

statement entitled "Catholic Action and Catholic Activities" in which they indicated their will that the N.C.W.C. be the instrument through which the official action of the Laity be developed. -

Accordingly, everyone interested in development of Catholic Action in this country should study the present organization of the N.C.W.C., and should be preoccupied with a real desire to foster and develop the officially designated coordinating agencies of lay activity, first in his own diocese, and then in the nation as a whole. Information can be secured from the diocesan chancery for diocesan agencies, and from the N.C.W.C. (1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C.) for the National Agency. The following short outline of the N.C.W.C. Organization and work is printed each month on the inside cover of the review "Catholic Action":

FACTS ABOUT THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

"Over a manifold activity of the laity, carried on in various localities according to the needs of the times, is placed the National Catholic Welfare Conference, an organization which supplies a ready and well-adapted instrument for your episcopal ministry."—Pope Pius XII.

The National Catholic Welfare Conference was organized in September, 1919.

The N.C.W.C. is a common agency acting under the authority of the bishops to promote the welfare of the Catholics of the country.

It has for its incorporated purposes "unifying, coordinating and organizing the Catholic people of the United States in works of education, social welfare, immigrant aid and other activities."

It comprises the following departments and bureaus:

EXECUTIVE—Bureaus maintained: **Immigration, National Center Fraternity of Christian Doctrine, Information, Publications, Business and Auditing, and "Catholic Action,"** monthly publication, N.C.W.C.

YOUTH—Facilitates exchange of information regarding the philosophy, organization, and program-content of Catholic youth work; promotes the National Catholic Youth Council, the federating agency for all existing, approved Catholic youth groups; contacts and evaluates national governmental and non-governmental youth organizations and youth servicing organizations.

EDUCATION—Divisions: **Statistics and Information, Teachers' Registration, Library.**

PRESS—Serves the Catholic press in the United States and abroad with regular news, features, editorial and pictorial services.

SOCIAL ACTION—Covers the fields of **Industrial Relations, International Affairs, Civic Education, Social Welfare, Family Life and Rural Life.**

LEGAL—Serves as a clearing house of information on federal, state and local legislation.

LAY ORGANIZATIONS—Includes the National Council of Catholic Men and the National Council of Catholic Women, which maintain at N.C.W.C. headquarters permanent representations in the interests of the Catholic laity. These councils function through some 3,500 affiliated societies—national, state, diocesan, district, local and parish; also through units of the councils in many of the dioceses.

CATHOLIC ACTION STUDY—Devoted to research and reports as to pronouncements, methods, programs and achievements in the work of Catholic Action at home and abroad.

The N.C.C.M. maintains at its national headquarters a **Catholic Evidence Bureau**, sponsors a weekly nation-wide radio **Catholic Hour** over the network of the National Broadcasting Company, and conducts a Catholic Radio Bureau.

The N.C.C.W. maintains in Washington, D. C., the **National Catholic School of Social Service**.

The Conference is conducted by an administrative board composed of ten archbishops and bishops aided by seven assistant bishops.

Each department of the N.C.W.C. is administered by an episcopal chairman.

Through the general secretary, chief executive officer of the Conference, the reports of the departments and information on the general work of the headquarters' staff are sent regularly to the members of the administrative board.

The administrative bishops of the Conference report annually upon their work to the Holy See.

Annually at the general meeting of the bishops, detailed reports are submitted by the administrative bishops of the Conference and authorization secured for the work of the coming year.

No official action is taken by any N.C.W.C. department without authorization of its episcopal chairman.

No official action is taken in the name of the whole Conference without authorization and approval of the administrative board.

It is not the policy of the N.C.W.C. to create new organizations.

It helps, unifies, and leaves to their own fields those that already exist.

It aims to defend and to advance the welfare both of the Catholic Church and of our beloved Country.

It seeks to inform the life of America of right fundamental principles of religion and morality.

It is a central clearing house of information regarding activities of Catholic men and women.

All that are helped may play their part in promoting the good work and in maintaining the common agency, the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

CATHOLIC ACTION records monthly the work of the Conference and its affiliated organizations. It presents our common needs and opportunities. Its special articles are helpful to every Catholic organization and individual.

52. The Church is One, but How United is it?

a. Does what we have called "juridical" unity assure practical unity? (cf. the note and questions to Section 12)

b. Would not much of the Catholic weakness in international influence be explained by the fact that we take that influence for granted, and hence don't work at it?

c. For instance: Have you ever heard that the "Catholics are the greatest force of unity between North and South America"? But how many North American Catholic Priests are in South America? How many hundred Protestant Missionaries? How about the North American Schools in South America: are most of them Protestant or Catholic? The South Americans up until very recently were convinced that the United States was a totally Protestant nation, and they were judging not from statistics but from facts. What were the facts? Now what do you think of the frequent boasts that "Catholics are the greatest force of unity between North and South America"? Could they be such a force, though? What would they have to do to be it?

d. Do you think that Catholic Youth movements have as much practical unity internationally as, for instance, the Y.M.C.A.? Yet the Y.M.C.A. possesses no dogmatic unity whatever! How then do you account for its great practical unity—even uniformity—on the international level?

e. Can you give examples of local Catholic efforts which "failed to exert any cumulative effect or even cancelled each other out" because of "differences of method or questions of group prestige."

f. What would be necessary, to assure that the great abundance and variety of Catholic efforts will really have unified effect on the world? What does Catholic Action do to fulfill this requisite?

53. In Union there is strength.

a. What would be the effect of the common possession by all dioceses throughout the world of a single, comprehensive theory of action such as that offered by Catholic Action?

b. Would this destroy the authority of the local bishops in any way? Why not?

c. Are there certain problems of a specifically national or international nature which cannot be met by a single diocese, or even by all dioceses working strictly "on their own"? For instance, why were the secularists able to exclude all Vatican influence on the "peace" of Versailles?

54. It Gets in One's Blood.

a. Did you ever meet a sort of "inferiority complex" of certain Catholics in relation to all things done or sponsored by the Church? We can grant that there is a certain basis for some complaint in the fact that many people out of a spirit of zeal will undertake works for which they have no particular competence, and then will try to "sell" these works, not because they are competent, but because they are "Catholic." Of course, it is unfortunate that generosity and intelligence should not always coincide, but these rather accidental considerations hardly explain the "inferiority complex" which is so often met. Could it not be explained, however, by the evident fact that Christianity is no longer—and has not been for centuries—the determining factor in Western Civilization?

b. If Christianity—instead of secularism—were "giving the tone" to modern society, do you think this "inferiority complex" would be of such frequent occurrence?

c. And, while we are on the subject, could a Christian with an

"inferiority complex" in relation to his faith be a real Christian in the sense outlined in Sections 35 and 36?

d. If, therefore, the unity of action of Catholic Action could once more "give the tone to Society," would the Christians in that society probably be better Christians? Or, in other words, how important is "morale" in a struggle such as the Christian life must necessarily be.

55. How Real is the Mystical Body—even Psychologically?

a. Do you think we have at the present time a vivid consciousness of being members of the Mystical Body of Christ?

b. For instance: Suppose two Catholic organizations were engaged in about the same field of apostolic work, and we belonged to one which for the moment was overshadowed by some brilliant success of the other in doing good. Would our principal feeling be one of satisfaction that the work of Christ was being well done?

c. Is this feeling of rejoicing at the good done by others in the field really an evident characteristic of present Catholic Organizations? Consult older people on this point, and see what their impression is also.

d. Yet would not this be the first and natural impulse if we really felt we were all one **in Christ?**

e. To have this feeling, wouldn't the two organizations of question "b" have to be somehow in practical union? Does Catholic Action seem to offer the means of uniting them thus without destroying the identity of either one? (See last sentence in Section 51).

LESSON XIII

The Fourth Great Characteristic of Catholic Action: Authority of the Hierarchy

56. The Most Important Characteristic

Now we come to the last great characteristic of Catholic Action—the fact that it is under the direct authority of the hierarchy. In a certain sense this is the **most important** characteristic, for if it is neglected, then the whole of Catholic Action is falsified and becomes a real danger to Catholic life instead of a great ideal.

57. Why So?

The fact that Catholic Action is thus directly under the authority of the hierarchy flows from its very essence as a **participation** in their apostolate. Here we can return to the oft-repeated question, whether the Bishops and the Pope can engage in Catholic Action. You will remember that this is always asked as if the hierarchy were being excluded from something to which they ought to belong, but it should now be evident what a misunderstanding lies behind this question. The Bishops are not directly incorporated in Catholic Action, not because of any kind of exclusion but because their work is very much superior to Catholic Action. It is the apostolate of the hierarchy, **their work**, in which the laity can only **participate**, and it is this participation which is specifically “Catholic Action.”

58. No Mandate from the Bishop—No Catholic Action.

The first result of this fact that Catholic Action is directly under the authority of the Bishops is that without a direct and specific mandate from the Bishops it is impossible to talk of being engaged in Catholic Action in the strict sense, no matter what good work one may be doing or what organizations one may belong to. These other organizations are good, they have their work to do, they **must continue**, they **must be helped** in every way, but they **simply are not Catholic Action**. That only can be Catholic Action which is so designated by the Bishop. There is such a thing, though, as working towards Catholic Action, which is open both to individuals and groups; but more of that later.

Notes and Questions, Lesson XIII

56. The Most Important Characteristic.

a. Theoretically, of course, the Bishop is in authority over every Catholic work and organization in his diocese; but is it common for him to exercise that authority practically and immediately in the ordinary routine of the organizations's regular work? Or doesn't the Bishop's practical exercise of authority ordinarily limit itself to initial approval of the organization or work, followed by the general direction given to all faithful of the diocese?

b. Why would a much more practical and immediate exercise of authority be necessary for Catholic Action? (See next Section, 57)

c. Could the specific thing called Catholic Action be set up if for some reason the Bishop would not judge it prudent in his diocese? (See Section 58)

d. Could it function normally without an official representative of the Bishop (the "Ecclesiastical Assistant" as he is called in Catholic Action theory) in attendance at each meeting of the Council? (See Sections 51 and 59)

e. Of all the characteristics of Catholic Action we have seen so far, which one furnishes the most clear-cut basis of judgment in answering the question "Is such-and-such an organization Catholic Action?" Or, to put it in another way, there are many kinds of lay activity, many kinds of apostolate, many forms of organization, and even many forms of Episcopal approval and supervision; so that on any of these points it might be difficult to judge whether the organization in question conforms or not to the exact nature of Catholic Action. But could there be much room for discussion on whether or not it possessed an express and official mandate for Catholic Action? (See question "c" of Section 20)

f. Note, though, that this is simply the juridical aspect of the problem—the "letter of the law," and does not answer the problem of whether the organization is living up to the "spirit" of Catholic Action; i.e. the theory as outlined by Pope Pius XI and continued by the present Holy Father.

57. Why So?

a. How does the necessity for Hierarchical authority "flow from the very essence" of Catholic Action?

b. If an orator were to refer to the exemplary lives and work of the priests and bishops as "a fine example of Catholic Action" (this actually happened), would he be using the word Catholic Action in the sense given it by Pope Pius XI?

c. What should he have said?

d. To whom only could he have applied the praise he actually spoke? What would the bishops and priests have had to do in any activity that merited such praise?

58. No Mandate from the Bishop, No Catholic Action.

a. What is meant by a direct mandate? Suppose the Bishop in the course of a sermon or pastoral letter praised the work of Pope Pius XI

and said that all Catholics ought to strive to carry out his teachings; would that be a direct mandate?

b. What is meant by a specific mandate? If a group of laymen should get official approval of the bishop to be a Sodality, an Evidence Guild, a Retreat League, could they say that because they have official approval they are Catholic Action?

c. Could it happen that a bishop might give an official mandate of Catholic Action to a society which at the time of the mandate would not conform to the requirements set forth by Pope Pius XI? (See Note at end of questions to Section 12)

d. Such an organization would then certainly be Catholic Action juridically—"according to the letter." What duties would lie on its members to make it Catholic Action "according to the Spirit." (See same note as above)

LESSON XIV

The Practical Exercise of This Authority and Its Results

59. The Priest: the "Soul of Catholic Action."

The authority of the Bishop is ordinarily exercised through an official ecclesiastical assistant, as we have noted above. And this position of ecclesiastical assistant, or chaplain as we would perhaps say, is one of the most important practical points in the whole scheme of Catholic Action. Pope Pius XI frequently called the priests the "soul of Catholic Action" and this is a good figure, for if the ecclesiastical assistant does not know his work or does not perform it well, there will be no life in Catholic Action, no matter how much talk and effort is expended on it.

Thus, we see once more that although the clergy are not officially a part of Catholic Action, Catholic Action still depends upon their work to an extraordinary degree, and Pope Pius XI has said that their assistance to Catholic Action is "one of the principal duties of the pastoral charge." So strong was his conviction on this point that he maintained that "the pastoral theology of another day will now no longer suffice," and urged, consequently, that "seminarians also be educated in this kind of apostolate, and young priests be prepared beforehand, and some among them sent for thorough training to those places where Catholic Action has already proven its power and efficacy..."

60. "Thinking with the Church."

From what has gone before it will be easy to understand that in Catholic Action the phrase "thinking with the Church" or "thinking with the Bishops" can have an altogether different significance, than it could ever have had before the advent of Catholic Action.

61. Example.

I believe it is Jacques Maritain who has said that one of the most fearful aspects of the nineteenth century was the great separation in social thinking between Pope Leo XIII and the rest of the Church. Looking back now on the Encyclical "Rerum Novarum" from the vantage-point of half a century we can see that the Holy Father was right in every important point, and that the quicker the whole body of Catholics could have come to his way of thinking in the

social field, the better it would have been for the world. Yet it has taken us a half century to come to this realization, and some Catholics (perhaps they are not few) have not realized it even as yet. An even stronger example could be found in the long centuries that passed before Christian charity triumphed over the institution of human slavery.

Now it should be rather evident that if the whole Catholic world were organized, after the fashion which has just been outlined in this study with study clubs in every parish, in every diocesan council, and in the national council with a quick transfer of influence down through these different levels of Catholic Action and a quick translation into action through the "inquiry Method" and "cell technique," then such direction as "Rerum Novarum" from the Holy See could penetrate the whole Catholic life effectively within 10 or 15 years, instead of the 50 to 100 (or even longer) now required. Truly Catholic Action can be the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the Church, as Pope Pius XI suggested.

Notes and Questions, Lesson XIV

59. The Priest, the "Soul of Catholic Action."

a. Why would the Holy Father call priests "the soul of Catholic Action"?

b. From what we have already seen of the vast extent of the theory of Catholic Action, will both priests and laity have to devote much study to it before they can be fully faithful to its principles and methods?

c. If any group of laymen should want to study Catholic Action, would it be good for them to "go it alone" for a while before looking for a priest to guide them, or shouldn't they rather, knowing that the priest has to study the question at least as much as they do, try to work closely with him from the very beginning of the study?

d. And if it is a parish group, what priest should they try to interest in their study?

e. What point in the long discussion after the questions to Section 40 bears out the Holy Father's statement about the "pastoral theology of another day"?

60. Thinking with the Church.

a. This section brings up a curious problem: It will be easy to understand (see especially Section 61) how **after** the establishment of Catholic Action the phrase "thinking with the Church" will have much more meaning than it could have had **before** Catholic Action. But the very fact that this pamphlet is being written at all, with its attempt to do little more than remove elementary misunderstandings, shows that we are still **before** Catholic Action. Now for the problem: The work of Pius XI was an incomparably greater revolution of thought than the work

of Leo XIII; yet fifty years after Leo XIII, with all the driving force of Pius XI added during the last decade, and urged on by a threatening world revolution, some parts of Leo XIII's teaching are still unattained ideals. Are we facing a vicious circle in trying to establish Catholic Action? It was instituted precisely because the older methods of "thinking with the Church" were insufficient to modern needs, yet aren't the older methods the only ones at our command for the actual acceptance of Catholic Action itself?

b. Is there something that we can do to help Catholic Action overcome this tremendous difficulty that it must so to say, "lift itself by its own boot-straps?" (See Section 64, and study again question "d" of Section one.)

61. Example.

a. Could we not find an instructive parallel for our purposes in the power of the United States to get things done before and after December 7, 1941. Before that date the same power was in existence as after it; but it could not be used because every step involved discussion provoked by particularistic interests and prestige. Once that date was passed and the common good assumed overwhelming importance, things could be done in weeks which formerly could not have been accomplished in years. Draw a parallel in the spiritual order.

b. As soon as particularistic interests once more emerge as the danger to the common good becomes less imminent; we can confidently expect a return to the old helplessness and "muddling through." Such a situation is normal and to be expected in the field of the temporal (cf. Section 7), but should this also be normal in the Spiritual order? (Remember that the spiritual order deals directly with "ultimate values" while the temporal order deals with particulars. In which, therefore, should the common purposes be more powerful and operative?)

LESSON XV

Conclusion

62. To Conclude.

When I accepted this assignment, I knew that it was presumptuous to outline the whole of Catholic Action in a few pages, and I do not know how well I have succeeded in avoiding the dangers of this presumption; so I would like to add here a fifth great characteristic of Catholic Action, which is, considering the present circumstances, one of the most important for readers of this study. This characteristic is that nobody, no matter who he may be, can explain what Catholic Action is in a pamphlet. If you have been interested in this outline, therefore, you must **not** think that now you have everything clear. All you must think is that Catholic Action is much vaster and much more significant than it looks to the casual glance; and perhaps this persuasion will lead you to study it further and to try to work towards its realization.

63. Work To Do.

For you must remember that Catholic Action is not yet fully realized. In every country of the world it has created great changes, but in some countries it has advanced rather far, in others we see only the first stirrings of effort to realize it. Furthermore, within these various realizations, some of the characteristics which have been outlined may be more developed, others less so. As a result of this fact you can see how difficult it may sometimes be to say of any single work, "This is Catholic Action," or of any other, that it is not. We can, nevertheless, give a real criterion by which we can know whether or not a work is Catholic Action. If it possesses all **four** of these great characteristics which have been outlined, then it is Catholic Action. If it lacks any **one** of them, it is not.

64. Hard Work to Do.

But will Catholic Action retain this form which Pope Pius XI labored so hard to give to it? That is hard to say. It is complex, difficult to understand; and for that reason is under constant pressure from people who do not understand it, and substitute their own ideas in its stead. Here in America, for instance, almost any good work that you could name is being called Catholic Action by some group

or other; and who knows but that if they are persistent enough such groups may eventually have their way. But all those who understand it—and find it good—must carry the burden of keeping it, as nearly as possible, what it is. It will be hard work.

Notes and Questions, Lesson XV

62. Conclusion

a. Looking back over the whole pamphlet, try to make a list of the "revolutions" of Catholic life that Pope Pius XI seems to have had in mind in elaborating the theory of Catholic Action.

b. State briefly his contribution to the means at our disposal in the following fields:

1. Relation in the practical order of the Spiritual to the Temporal.
2. Placing of responsibility for social reconstruction.
3. Distinction between "juridical unity" and "practical unity."
4. The Dignity of the Christian layman and his part in the work of Christ.
5. The Necessity of the Lay Apostolate.
6. The relation between the Hierarchy and the Laity.
7. The primary field of each one's responsibility.
8. The necessity of personal formation.
9. The method of engaging personal responsibility, in the work of formation.
10. The extent and complexity of the Apostolate.
11. The understanding and practice of "Social Justice"; and the influence of this doctrine on the possibility of social reform.
12. Appreciation of the social nature of man's life; his dependence on his "natural medium," and his power to perfect it.
13. The futility of "dabbling" in the apostolate in all kinds of "big projects" if one neglects the one place in the world which he alone is competent to christianize—his own "natural medium."
14. The power of the "Apostolate of like by like."
15. The necessity and strength of organization.
16. The necessity of practical unity among all forces for good.
17. The means of obtaining this unity without destroying legitimate differences.
18. The relation between "elite" and "mass."
19. The power of the "cell technique" as an instrument of social action.
20. The clergy-laity relation, and "thinking with the Church."

63. Work to do.

- a. From your own experience, now that you know something of the

theory and implications of Catholic Action, how far has it developed in your surroundings?

b. Would you know which dioceses in the country have an Official Catholic Action? For instance: Catholic Action for men has been officially set up in San Francisco and San Antonio; For youth in Chicago and Fort Wayne. There is a very live JOC (Young Christian Workers) movement in Manchester, New Hampshire; and an interesting and solid development of cell-action at the University of Notre Dame. Other interesting developments could also be listed.

c. Do you know also that Canada, especially the Province of Quebec (Ecclesiastical Provinces of Quebec and Montreal), offers a fine object lesson in what Catholic Action is and how it works?

d. Wouldn't it be a good idea for those interested in furthering Catholic Action to keep in touch with these centers of practical development and experimentation?

e. A great deal of space has been given in this pamphlet to the problem of what is and what is not Catholic Action, but note that this is because all a pamphlet aims at is understanding. If you were actually working towards Catholic Action in the practical order, would it be wise to insist on this point so much? Wouldn't it be better to build up the positive aspects of Catholic Action so that what is good can be seen, rather than argue indefinitely with people who don't understand what you are talking about because they have nothing practical on which to base a judgment?

f. Remembering always that Catholic Action cannot be officially established except by the Bishop, is there not a great deal that can be done besides mere study, to prepare the way for it—i.e. to give the Bishop some grounds for supposing that if he would establish it, he would find men and women and young people able and willing to make it a success?

64. Hard Work to do:

a. The following passage by Father Martindale, S.J. (the English translator of Msgr. Civardi's *Manual of Catholic Action*) is very suggestive. It was written for a special commemorative issue of *The Catholic Herald*, London, on the day of the death of Pope Pius XI: February 19, 1939:

"What possibly he ought to be more remembered for is his insistence on that enigmatic idea: Catholic Action.

"Why enigmatic? Because hardly anyone professes to understand the notion thoroughly, though may that not be partly because many do not like what they understand of it? They do not like the almost rigid organizational form of Catholic Action that the Pope prefers. They may not like the idea of being so much as active—after all, most men are lazy. And the clerical-minded certainly do not like the enormous position assigned by Pius to the Laity, who are, within his scheme, constantly to be 'presidents' with an ecclesiastic for 'assistant' only.

"But after all, the Pope is only declaring that the Church, clergy and laity, is One, and is alive, and must therefore act as a whole. The temperamentally anti-clerical will find no excuse, in what the Pope really means, to crow over the clergy; the clergy, no forgiveness if they want to do everything themselves, merely on behalf of a subservient laity.

"But the positive element in Catholic Action is the fact that the entire Church is 'Apostolic' in the sense that to be properly Christian she must all the while be Christianizing. 'To rechristianize what has become pagan; to Christianize what has never been Christian.' . . .

"This Pope's work will endure, unless he have enemies within his own household, and even then it will."

b. Lest it be thought that Father Martindale is too severe in the above judgment, let us hear Pope Pius XI himself on one of the most important points (unity) which Catholic Action is supposed to attain: (It is paragraph 71 of the Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*, March 19, 1937)

"To all Our children, finally, of every social rank and every nation, to every religious and lay organization in the Church, We make another and more urgent appeal for union. Many times Our paternal heart has been saddened by the divergencies—often idle in their causes, always tragic in their consequences—which array in opposing camps the sons of the same Mother Church. Thus it is that the radicals, who are not so very numerous, profiting by this discord are able to make it more acute, and end by pitting Catholics one against the other. In view of the events of the past few months, Our warning must seem superfluous. We repeat it nevertheless once more, for those who have not understood, or perhaps do no desire to understand. Those who make a practice of spreading dissension among Catholics assume a terrible responsibility before God and the Church."

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography on Catholic Action

Since this pamphlet aims at nothing more than an introduction to Catholic Action, the following list of materials available in the English language has been compiled to permit further study. It is hardly possible at the present time to aim at completeness in such a list; therefore we will be grateful for communications calling to our attention works in English which may have been omitted. Address the Youth Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Some abbreviations:

A.C.T.S.—Australian Catholic Truth Society

A.N.S.C.A.—Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action, 379 Collins Street, Melbourne, Australia

C.T.S.—Catholic Truth Society (London, Dublin, etc.)

S.A.G.—Saint Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N. J.

The Abbreviations in the Periodical list are those of the *Catholic Periodical Index*, e.g.: O.F. 16: 14-21 N 30 '41 should be read: *Orate Fratres*, Volume 16: page 14 to 21, issue of November 30, 1941.

THE PRINCIPAL OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS ON CATHOLIC ACTION (Consult Appendix II)

(English translations are indicated whenever they are available)

POPE PIUS X:

(While Patriarch of Venice) *Speech on Catholic Action*, of which extracts are quoted in McGuire: **RESTORING ALL THINGS**, Sheed & Ward, 1938, pp. 107-110.

Encyclical II fermo proposito (June 11, 1905) in *The Pope and the People*, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1905, p. 189.

POPE PIUS XI:

Encyclical Ubi Arcano Dei (Dec. 23, 1922) in *The Pope and the People* (cited above), and J. H. Ryan: *Encyclicals of Pius XI*, p. 3.

Letter to Cardinal Bertram (Nov. 13, 1928) in James D. Loeffler, S.J.; *Directives for Catholic Action*, Central Bureau Press, St. Louis, 1938, p. 12. and in *Central Blatt*, November, 1937, p. 227.

Letter to Cardinal Segura (Nov. 6, 1929) in *Directives for Catholic Action* (cited above) and in *Central Blatt*, December, 1937. *Irish Eccl. Rec.* Jan. 1930, pp. 98-102.

Encyclical Caritate Christi Compulsi (May 3, 1932) Pamphlet of N.C. W.C., America Press, Paulist Press.

Letter to the Patriarch of Lisbon (Nov. 10, 1933) in *Directives* (cited above) also in *Central Blatt*, January, 1938, p. 305; and in *Catholic Mind*, April 8, 1934, p. 121.

Letter to the Bishops of the Argentine (Feb. 4, 1931) in *Directives* (cited above) and in *Central Blatt*, December, 1937, p. 267.

Letter to the Bishops of Colombia (Feb. 14, 1934)

Letter to Cardinal Cintra and the Brazilian Hierarchy (Oct. 28, 1935) in *Directives* (cited above)

Encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* (Dec. 20, 1935) Pamphlet N.C.W.C.
Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (March 19, 1937) Pamphlet, N.C.W.C. and Paulist Press.

Letter to the Mexican Hierarchy (March 28, 1937) Pamphlet, N.C.W.C. and in *The Catholic Mind*, May 22, 1937, p. 213.

Letter to the Philippine Hierarchy (Jan. 18, 1939) Published (with some parts summarized) in the *Catholic Herald*, London, February 17, 1939.

POPE PIUS XII

(While Cardinal Secretary of State) Letter to Commander Ciriaci (March 30, 1939). Letter to Mgr. Del Bene (September, 1935).

Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (Oct. 20, 1939) Pamphlet N.C.W.C.

Discourse to the Members of Italian Catholic Action (Sept. 4, 1940) Mimeographed by the Catholic Men of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

(As this goes to press word comes of a book of Papal Documents published by the Chicago Cells, address, 3 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, Ill.)

BOOKS

We have yet to produce our reference works on Catholic Action in English. Most people who attempt a technical study have recourse to the excellent and extensive studies available in French, Spanish, and Italian.

The Italian Works of Cavagna and Civardi have been translated in England in abridged editions.

The best studies in Spanish are:

Direcciones Pontificias, Junta Central de A.C.; Madrid; 1933

Lecciones de Accion Catolica, Felix Ugalde, C.M.F.; Buenos Aires, 1939

Some of the best studies in French are:

L'Action Catholique, Traduction Francaise des documents Pontificaux (1922-1933), Maison de la Bonne Presse, Paris, 1934

L'Action Catholique, Emile Guerry, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris

L'Action Catholique Specialisee, Bayart, Centrale de la J.O.C., Montreal

Notion de Milieu, H. Lalande (editor), Paris, 1936

The excellent study by Father Lelotte has been translated into English by the National Secretariat of Australian Catholic Action.

The German study by Father Joseph Will, S.J., has been translated with some adaptations in this country by Father K. Hennerich, O.M. Cap.

The following list of books contains the four translations above referred to, as well as a few other items that are available in English. It is high time that it were longer—may its size increase!

Cavagna: *The Pope and Catholic Action. Letters and Documents*; The Catholic Truth Society of London, 1935.

Civardi, Msgr. Luigi: *Manual of Catholic Action*; (S. & W.—1936) Translated by Fr. C. C. Martindale, S.J. This book is the "standard" treatise on the subject.

Geissler, Eugene S., M.A.: *Training of Lay Leaders*, (An Introduction to C.A.); Catholic Action Students, Notre Dame University, N. D., Indiana. (This book, written after the present pamphlet, has the honor

of removing the reproach that 'no technical book on the subject has yet been written by a Catholic of this country.' Note, however, that it treats only the training of lay leaders, and not the whole theory of Catholic Action.)

Goodman: **Handbook of Catholic Action**; Australian Catholic Truth Society (A.C.T.S.)

Lelotte, S. N., Father: **Fundamental Principles of Catholic Action**. (Very good. Better adapted to study groups than Civardi) Publications Dept., Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action. (A.N.S.C.A.), 379 Collins St., Melbourne, Australia.

Mattimoe, Ed. J.: **A Catechism of the Cells**; 2544 Parkwood Ave., Toledo, Ohio.

McGuire, Paul (and Father John Fitzsimons): **Restoring All Things—A Guide to Catholic Action**; (S. & W., 1939) Essays treating Catholic Action and the Mystical Body. (Fr. Chenu), C.A. and the Liturgy (Dom G. Lefebvre), C.A. and the Priest (Canon Glorieux). Description of C.A. throughout the world with more complete treatment of Italy, Belgium, and France. A chapter on "formation technique" which is packed with suggestions. Several appendices with suggestions for practical programs.

McGuire, Mrs. Paul: **Handbook for C.A. Groups**; 1939, Catholic Guild for Social Studies, Claridge Arcade, Gawler Place, Adelaide, South Australia.

Will, Rev. Joseph, S.J.: **Catholic Action Handbook**. Translated and adapted by the Rev. Killian J. Hennerich, O.M. Cap. New York, Joseph F. Wagner, Inc.

Handbook for the University Movement of Catholic Action; (13 pp. mimeo) Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action, Melbourne, Australia.

PERIODICALS OF ACTIVE GROUPS

Catholic Action Bulletin, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

Catholic Action Reprints, (Serial Reprints of Selected Studies and Articles) University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

Catholic Action Leader's Bulletin, 3 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, Ill.

The Cells, Toledo Catholic Actionists, 334 Melrose Ave., Toledo, Ohio.

Cells of Restoration, Catholic Action Groups of San Antonio, 112 College St., San Antonio, Texas.

The Crusader, "The American Jocistes"; c/o Mr. Gerald Fitzgerald, 3118 Church Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Digest of Articles in Clerical Reviews, Holy Cross Seminary, Harewood Road, Washington, D. C.

Leaders Bulletin, Catholic Action Students, Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Leaders' Bulletin, The Catholic Rural Life Conference, 525 Sixth Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

The Priests' Bulletin, 3 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Publications of the C.A.S. (Reprints, Adaptations, and Original Studies), Catholic Action Students, Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Indiana.

The Young Christian Worker (1940), Wilbrin Whitelock, 918 South 4th St. Ponca City, Oklahoma.

PAMPHLETS

A few of these pamphlets are included without having been examined by the compiler. If they do not live up to their titles, those who have studied the present pamphlet should be able to judge them correctly.

Andriano, Sylvester (and James L. Hagerty). *The Program of Catholic Action in the Archdiocese of San Francisco*. Reprinted from *Moraga Quarterly*, Vol. IX, No. 1, 1938. It gives the viewpoint of two laymen about C.A. with particular application to San Francisco where it has been officially established.

Bandas, Rudolph. *Catholic Action* (S.A.G.)

Cardijn, Canon Joseph. *The Spirit of the Young Christian Workers*. (Cath. Truth Soc., London). Translated by Rev. J. A. Coughlan and Rev. Walter Meyjes. Brings out the spirit of the J.O.C. and the philosophy behind it. Outlines the characteristics of C.A. Gives relative value of study circles and C.A. groups.

Curran, R. A. J. *Catholic Action*. (Paulist Press) Based on the first two chapters of Civardi's Manual, with a particular application at the end to California, more specifically to San Francisco and its official Catholic Action.

Egan. *Catholic Action* (A.C.T.S.)

Faulhaber, His Eminence Michael Cardinal. *The Essential Characteristics of Catholic Action*. (Central Bureau Press) A sermon delivered on the sixth anniversary of the Coronation of Pope Pius XI (1928)

Fuontenelle, R. *Brief Catechism of Catholic Action*. (Central Bureau Press). Fundamental and very exact. In question and answer form. Brief, to the point.

Hellriegel, M. B. *True Basis of Christian Solidarity*. (Central Bureau Press).

Hunt, Rev. John J. *Catholic Action and the Priest*. (Reprint from *Moraga Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 4, Summer, 1940. Contains much for any priest interested in C.A.

Hunt, Rev. John J. *Catholic Action—the Church in Action*. (Cath. Men of the Archdiocese, San Francisco, 1939). Orderly and very detailed plan of organization for the C.A. setup in San Francisco. The handbook for official C.A. work there.

Kothen, Rev. R. *Catholic Action and the Young Christian Workers Movement*. (Liverpool Archdiocesan Bd. of C.A. 152 Brown Low Hill, 3)

LeClercq, Jacques. *An Essay on Catholic Action*. (Central Bureau Press) Transl. by J. D. Loeffler, S.J. The difference between a "Catholic Party" and Catholic Action.

Lord, Rev. Daniel A., S.J. *The Call to Catholic Action*. (Queen's Work) Tells the 'why' of C.A. Inspirational rather than technical.

Lord, Rev. Daniel A., S.J. *The Sacrament of Catholic Action*. (Queen's Work) For 20th century apostles of the laity, no better parallel can be found than the first Apostles of Christ.

Lord, R. H. *What is Catholic Action?* C.T.S., London.

Martindale. *The Spirit of Catholic Action*. C.T.S., London.

McKinnon, Harold R. *Catholic Action and the Lawyer*. (Reprint from

Moraga Quarterly, Autumn, 1939). Stresses the effect of C.A. in the field of the lawyer.

Mitchell, K. W. **This is Catholic Action** ("Catholic Action is Catholic Life") A.N.S.C.A.

O'Toole, Rev. James. **What is Catholic Action?** (Paulist Press) Civardi summarized clearly and forcefully. For those who want to clear the atmosphere and get at the meaning of C.A. in a short study.

Pizzardo, His Eminence Giuseppe Cardinal. **Conferences on C.A.** (N.C.W.C.) "An excellent resume of Catholic Action. Brings with it the authority of Cardinal Pizzardo who is Head of the Central Catholic Action Office in Rome.

Pizzardo, His Eminence Giuseppe Cardinal. **Pope and Catholic Action, and What is Catholic Action.** (I.C.T.S., Brooklyn).

Catholic Action—A Simple Explanation. (C.A. Office, Cathedral Buildings, Brownlow Hill, Liverpool, 3).

Catholic Action—Principles and Practice. (C.T.S., Dublin).

Catholic Action—What Is It? (O.S.V. Press). In three sections: (1) the layman is expected to do his share; (2) how to share in Catholic Action; (3) the Papal Delegate (Archbishop Cicognani) defines it.

The Popes and Catholic Action (A.C.T.S.)

What is New in Catholic Action. Pax Romana, Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

Certain Diocesan Councils of Catholic Men affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Men are engaged in a very interesting development whereby they receive a mandate of Catholic Action in their dioceses. An example of this development can be seen in the booklet **Official Instructions for Parish Officers and Representatives of the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois.**

ARTICLES:

Interesting articles occur from time to time in **The Homiletic and Pastoral Review**; **The Acolyte**; **Catholic Action**; **The Catholic Mind**; **The Journal of Religious Instruction**; **The Sign**; **The Ecclesiastical Review**; the **Youth Section of Our Sunday Visitor**, and other well-known Catholic Periodicals. It must be remembered, however, that the majority of the articles carried in periodicals use "Catholic Action" in a very loose sense to designate almost anything that is Catholic. Hence no attempt should be made to discover what Catholic Action is by searching through such sources; but once you have acquired from more careful writers a fairly good idea of what the Popes have proposed as "Catholic Action" in the proper sense, then it is easy to pick out in periodical literature the growing number of articles that make a real attempt to use the term in its proper sense.

The **Catholic Periodical Index** has a very useful entry on Catholic Action, followed by separate entries for the various countries. It probably lists most of the worth-while articles that have appeared in English, but unfortunately it also contains a majority of entries that have nothing to do with the proper sense of Catholic Action. It is very useful, however, for those who already know enough on the subject to be able to recognize "the real thing" when they see it.

The following titles have been culled for the most part from the

Catholic Periodical Index, and probably contain a fairly high percentage of "the real thing"; However, a number of the articles included have not been read by the compiler, and they may or may not live up to their titles. Those who have studied the present pamphlet, however, will be able to recognize any "duds" that may have crept in.

d'Aragon, M. *Catholic Action in France*. *Dublin Review* 202; 27-38 Ja '38.
 Bandas, R. G. *Scriptural Basis of Catholic Action*. (Chapter 32, Vol. II of *Biblical Questions*, S.A.G.)

Boyd, W. *Cell-technique in C.A.* *O.F.* 16: 14-21 N 30 '41 (cont).

Bruehl, C. *Lay Apostolate*. *Hom. and Past. R.* O '29.

Pius XI and C.A. *Hom. and Past. R.* 39: 898-906 Je '39.

Burns, G. S. *Spiritual Exercises and Cath. A.* *Month*, Jan. '32 p. 19-27.

Campbell, P. E. *C.A. a Univ. Duty* *Hom. and Past. R.* 32: 1068-75 Jl '32.

Cicognani, A. G. *Most Rev. Holy Father and Catholic Action*. *Cath. Char.*

R. O '33, p. 255-8; *Cath. Mind* Nov. 8, '33, p. 401-7.

Donovan, J. P. *Devout Life Through C.A.* *Hom. and Past. R.* 42: 142-9 N '41.

Downey, R., *Most Rev. Advent Pastoral*. *Tablet* 162: 812-14 D 16 '33.

Farrell, A. *Spirit of Cath. A.* *Blackfriars* 12: 92-8 F '38.

Ferland, A. *Priesthood of the Laity, the foundation of C.A.* (bibliog. footnotes) *O F* 12: 496-509 O 5 '41.

Ferree, S. M. *Catholic Action in the Cathoic College and University*. *Journal of Religious Instruction* Sept. 1940, pp. 46-59.

The Role of the University in C.A. (useful quotations from Pope Pius XI) *N.C.E.A. Proceedings* 1939 p. 186.

Geissler, E. *Observe, Judge, Act*. *Ch. Soc. Act.* 6: 91-4 Mr. '41.

Gillis, James R., O.P. *The Lay Apostolate and Catholic Action* (Chapter in *The Effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation*) J. H. Furtis, Baltimore, Md.

Griffin, J. J. *The Action Called Catholic*. *Catholic Mind*, March 8, 1935.

Hennrich, K. J. *Leadership in Christianity*. *Hom. and Past. R.* 40: 387-99 Ja '40.

Hess, B. *Catholic Action (German)*. *Hom. and Past. R.* 32: 197-203 N '31.

Hope, H. *Meaning of Catholic Action*. *Tablet* 171: 264 F. 26, '38.

James, S. B. *Basis of C.A.* *Eccl. R.* 105: 104-11 Ag. '41.

Jafnes, Mr. Stanley. *Catholic Action*. *Ecclesiastical Review*, August, 1941.

Kirchner, Ed. J. *Catholic World Congress of University Federations* (2nd part: "The Theme of the Congress") *Journal of Religious Instruction*, May 1939, pp. 757-763.

Larke, H. M. *Liturgical Movement and C.A. in Belgium*. *O.F.* 13: 59-65 D 25 '38.

Lord, R. H. *Nature and Need of C.A.* (abridged) *Irish, Mo.* 67: 484-91 Jl. '39.

Moore, W. J. *Lay Priesthood: a basis for C.A.* (bibliog. footnotes) *J. Rel. Instr.* 10: 777-85 May '40.

McGuire, Paul *Achieved Types of C.A.* *The Commonweal*, June 17, 1938, p. 201.

Group in C.A. *Sign* 20: 93-5 Sept. '40.

March of Catholic Action. *Columbia* 19: 10 O '39.

Method of C.A. *Columbia* 18: 34 Ja '39; *Cath. Mind* 37; 553-61 Feb 22 '39.

- Pope of C.A. Sign 18: 548-50 Ap. '39.
 Preparation for C.A. Sign 18: 140-3 O '38.
 Reading for C.A. Sign 18: 283-5 D '38.
- McLaughlin, M. M. *Catholic Action and Catholic Education*. Hom. and Past. R. 41: 1174-82 S '41.
- Ross, E. J. *Training for C.A.* Cath. Ed. R. 38: 19-24 Ja '40.
- Rummel, Archbishop *Plea for Christian Militancy*. N.C.W.C. Review 1931 October
- Sharp, J. K. *C.A. and the Sodality*. Hom. and Past. R. 31: 950-6 Je '31.
- Van Hauche, L. *Secrets of the Influence of Jocisme*. Eccl. R. 98: 540-7 Je '38.
- Waterhouse, H. *Approach to Catholic Action* (Bibliog. footnotes) Clergy R. ns. 16: 304-14 Ap. 39.
- Catholic Action and the Mass* (Last two Chapters of *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, S.A.G., 1940.
- Catholic Action in Foreign Countries* Catholic Action, January 1938.
- Clergy and Cath. Act.* Clergy R. ns. 20: 188 F. '41.
- The First U. S. Archdiocesan Program of Catholic Action*, Catholic Action, November 1940 p. 28.
- Laymen to Laymen*, Commonweal 29: 13-5 O 28 '38.
- The Meaning of Catholic Action*, *The Catholic World* Vol. 140, p. 104.
- National Catholic Welfare Conference and Catholic Action*, Catholic Action—March—June '33.
- New Volume presents Popes words on Catholic Action*, N.C.W.C. Review Jan. '30.
- The Pope of Catholic Action*, Cath. Mind. Jan. 22 '30, p. 37-40.
- Principles of C.A. in Seminary*, Hom. and Past. R. 41: 496-502 F. '41.
- Specialized Catholic Action among Youth in the U. S.*, Catholic Action NCWC February 1941)

COMPILATIONS

- These books which bring together a number of articles from various sources are subject to the same observations as periodical literature in general—you ought to have some idea of Catholic Action **before** you use them, so as to be able to pick out those articles which use the term Catholic Action in its proper sense.
- Confrey, Burton. *"Catholic Action. A textbook for colleges and study clubs."* (Benziger, 1935)
- Confrey, Burton. *Original Readings in C.A.* (1936).
- Confrey, Burton. *Readings in C.A.* (Magnificat Press, '37).
- Confrey, Burton. *Social Studies*. Benziger, 1934).
- A Call to Catholic Action*. Conferences from the Homiletic and Postoral Review. 2 vols. New York, Joseph F. Wagner, Inc.
- Deus Meus et Omnia*. (Christ the King Seminary, St. Bonaventure, N. Y.) Yearbook for 1933. Volume 17. A series of papers dealing with C.A. in the many phases of Catholic life.

APPENDIX II

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

It has been thought good to add here a few official documents which are not readily available in English. Those chosen are the Letter to Cardinal Bertram, the first complete exposition of the theory by Pope Pius XI; and extracts from the Letter to the Philippine Hierarchy, the last document to come from the pen of the Holy Father.

From Pope Pius XII we will publish first, his letter to Commander Ciriaci, written for Pius XI while he was still Secretary of State to the latter, and then extracts from his Discourse to Italian Catholic Action around which two misunderstandings are current. The first of these has already been discussed in a note to section 34 of this pamphlet (cf. first and third paragraphs of the document); and the second concerns the new statutes of Italian Catholic Action, which appear to change the theory by making clerics the "presidents" of Catholic Action. These statutes are referred to in the second paragraph, where the reason is given: "to render Catholic Action more adequate and attached to the needs of the souls and of the times." The allusion is rather obviously to the great difficulties Catholic Action has always had with Fascism (Cf. the Encyclical "Non Abbiamo Bisogno") which maintains that the Church has no right to set up a lay organization, but only a purely religious one, hence, one under direct clerical presidency. It can be understood why in the same paragraph (the second) the Holy Father is careful to point out that these statutes do not apply to other countries, which "other traditions and peculiar circumstances." It is hardly necessary to point out that neither the "collaboration-instead-of-participation" controversy, nor the "new-statutes-have-changed-all-that" controversy is kept alive by people who are interested in Catholic Action.

Selections from the Discourse of
PIUS XII on Catholic Action II
(September 4, 1940)
(To Italian Catholic Action)

INTRODUCTION

1. The work of His Holiness Pius XI

It is sweet and agreeable to us to greet the dear and precious heritage which has been left to us, as the privileged

fruit of his burning zeal for the progress of the Christian life, by our wise and incomparable Predecessor. For, if Faith and the Charity of Christ make us all brothers, and stimulate us mutually to wish one another well; if the collaboration of the laity in the Hierarchical apostolate appears fruitful and recognized from the dawn of Christianity in the primitive apostolic preaching; if this apostolate of co-operation has taken, throughout the centuries in the history of the Church, the most varied aspects of association, of discipline, of manner, and of measure according to the fitness and spirit of the times;—this most noble form of collaboration, which constitutes Italian Catholic Action, and which was developed under the Pontificates of Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, and Benedict XV, has received from the great mind and the great heart of Pius XI, its most vigorous promotion and its organic constitution.

2. New Statutes of Italian Catholic Action

But the merit of every salutary institution is to grow, in an ordered and safeguarded manner, perfecting itself in its development, and submitting itself always more perfectly to the conditions of its finality. Thus we are greatly pleased to render thanks to the Cardinals' Commission for the editing of the new Statutes, realizing moreover, that in other countries they can, whilst always maintaining the fundamental concept and the essential lines of Catholic Action, adapt themselves to other special forms and organizations according to the various traditions and particular circumstances. These new statutes seek only to render Catholic Action more adequate and attached to the needs of souls and of the times, and always more strictly united to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, in order that this vital tree which Our Predecessor made to grow in the garden of the Church, may spread its branches among the Christian people and bring forth those fragrant fruits of Christ which its root, rich with divine life, causes to ripen and prosper.

I.—The End of Catholic Action:

1. To Cooperate in the Salvation of Souls

From this one can see how high is the mission of Catholic Action, insofar as it lends its aid to attain the very end of the Church: to cooperate in the salvation of souls, and to continue across time and space the redemptive work of Christ. The high end of the Church and of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, is it not indeed the conversion of the world and the gathering of all nations into the kingdom of God? And the divine sign of the redemption of all the sons of Adam,

the beacon of eternal salvation for humanity which is lost in the ocean of error and of sin, is it not the cross of Golgotha, fountain of wisdom, of strength, and of victory? Now raise your eyes to Golgotha, dear sons and daughters, and admire the Spouse of Christ, who with the Chalice of His Blood, sets out for the conquest and the reconciliation of the world with God. At her side are Peter, the Vicar of Christ, with the keys of heaven, the bishops, the priests, the cooperating ministers of this holy enterprise. Around them you see the crowds and the peoples regenerated in baptism and the word, which supernaturalize souls and unite them all before a single Master. . . .

2. To Continue throughout time and space the Redemptive work of Christ.

. . . . We have not here a lasting city, but we seek the city to come. Our true and lasting fatherland is on high: it is for that that we are born, it is to that that we are destined, towards which we direct ourselves, with all our brothers in faith and in hope, united in that charity which surpasses faith and hope, as it surpasses also riches and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, charity which is all-lovable, all-happy with the truth, supportnig all things, believing all things, hoping all things, bearing all things. This Charity attracts and snatches to herself all the brethren, to have in them, so to say, companions of eternity in heaven, in the blessed vision of God. There you see the aim of cooperation in the end of the Church, and in the salvation of souls. There you see the field of the spiritual harvests of Catholic Action at the present hour.

II.—The Necessity of Catholic Action

1st Proof: On the one hand, the profound dechristianization of a great number of men; on the other, the small number and (in certain cases) the helplessness of the priests.

The present hour is the hour that tries men's souls. . . . in the tumult of the whole modern life, where indeed can the soul of man, naturally Christian, find peace? . . . Approach these souls and ask them. They will reply to you with the incoherent babbling of infants, and not as men. . . . These are unhappy souls who in the perils of their earliest years had no one to instruct them, to guide them, to correct them, to strengthen them in faith and piety; or else indifference, neglect, the bad example of comrades, the ardor of youth, the distractions and occupations of daily life, darken in them the light of faith and of religious practice, by turning away their thoughts or by hardening their

hearts, transforming what was a good root into a dried-up trunk which will send forth new sprouts (only) in hours of trial, or in response to a friendly and sympathetic word, or in the cold decline of life. How many such souls there are. . . The number and the work of the ministers of God are so inferior to the numbers and the needs of all these souls! The pastors, especially in the great cities, feel so very much the urgency of the help of faithful collaborators in the many-sided, arduous, and vast labor which weighs upon them. . . And many sectors of social life are almost closed to priestly action, but open to that of laymen.

2nd Proof: The efficacy of the apostolate of like by like.

It is a great law of nature and of grace that similarity opens doors to reconciliation and affection: it is a bond which, by placing a layman in contact with another layman, starts a friendship between them which can lead them to meet also on the high plane of the spirit. . . As St. Augustine says. . . "Consider not yourself alone, and say not to your heart: 'Does it then pertain to me to correct the sins of my neighbor? It is enough for me to save my soul before God.' No! Remember the servant who hid the talent received from his master, and did not make it fructify. Of what was he accused? Was it of having lost the talent; or rather of having kept it idle?"

To His Eminence Adolf Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau, on the general principles and fundamentals of Catholic Action:

Our Beloved Son, Health and Apostolic Benediction:

We took no little delight indeed in what you informed Us not long ago that you have initiated and carried forward to foster the development of Catholic Action among your people. It is an indication of your devotion to the Holy See that you have requested that We Ourselves, writing to the beloved sons of your diocese, might add to the profit of souls by pointing out the best ways and means of making progress in such initiatives.

Indeed a cause is at stake which was not unknown to the apostolic age itself, when Paul, for instance, in the Epistle to the Philippians (IV, 3), mentions "his helpers," and asks that aid be given to "those who have labored with me in the Gospel." But especially in our times, when the integrity of the faith and of morals is daily approaching a more dangerous crisis, and when we lament such a scarcity of priests that they seem to have proven absolutely unequal to caring for the necessities of souls, more reliance must be placed on Catholic Action, which can offer its aid by making up for such insufficiency of the clergy with associates drawn and multiplied from the ranks of lay associations.

It is clear that Our Predecessors both approved and employed this manner of sustaining the Catholic Cause, when, in that measure in which the times became more threatening to the Church and to human society, with that much more insistence, as if sounding a rallying call, they exhorted all the faithful, under the leadership of their bishops, to fight a holy warfare and to labor with all their strength for the eternal salvation of their neighbors.

No less have We Ourselves, from the very beginning of Our Pontificate been solicitous for the development of Catholic Action, for in the Encyclical Letter *Ubi Arcano* we publicly declared that it could not in the least be separated from the pastoral ministry nor from the Christian life. Subsequently we have set forth its nature and purpose so that if the matter is well studied it is evident that Catholic Action has no other aim than that laymen should participate in a certain manner in the hierarchical apostolate.

Catholic Action therefore, does not consist only in this, that each one should pursue his own Christian perfection, though this is first and foremost, but it consists also in a

most genuine apostolate common to Catholics of every social rank, whose thought and activities are coordinated with those definite centers, so to say, of sound doctrine and varied and dynamic action which are duly and legitimately constituted and which finally the authority of the Bishops accompanies and supports. To the faithful, therefore, who have thus assembled and united that they might be at the command of the ecclesiastical Hierarchy, that same hierarchy imparts a sort of mandate whereby it supplies them with new strength and incentive.

So, then, hardly otherwise than the divinely granted mandate of the church, and of the hierarchical apostolate itself, such an Action is not to be called external, but spiritual, not earthly but celestial, not political but "religious." Nevertheless it is right and proper to call this same action "social" since it has for purpose to advance the reign of Christ our Lord; and since by advancing this reign the highest good of all is acquired for society, and those goods likewise are pursued which flow from this highest, such as those which pertain to the welfare of the State and are called political, being not private goods and proper to single persons, but the common goods of all the citizens—All this, Catholic Action can and ought to attain, provided that in sincere obedience to the laws of God and of the Church, it remains completely aloof from the factional strife of political parties.

If indeed the Catholics who are sharers in the hierarchical apostolate, are imbued and animated with this spirit, they cannot fail to promote, as their proximate end, the union of the faithful of all nations in matters that pertain to religion and morals; and also—what is of paramount importance—they will possess the power that should be theirs for spreading far and wide the principles of Christian faith and doctrine, for defending them efficaciously, and finally for making them operative in public and private life.

Thus in Catholic Action all of our people in their universality will be of united purpose, without exception as to age, sex, social condition, culture, or as to national or party aspirations, provided however that these last aims are not in conflict with the teaching of the Gospels and with Christian law, so that those who profess them seem by that very fact to abandon that same teaching and law. For we are speaking of an Action which embraces the whole man and assures his integral religious and civic formation: namely, a solid piety, an efficacious and fruitful knowledge of sound doctrine, and absolute integrity of moral life; for if a man

lack these things, he is not one who can fruitfully exercise the hierarchical apostolate.

It is evident that in its practical aspects Catholic Action must vary according to the diversity of age and sex, and the conditions of time and place. Thus those belonging to the youth organizations should chiefly form and prepare themselves to carry on in the future the work that has been begun; to men of more mature years a broader field is open, for no undertaking which offers an opportunity to benefit society is forbidden to members of Catholic Action, if in some way it forms part of the divine mission of the Church.

Neither does Catholic Action strive to follow an exclusive way and method in accomplishing its tasks; but on the contrary it embraces societies and works of every kind, especially religious ones, whether they be for the promotion of piety, the formation of the young, or for a strictly social or economic end. These societies and works it adapts and directs to the social apostolate. Furthermore, by a judicious distribution of forces and tasks, and through the unity of direction of the various elements of the whole organization, namely, the groups composed of men, of women, and of the youth of both sexes, Catholic Action will both enjoy the advantages of such religious and economic associations, and will in turn bring them its support and ensure their progress. This it will do in such a way that it will not only bring about harmony and good will among them, but also maintain the co-ordination of their efforts, with what reward to the Church and to society can be well imagined.

In order to bring about this noble end which is primarily moral and religious, Catholic Action assuredly will not prevent the participation of its members in public life in any capacity. Rather, it renders them better fitted for public office by reason of the strict formation of character which results from the practice of Christian virtues. Was it not instituted for the purpose of bringing to society and to the state the most conscientious and able officials?

Therefore it cannot be said that Catholic Action neglects the true welfare of the state, since this welfare pertains, just as the promotion of every kind of public prosperity, to the scope of Christian charity. Is not that welfare wherein is contained the immediate end of civil society furthered by Catholic Action when it requires that its members respect legitimate authority and obey the laws, and that they guard and defend those things in which the well-being and happiness of the people consist, such as the integrity of moral

life, the protection of the home, and agreement between all classes, in short, everything that contributes to the peace and security of human society?

This end will certainly be better attained if, as We have said, political controversies be rigorously excluded even though the parties consist of Catholics who are otherwise not restricted in their discussion of controversial matters; and if also strict adherence be given to the regulations and instructions of their spiritual rulers regardless of conflict, real or apparent, with party interests and discipline.

From what has been here said, it is evident that Catholic Action must be regarded as a certain way and method which the Church employs in order to bestow many benefits on the people, a means seemingly ordained by Divine Providence to enable the Church to draw to her evangelical law and teaching those who have no relations or contact with priests and hence might easily succumb to the false and perverse doctrines of seditious men.

Such are the fundamental principles and foundations common to all Catholic Action, though the forms may differ in accordance with the nature and conditions of nations. Thus it is plain that it deserves the patronage and favor not only of bishops and priests, who know that it is to Us as the apple of Our eye, but also of the government and officials of every state. For supported by this joint patronage it will certainly bring to Catholics a wealth of spiritual fruits, and by awakening religious sentiments in the souls of men will everywhere greatly contribute to the civic welfare. Such is Our earnest desire and fervent wish.

Meanwhile We are deeply grateful for the success which Catholic Action, patterned on Our instructions, has already evinced in your See. We are not less grateful to you, dear Brother, for the zeal you have shown in this cause, and We therefore bestow Our Apostolic Blessing upon you, your clergy and your people as a token of Our goodwill and a pledge of the Divine favor.

Given at St. Peter's, Rome, on the 13th day of November in the year 1928, the seventh of our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XI.



Letter of His Eminence, Cardinal Pacelli, to Commander Augusto Ciriaci, General President of Italian Catholic Action.

The Holy Father has learned with great satisfaction of the intention shared by you and your colleagues of the Central Committee to bring about a collaboration continually

more perfect and more efficacious with the various forms of the Christian Apostolate which are developing so fortunately, and in such divers ways, as the fruit of an intensely supernatural life. This action, indeed, at the same time that it responds to the constant direction of the Holy See, recently confirmed in solemn pronouncements, cannot but render more fruitful the noble task to which Catholic Action devotes itself with such ardor.

In this regard it is fitting to recall first of all a thing which has already been repeated many times, namely, that Catholic Action, being the participation of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate, is in its nature as old as the Church herself; but in these modern times it has taken new forms more appropriate to the new needs, following the instructions given by the Sovereign Pontiffs, and especially by the August Pontiff now gloriously reigning. Moreover, it must always be kept in mind that Catholic Action, being by its very nature coordinated and subordinated to the hierarchy, receives in return from this latter its mandate and its directives, in order to form a whole army of souls, inflamed with the desire of participating in the apostolate of the Church and of cooperating under its orders in the extension of the reign of Christ in individuals, in families, and in the whole of society.

According to the instructions given by the Holy See, and according to what the very nature of things suggests, Catholic Action in Italy is constituted on the one hand, of the three organizations of men: The Italian Federation of Catholic Men, The Association of Catholic Italian Youth, and the Italian Catholic University Federation; and on the other hand of the Italian Feminine Catholic Union, with its three sections: The Union of Italian Catholic Women, The Italian Feminine Catholic Youth, and the Italian Catholic University Women.

But besides Catholic Action properly speaking, there exist other institutions, associations, and undertakings, which tend, with an admirable variety of organization, either towards a more intense ascetical formation, or to the practices of piety and religion and especially to the apostolate of prayer, or to the exercise of Christian Charity in all its forms and applications, devoting themselves in fact to a wide and efficacious apostolate, both individual and social, with forms of organization which are both of great variety, and adapted to personal initiative, but by that very fact different from the organization proper to Catholic Action.

These therefore are works which cannot be confused with Catholic Action, though one can and should regard them as its true and providential auxiliaries.

Their own ends, and the indications given on many occasions by the Holy See, especially in recent pontifical letters, demand that a "mutual and cordial understanding" should always reign between these institutions and Catholic Action; and that a "mutual collaboration" be fostered which will multiply and coordinate their efficaciousness for the good of souls and for the prosperity of the Church.

Nevertheless, just as Catholic Action will take care to foster these institutions in the best manner possible, so also these latter must continue to lend to Catholic Action their providential assistance, whether by the assistance of prayer which is so efficacious and never too highly recommended and esteemed, or by making known the beauty, the necessity, the advantages of Catholic Action to their own members, and exhorting and directing them to join it. This is to be understood above all of those institutions and sodalities which gather together young people in order to strengthen and conserve in them the fruits of a Christian education.

In this way, while the multiplicity of organizations and of institutions will serve to demonstrate clearly the marvelous facility of the Church in providing for the various needs of souls and of human society, yet the perfect harmony between these institutions and Catholic Action—while each conserves its own just autonomy—will be a sort of reflection of the unity of the Church, which unites its children with the bonds of charity and zeal, and stirs them up to work generously for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

I transmit all this to you with the request that you make it known to the members of the Central Committee, as well as to other persons or organizations who have asked for instructions on this subject; and I am happy to add that the August Pontiff imparts to you and to all the collaborators and auxiliaries of Catholic Action the Apostolic Blessing.

March 30, 1930.



Excerpts from the Apostolic Letter to the Hierarchy of the Philippines.

(This is the last Pontifical Document of Pope Pius XI, and was published in the *Osservatore Romano* on the very eve of the Holy Father's death. Thus it is his last testament concerning this Catholic Action for which he fought unremittingly throughout his whole Pontificate.—The first few

paragraphs deal with questions of the family and of Christian Education, as well as with the formation of the clergy. Then follows the major portion of the document, devoted to Catholic Action.)

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact, venerable Brethren, that in order to repair the ills or the ruins of modern society, the action of the clergy, be it ever so active and zealous, is no longer sufficient, since it is certain, leaving aside other grave reasons, that many persons, belonging to all social classes, either forgetful of God and His Christ or withdrawn from Them, are today either refractory or even hostile to the evangelizing action of the priest. Hence it is of urgent necessity that laymen come to assume, in a certain manner, their part in the hierarchical apostolate of the Church.

Instructed by the priests who assure also their spiritual formation, living integrally the Christian life, these laymen prepare the way for the light of truth and for the sanctifying action of grace in sectors far from the Church or hostile to Her action. They ought to exercise their apostolate as active and obedient collaborators of the Church Herself. Whence it follows clearly that the mission of these laymen is, in a certain sense, the very mission of the sacred hierarchy and of Jesus Christ: namely, to procure for souls the supernatural life, to foster its growth, to defend it. In consequence their activity is a precious aid and a necessary complement to the priestly ministry. And it is because of this consideration that since the beginning of Our Pontificate we have addressed to hierarchy and to the people a paternal invitation that the faithful be properly prepared and organized in view of this apostolate which We defend (taking Our inspiration from texts of the Sacred Scripture) **the participation of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate, and which we have called Catholic Action.**

Catholic Action is Catholic Life

Catholic Action, we may say, is Catholic life, for just as there can be no action without life, neither can there be life without action. Catholic Action in effect aims at the formation of sincere Catholics, who will know, love and live the Christian faith in its integrity, showing that it is possible to fulfill perfectly the duties which it imposes on all classes, in every social and professional sphere.

One can therefore say with truth that in those who really love and practice Catholic Action, a whole and fervent

Catholic life coincides perfectly with a life which is apostolically active, so that the same Christian life on the one hand grows and is made perfect in the individual, and is, on the other, diffused abroad to other souls, in whom this life is imperfect or altogether extinguished.

The members of Catholic Action are, therefore, within certain limits, the helpers and defenders of the divine life in souls.

From all this it can clearly be seen that Catholic Action is essentially a religious work and not a political one; it is spiritual, not material. Its aim is clearly different from every other movement and grouping which pursues purely worldly and temporal ends, however honest and praiseworthy these may be.

It is also social action, because it promotes the supreme good of society, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is not unmindful of the great problems which vex society and which are reflected in the religious and moral order, but, under the guidance of the Hierarchy, it studies them and proposes to solve them according to the principles of justice and of Christian charity.

The Clergy and Catholic Action

But now we must say another thing which Our experience, now long, has taught Us, namely that in all countries the fate of Catholic Action lies in the hands of the clergy. The members of the clergy, therefore ought to know both the theory and the practice of this new form of apostolate which forms a part of the sacred ministry. Knowing your paternal solicitude for the salvation of souls, We are certain that you will take such measures that your priests can be so prepared: the young clerics in the seminary during their course of pastoral theology, of which Catholic Action ought now to be an integral part (as the classic forms of the apostolate are); and the priests already employed in the sacred ministry, by special courses, by prayer and study, or in any other way that your zeal may suggest.

Formed in this way, the priests,—and we hope the same will apply to the religious—ought to consecrate themselves to this difficult work of the spiritual and practical preparation of the laity for Catholic Action, noble efforts which will be abundantly repaid by the zeal with which these new collaborators will give their generous and faithful help to the ministers of God, for the conquered and spiritual progress of souls.

We do not wish to express here in detail the nature, the

excellence, and the necessity of Catholic Action: numerous indeed are the documents of the Apostolic See which have treated of these things at great length; but We do wish to insist on an essential point which ought to constitute an unbreakable rule of Catholic Action.

We do insist on one essential point, which should be a fixed rule of Catholic Action, that is: Catholic Action must by its very nature develop itself in the Diocese and be directly dependent on the Bishop, for, since Catholic Action is the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy, it is the Bishop who has the right, and also the duty, of establishing, organizing and directing Catholic Action in his own diocese, and of doing so in such a way as to facilitate the future national coordination.

For the practical working of Catholic Action it can never be recommended enough that the associations shall not only live together in perfect harmony, but that they shall be properly co-ordinated, and joined together for their common ends. From the parochial associations of Catholic Action to the diocesan organizations; from these to the national centers—all should be as closely bound together and as compact, as the members of one body. For this reason the central organizations are also necessary to act as co-ordinating organs and to them falls the task of directing and orientating the activity of all the associations throughout the country, to offer suggestions and make proposals to the diocesan centers, that is, of course, with due regard to and with the consent of the respective Bishops.

Part of Women

Of the aims of Catholic Action Pius XI says:

Catholic Action should therefore aim at the restoration of the Christian family, which is the source of natural life and the divinely-ordained institution in which the supernatural life of the children of God first has its growth.

For, alas! We know that in the midst of your beloved people also the enemies of God are striving by every means in their power to profane the sacred institution of the family, urging men on even to the breaking of the matrimonial bond, and spreading abroad new theories and abominable practices which tend to suppress life in its very source.

In this extensive field of apostolic activity—the restoration of the family—a large part of the apostolate must belong to the women, whose zeal for Catholic Action merits our special praise and encouragement. Hence it is to Catholic

women of every social condition and age, to the girls and young women of Catholic Action, to the mothers of families, and to widows, that we make our appeal, so that, according as their strength and circumstances allow, they may cooperate in every good work, helping to strengthen the army of the apostles of Christ for the salvation of souls; especially by the teaching of Christian doctrine and by strengthening and recalling to the practice of true Christian piety the other members of their own sex.

The importance of Catholic education in schools and universities is then made clear:

This apostolate of Christian education, the Pope writes, which is also necessary to make up for the deficiencies of the State schools in the matter of religious instruction, will be more efficient if there is unity of direction; to achieve this it will be necessary to create diocesan centers for the coordination of the various catechetical activities and to maintain contact with the national Centers of Catholic Action.

University Students

The University Students, of whom there are so many in the Philippines, deserve special attention from Catholic Action. They, in fact, represent the future leaders of society in the various fields of culture, commerce, industry and public affairs. But, unfortunately, during this formative period of their lives they are often exposed to grave dangers.

It may seem a very difficult undertaking to try to penetrate and exercise a salutary influence in University life, but the very difficulty of the task should be an incentive to set out on this work with great generosity of heart, and a complete abandonment to the help of divine grace, which can triumph over all obstacles. For, indeed, experience has shown us that ardent youths with an apostolic spirit, even in the midst of a crowd of indifferent and sometimes ill-disposed persons, can, by their virtue and open profession of faith, little by little, become centers of attraction to their fellow-students, and apt instruments for the salvation of souls.

It is, therefore, of great importance that associations of students shall be established in every center of higher studies, which will strive not only to form perfect Christians, who will be faithful to Christian moral principles in the exercise of their profession, but likewise active apostles in their own sphere of life.

Among those who should be prominent in Catholic

Action are "persons of culture and those who occupy distinguished social positions."

The Workers

Particular attention should be given to the workers in the factories and to the agricultural laborers. "The conditions in which they live," the Pope goes on, "expose them to greater sufferings, for they often lack those means which are necessary for a life worthy of a Christian, and also that tranquility of the spirit which comes from a sense of security for the morrow. They are, alas, in the great majority of cases, without those spiritual and moral consolations which can help them in their tribulations. Nay, their condition renders them more easily penetrable by those doctrines which claim, it is true, to be inspired by zeal for the welfare of the worker and of the poor in general, but which alone defends the foundations of all right and social justice, and reject the spirit of fraternal charity taught by the Gospel, which alone can guarantee a sincere collaboration between the classes. Moreover, these communist doctrines, founded as they are on pure materialism and on the supposition that the goods of this earth are capable of satisfying all human needs, prescinding altogether from the final end of man, have in practice shown themselves to be full of delusions, and incapable of promoting the true and lasting welfare, either spiritual or material, of the worker."

