

A Trappist Writes

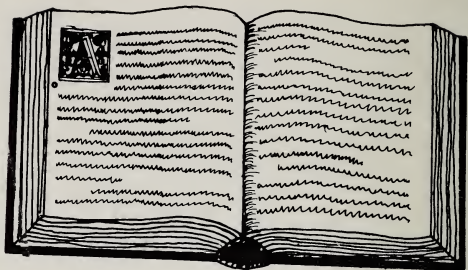


For
Your Own
Defense

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*A Booklet for
Catholics in the Service*

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A Trappist

writes:

FOR
YOUR OWN
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A
Booklet For
Catholics In The Service

NIHIL OBSTAT:

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Censores

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NIHIL OBSTAT:

MSGR. HENRY F. DUGAN, J.C.D.

Censor Deputatus

die 8a Julii, 1941.

IMPRIMATUR:

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Episcopus Indianapolitanus

die 9a Julii, 1941.

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IN
LOVING MEMORY
of
SERGEANT JOHN J. FLANAGAN
S'g't. 1st Class, U.S.A. Retired

A
Sterling Soldier
for

Uncle Sam

because

A
Real Soldier
for

JESUS CHRIST.

Summoned by his Commander
to

Headquarters

Jan. 1, 1935.

Forewarning

IF you know it all and can be told nothing,
DON'T read this booklet.

IF you are unwilling to face facts,
DON'T read this booklet.

IF you dislike to read the truth about your-
self, told in a simple, straightforward man-
ner,
DON'T read this booklet.

IF you will not reason consistently,
DON'T read this booklet.

BUT

IF you have some common sense and are will-
ing to use it,

IF you have some Catholic sense and do not
keep it just for Sunday,

IF you have some steel in your back-bone, iron
in your constitution and real manliness in
your make-up,

IF you consider yourself a man and wish to
become more of a man,

READ ON.....

Nothing To Worry About

"What are you worrying about?"

"The draft."

"That's nothing to worry about! No. Either you're called or you're not called. If you're not called, you've got nothing to worry about."

"Yes, but if I am called. . . .?"

"Then you've got only two things to worry about: either you're accepted or you're not. If you're not, then you've got nothing to worry about."

"Yes, but if I am. . . .?"

"Then you've got only two things to worry about: either you go over seas or you don't. If you don't, you've got nothing to worry about."

"But if I do. . . .?"

"Then you've got only two things to worry about: either you go to the front, or you don't. If you don't, you've got nothing to worry about."

"But if I do. . . .?"

"You've got only two things to worry about: either you die or you don't. If you don't, you've got nothing to worry about."

"But if I do. . . .?"

"Then you've got only two things to worry about—" and with one hand he pointed to Heaven, with the other, to Hell.

That was the story, and it ended in a laugh. It was back in 1917 when we had to draft them. And before the Armistice was signed there were over 24 million who had "nothing to worry about—except whether they were accepted or not." Of these almost three

million had "nothing to worry about—except whether they went across or not." We sent 2,086,000 over seas, but only 1,390,000 had to worry about "getting hit or not," for that is all that saw actual combat. Of these only 236,000 had to worry about "whether they died or not," for only 236,000 were wounded. All told, of our 4,800,000 armed forces, taking accident, disease and battle into account, only 112,422 went—either to Heaven or to Hell. These are the statistics given by Col. Leonard E. Ayres, U.S.A.

That was twenty-five years ago. The situation is not changed today. You are in the service, and there are those who would say to you: "You've got nothing to worry about! No. Either we go to war or we don't. If we don't, you've got nothing to worry about. If we do, you've got only two things to worry about: either you see actual combat or you don't. If you don't, you've got nothing to worry about. If you do, you've got only two things to worry about: either you get hit or you don't. If you don't, you've got nothing to worry about. If you do, you've got only two things to worry about: it proves fatal or it doesn't. If it doesn't, you've got nothing to worry about. If it does, well... there's Heaven and there's... Hell."

What do you think of that sort of reasoning? Logical, isn't it? Hard-headedly practical. That is what you call getting down to the big concerns, the basic worries for anyone in the service. And yet, it is horribly FALSE! It is TOO LATE to start worrying when you're dead! The reasoning is right, but the order of it is all wrong. The last step should be FIRST! And if you have any common sense and any Catholic sense, you know it. The time to start worrying about Heaven or Hell is NOW!

We left the bodies of seven and a half million men in the various areas of combat twenty-five years ago. I wonder where they placed their own souls. I wonder where all the Unknown Soldiers and the Unknown Sailors are this moment. If they did no worrying about Heaven or Hell until after they got hit. . . . I'm afraid!

And now about YOU—You've got something to worry about. You've got to worry about

Using Your Opportunity

Artemus Ward said, "Every man has a forte. It's some men's forte to do one thing, and some other men's forte to do another thing, while there are numerous shiftless critters 'round, whose forte seems to be just to do nothing." You don't belong to that last class. No. You're a service man and a Catholic service man, which means that you've got to do something, for you have a marvelous opportunity and a terrible responsibility. Believe me when I say that you've got two things to worry about—at least two—you've got to worry about those others you take with you. . . . to Heaven or to Hell! That is your forte—INFLUENCE! And whether you are conscious of it or not, you are exercising it every minute.

Look! You are living in closer contact with men than you ever lived before in all your life. You were not in the same close contact with the members of your own family that you are with your fellow men in the service this minute. You eat with them, sleep with them, drill with them, play with them, live with them day in and day out, week after week; and though you must do the same thing in the same way, though you must be as like as two

peas in a pod, yet, you are always different. You cannot kill individuality. Uncle Sam may clothe you the same, feed you the same, train you the same, but he can never make you the same! No! God has not done it; and no man or race of men can ever do it. You are an individual, and strip you though they will of all external differences, cast you in the same mould, drill you and drive you and tongue-lash you until you stand the same, march the same, rest the same, handle your gun, wear your hat and lift your hand in salute the same, they cannot make you the same; your individuality ever radiates and you are always different.

How was it that a proud mother could watch a whole regiment pass in review and then say with perfect complacency, "Sure, they were all out of step but my Jim?" How could she pick out "her Jim?" Easily! No two people are ever exactly alike. Not even twins. God has a separate mould for every man He creates; and after each creation, He casts that particular mould aside. That is why each of us has his own particular opportunity and each his individual responsibility. Artemus Ward was right: "Every man has a forte." And yours?—It lies in your individuality, and it may well be that it is identical with your individual opportunity.

Yes, you have an opportunity. A glorious opportunity. Even though you may think that you have cast aside all opportunity. You may be just a serial number to Washington, and just another "Unknown Soldier" to the rest of the world, but you were in God's army long before you signed up with Uncle Sam, and there are no "Unknown Soldiers" to God. No. He uses no serial numbers and knows nothing of official "red tape." You are an individual to Him, and an important individual. Important enough to have exercised His creative

powers and called upon His redemptive love. Important enough for Him to think of you every moment of your existence and to work for you every hour of the day. Yes, you mean something to God—BUT—What does God mean to you?

That is the question you must face, Catholic man in the service! For by facing it you become acquainted with your marvelous opportunity, realize your terrific responsibility and maybe, find your forte. At least you will become conscious of the possibilities that are yours for doing something for God! Opportunity, you know, knocks! it does not necessarily knock you down! And I know that Opportunity is knocking for you. So let it in by

Being A Man

Garfield, when still a boy, was asked what he was going to be when he grew up. "First of all," he said, "I am going to be a man; for if I do not become that, I will never become anything."—He became that, and consequently, twentieth President of the United States, and hence, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy.

Physically and officially you are all men. You passed the doctors' examination. But they only examined part of you! You have the requisite height, good eyes, heart, lungs and feet. But how about your soul? Could you pass a moral examination? Is your conscience good? Is your spiritual heart morally sound? Are your spiritual feet flat? or your spiritual lungs spotted? Those are matters that merit much more probing than what was given by the examining doctors; for you are more than a body, more than bone, muscle, sinew and tissue, more than a pair of hands

to carry a gun or a pair of feet to go "over the top." You are a composite of body and soul. You are a creature of God. That is why a Trappist must write to you **FOR YOUR OWN DEFENSE.**

Catholic man in the service, you have been called "For Defense." You have answered. Well and good. The cause is noble, the call is necessary, your answer, splendid. But you will never be of sterling worth in your country's defense unless you are first of all expert in **YOUR OWN DEFENSE.** That is the bald fact. There is a call more imperative and more imperious than the one that has stirred this nation; there is a call that must be answered first, if the nation's call is to be answered with anything like effect; it is the call **FOR YOUR OWN DEFENSE.** For if you are going to have a stone wall, you must first of all have stones. If we are going to have a stalwart army and a stalwart navy, we must first of all have stalwarts. And if you are going to be a man-of-war, you must first of all **BE A MAN!**—What does that mean to you?

Napoleon once defined a man as "a hog who feeds on gold." Cynical, but not without truth. Man is an animal, but not a dumb-animal; at least, he should not be! He was created a rational animal, a social animal, a gregarious animal, but above all he was created a religious animal. But too often man forgets his qualifying adjectives!

You are in the service and insistence is placed on only one side of you—your body. You are made most conscious of your physical, fleshy, animal side. They drill you and drill you and drill you, to make that body of yours tough. They feed you well to make it strong. They give you plenty of sleep and air and

exercise just for its well being. They are intensely interested in that body of yours. They will examine it time, time and again; they will clothe it well, house it well, serve it well; they will give it injections to prevent this, that and the other thing; and stimulants to promote this, that and the other thing. Judging from the care, interest and expense that they lavish on that body of yours, one might well believe that it was your most important possession. To many in the higher circles of the service, it is! But they are wrong! You are much more than a body to be bayoneted or bulletted. You are much more than organized flesh to be set in the wake of some rolling barrage. You are more than an animated sand-bag to stop machine-gun fire. You are an animal, yes, but not a pack-animal! You are first, last and always a religious animal; and this, you must never forget. And to help you remember it I give you some other too often

Forgotten Facts

Your Uncle Sam believes in freedom of religion, but too many of his nephews seem to think that he means freedom *from* religion; too many of them look upon the Constitutions as an Emancipation Proclamation. Now that is a tragic bit of terrible stupidity. It is freedom to practice religion that is guaranteed to Americans, not freedom to dispense with all practices!

And that brings us to a very common error. Many individuals who have attained to the age of manhood, but not to manhood, think, and they openly speak their thought, that religion is all right for women and children, but not for men. That is a sad manifestation of colossal ignorance. That shows that these

“men” know nothing about man and have never learned anything from history.

The greatest Man who ever lived, the Man who has most influenced all subsequent history, the Man who to-day, though two thousand years have passed since He died, still wins the stout hearts and fires the strong wills of hundreds of millions, the Man who is at this moment the real storm-center of all the upheavals that shake civilization, was the most religious Individual who ever paid homage to God. The strongest Man who ever walked this earth of ours was not Samson; the biggest Man who ever cast shadow on our lands was not Goliath; the wisest of all men who ever spoke was not Solomon. No! The biggest, bravest, boldest and best of men, the Man amongst all men, He who lived in constant contact with God—and that is religion at its best—was Jesus Christ.

Too often you think of Him only as God. He is true God; but never forget the other half of your phrase—He was *true Man!* TRUE MAN, that is the point to insist upon. Not a bully. Not the brawny, brutish, bellowing type. But a Man who was strong enough to be gentle—and that calls for the strength of Gibraltar! A Man who has merited two strangely contrasting titles: The Lamb of God and The Lion of Juda. A Man who was brave enough to defy the powers of the world, yet gentle enough to stoop to the lowest outcast and criminal. Never forget that Jesus Christ, your God and mine, was TRUE MAN! He had a heart like ours, hands like ours and a head like ours. He knew what it was to be lonely, sad, hungry, thirsty and tired. He knew what it was to sweat and to shiver. He knew what it was to rejoice and what it was to weep. He knew what it was to be right, and hence, boldly defiant. He also knew what

it was to be somewhat afraid. He was just like you and me in all things except . . . SIN! And that is just about what our unintelligent, somewhat moronic individuals seem to think manhood consists in! They associate saintliness with women, the weak or the very young; sin they think is a synonym for manliness. What ignorance!

Here Are a Few Strong Weaklings

Was George Washington a weakling? In his Farewell Address he said: "religion and morality are indispensable supports of political prosperity . . . the great pillars of happiness . . . the foremost props of the duties of men and citizens."

Was Abe Lincoln a woman? In his greatest speech, his Gettysburg Address, he spoke of "this nation under God."

Was the father of the American Navy some spineless, spunkless, colorless thing? History says it was Jack Barry, a man's man and a sterling Catholic.

Speaking of history, open your pocket-edition of the New Testament to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians; read chapter eleven from the twenty-second verse to the end. Then ask yourself if this Saul of Tarsus, this 'fire-eater' who was converted to Christianity, was a MAN. You say only men can 'take it.' Look what he took! Yes, and look what he gave! He gave his life to Christ and he gave his life for Christ. Without a moment's hesitation he laid his head on a block to have it struck off by Roman executioners to show his love for God. He was a soldier of Christ!

Still speaking of history, of soldiers and of Rome, let me remind you of the Theban Legion. This was a legion composed entirely

of Christians. They served their country so well that the Emperor Diocletian ordered them from the East to swell the forces of Maximian-Hercules as he marched against the enemy in what we now call France. They came and were ready for soldierly service until Maximian-Hercules commanded them to search out the Christians in the surrounding country and put them to death. The Legion refused to obey. Maximian was furious. He had them drawn up in regular formation; then ordered his executioners to go along the lines, take out every tenth man and behead him before the eyes of his comrades. The executioners did their work. Maximian then asked the remainder of the Legion if they were now ready to obey. "No!" came the thunderous reply. So again the same order to take out every tenth man and behead him was given. Again the executioners did their work and did it well. One fifth of the Legion now lay headless, and yet, when Maximian again asked if they would search out and slaughter Christians he heard a shout that seemed to shake the silent Alps at whose foot they stood, "Never! Never! Never!" Then in a frenzy Maximian marched the Legion into a valley, surrounded them with his own troops, and commanded that they be massacred before his own eyes. Massacred they were, down to the very last man; and not one in the entire Legion flinched! Religion had given them backbones of steel and hearts of bronze.

But to come nearer home. I started with Jack Barry, the father of the American Navy, so I'll continue with the boys who go to sea. You sailors have to "shoot the sun," "read the stars," and depend on the heavens to guide you through the watery wastes. You ought to know then that Copernicus, a Catholic priest, discovered the sun to be the center of our

motion; that Galileo, a sincere Catholic, invented the telescope and the microscope; that the mariner's compass is due to Flavio Gioia, and that Toricelli made the first barometer. Where would you boys be without these Catholic men? You ought to remember that "Columbia, the gem of the ocean," is named after Christopher Columbus, the Catholic explorer, and that America takes her name from Americus Vespucius, the Catholic navigator. You ought to remember that the Pacific was discovered by Balboa, a staunch Catholic; that the Mississippi, found by DeSoto, was explored by Father Marquette, and that Champlain, LaSalle, Joliet, Cartier and the Cabots were the Catholics who discovered, explored and gave the names of saints to most of our mountains, rivers, lakes and towns. Then remember that weaklings never find a place in the train of intrepid pioneer explorers!

You soldiers ought to realize that Gen. Phil Sheridan was not exactly a "sissy." Recall the story of the Civil War and you will find that this great Catholic was also a great military man. Recall the last World War and you will find the Generalissimo of the Allied Forces was none other than that truly staunch and exemplary Catholic, Marshal Foch. Then think of Mercier in Belgium, and Joffre in France. And in our own country... Oh, what's the use? Just read the history of all the American wars from the Revolution to the last World War and you will find that Catholics were in the front ranks, leaders on land and sea. Read any history intelligently and you will find that the greatest fighters have been truly religious men. It is only the ignorant and the uninformed that associate religion with the unmanly.

Just read this letter, written in our own day by a priest war-hero, an officer in the Legion of Honor, a man who was *decorated NINE TIMES ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE*. It is addressed to the Premier of France, M. Herriot. After reminding the Premier that he caused the passage of a law permitting the return of insurrectionists, deserters and traitors, Father Doncoeur shows the sorrow he felt in 1902 when he was forced to take a train for Belgium because France had expelled the Jesuits and members of all Religious Orders:

“I lived twelve years in exile, from the age of twenty-two until the age of thirty-four, the best part of my man’s life. I forgive you for it. But on August 2, 1914, I was on my knees before my Superior. ‘To-morrow it is war,’ I said, ‘and my place is on the firing line.’ My Superior kissed me and gave me his blessing.

“On crazy trains, without mobilization orders (I was a reforme), without military booklet, I followed the guns to Verdun. On August 20 at dawn, before the renewal of fighting, I went out to look for the wounded of the 115th and advanced beyond the outposts when, suddenly, I was surrounded by the crackling of twenty rifles; and I saw my comrade stretched, full-length, on the ground beside me with his head crushed. The German post was thirty steps away. I felt at that moment that my heart was protecting my whole country. Never did I breathe the air of France with such pride, nor tread her soil with such assurance.

“How I was not killed at that time, nor twenty times since, I do not understand. I still have in my body a fragment of

shell received in the Somme and after being demobilized I committed the crime of staying at home. . . . And now you show me the door!

“You must be joking M. Herriot.

“But one does not joke over these things.

“Never during fifty months did you seek me out either at Tracy-le-Cal, or at the Fort at Vaux, or at Tahure. I did not see you anywhere, talking about your ‘laws on Religious Orders,’ and yet you dare to produce them today!

“Can you think of such a thing?

“Neither I, nor any other man, nor any woman will take the road to Belgium again.

“Never!

“You may do as you please. You may take our houses, you may open your prisons—there are many places in them left open by those whom you know—so be it.

“But leave as we did in 1902? Never.

“To-day we have more blood in our veins, and then, you see, as soldiers of Verdun we were in the right place to learn how to hold our ground! We were not afraid of bullets, or gas, or the bravest soldiers of the Guard. We shall not be afraid of political slackers.

“And now I tell you why we shall not leave. Dispossession does not frighten us. We own neither roof nor field. Jesus Christ awaits us everywhere and suffices unto the end of the world.

“But we shall not leave because we do not want a Belgian, or an Englishman, or an American, or a Chinaman, or a German, to meet us far from home some day, and ask us certain questions, to which we

would be forced to reply with downcast head: 'France has driven us out.'

"For the honor of France—do you understand that word as I do?—for the honor of France we shall never again say such a thing to a foreigner. Therefore, we shall stay, every one of us. We swear it on the graves of our dead.

Paul Doncoeur, S.J."

On and on we could go, but enough has been given to show you how stupid it is to link weakness, womanliness and lack of manhood with religion. And now I ask—

Are You Eccentric?

These blustering, bullying, braggarts who talk in their brainless way of sanctity being sissified, seem to think that all religious souls are *eccentric*. Nothing could be further from fact. The actual truth of the matter is that the only *eccentric* souls in our world today are the irreligious souls—they are *away off center*; for the center of all mankind is GOD! We were made by Him, we were made for Him! That is the essential truth to grasp and hold on to—God is our center! We were made by God and we were made to be godlike! That is the first and most forceful fact of existence. And therefore, the manliest thing a man can do is to become like unto God; and the most unmanly thing an individual ever does is to be irreligious.

You meet them on all sides and at every turn. They think themselves to be "men of iron"; and they are; but when fully analyzed they are found to be pig-iron. They are foul-mouthed, foul-souled, foul-minded. Will you ask yourself honestly just what is manly about filth? Does one reach maturity only when he

can wallow as do the inhabitants of the sty? Is it a mark of manliness to use language that no lexicon carries, but is found only on the lips of the loose, lascivious and licentious? Is one admitted to the ranks of the virile only on the condition that he throw away all that is virtuous and marked with valor? Is he alone strong who can be conquered by whisky, women and wantonness? Does he alone qualify as a real soldier or a real sailor who spends his month's salary between the bar-room and the brothel? Ask yourself honestly what has vice and vileness to do with virility; or what has moral muck to do with masculinity. Ask yourself, and answer yourself honestly, ask if drunkenness and debauchery are not signs of weakness rather than of strength; of want of courage and character, rather than of consummate manhood; of smallness of heart and mind and soul, rather than of bigness or bravery.

These "he-men" seem to think that just because a man joins the ranks he must become rank; that every time a soldier or sailor goes "on leave" he must take leave of his senses, his sanity and all manly sobriety. A little reflection will show you that these individuals do not know what a man is. Seemingly they know nothing of the soul, the higher and more important part of man, while the abuse they make of their bodies puts them lower than the beasts.

These points had to be dwelt upon, for too many in the service seem to think that pay-day means just three things: dice, drink and a debauch! Soldier, Sailor, Air-man and Marine—where are your brains? Headquarters recognize none of these three as "soldierly virtues." An indulgence in any of them brings not citations, chevrons or a commission, but only the guard-house or the brig. And yet,

Headquarters is anxious to reward anything that is really manly! Face the facts: "clothes do not make the man" nor the uniform a soldier or a sailor. No. There has got to be something inside! something inside the cloth, inside the skin, deep down in the heart and soul! There has got to be cleanness, control and character. There has got to be the bed-rock of *honesty!* That is a manly virtue! Honesty that forces one to be true to himself, true to his fellow man, true to his country, because first of all it forces him to be true to his GOD! That is why the Catholics in the service must answer the question "Am I a man?" by asking another "Am I honest?"

Are You Honest?

There isn't very much honesty in the world today. And many a man in the service who has the rating "Marksman A" is anything but a "straight-shooter" with himself, his fellow-man or his God.

There is one thing we need no drill-sergeant for when we join the colors; we need one to teach us how to hold our shoulders, our elbows and our head; how to handle our gun, how to march and how to use the bayonet; but we do not need one to teach us how to dodge, fake or masquerade. We need no drill-sergeant to teach us how to camouflage! No. Sham seems to be in the very air we breathe and to have gotten into the blood that pulses through our veins. David seems to have been talking about us when he said, "All men are liars." (Psalm 115, v. 2)

"Beware of Imitations" is not a clever advertising slogan that had to be thought out. No. It is a warning that leaps to the lips of everyone who has been stung. We buy shoes

and traveling bags only to learn that we have purchased paste-board instead of leather; we buy milk only to find that more of it came from the faucet than from the cow; we find chalk in our cream, corn-starch in our ice-cream and bone-dust in our flour. We find taxi-drivers who believe the old adage that "the longest way 'round is the shortest way home" and act on it; but who have forgotten that elementary lesson in mathematics, that "a straight line is the shortest distance between two points!" We put up at hotels and find our rooms placarded with "Stop! Have you left anything?" when we know they should read, "Stop! Have you anything left?" We consult physicians and dentists who hide their ignorance behind technical terms, and the deeper their bafflement, the more loud-sounding and learned-sounding their words. We have lawyers whose knowledge is applied not to the law's interpretation or application but only to its evasion. We have to create inspectors for this and inspectors for that; we have to hire watchmen for everything and anything and then have to hire watchmen to watch the watchmen. It's terrible and it's true. Believe me, all the fakirs are NOT in India!

No wonder youth grows cynical and when Grandma, Auntie or any other grown-up says, "You'll find that honesty pays," will readily answer, "Yes, I found that out already; and it is dishonesty that gets paid!"

Do you know our trouble?—We lack a loud-speaker! Actually! Oh, I know that we have a lot of them in the world today. Amplifiers screech at you from every open door and window. The "Magna Vox" magnifies every whisper that the microphone picks up. And yet, despite our over-production in this field, as in every other field, we have failed to produce a loud-speaker, a real amplifier for the

one voice we most need to hear. We have made the awful mistake of not producing a microphone that will pick up and a "Magna Vox" that will magnify the never silent Voice of Conscience. That is the Voice we need to hear. It is always broadcasting, but we seldom hear it because of the interference created by the "big boys" with their big noise. The Voice of experience will certainly tell us to "Beware of Imitations," and it is a good Voice to heed. Beware of imitation men and imitation women! But the Voice of Conscience has a more important message. That will tell us to "Look for the trade-mark" on our own actions! That will tell us to "Beware of being an Imitation" ourselves!

Honesty is what we need;—honesty with our truer selves. That will force us to be true to our neighbor and true to our God. That will force us to give up our double and even triple personalities, stop our Jekyll and Hyde existences and live as Catholic members of the service should live—Straight as a die—Open as a book—Four square to all the world! The thing most of us have to do is to stop trying to fool ourselves. We have already failed in our attempt to fool the rest of the world! What we need to do is to take a good long, open-eyed look at ourselves in a moral mirror. We need to have an X-ray taken of our souls! That would waken us up to our responsibility and show us that we HAVE at least two things to worry about. Since I cannot give you an X-Ray, I do the next best thing as I give you some

Meat For Men

Since joining up you have learned a lot of things. Of these undoubtedly the biggest is that you have learned to obey. An officer will

bark a command, and you, as mechanically and as promptly as any robot, will execute it. You have learned one of the hardest lessons for any man to learn—you have learned to obey. If you ever reflect, you must marvel at yourself. You, who have always been so independent; you, who would be the slave to no man; you, who have ever been the master of your destiny and the captain of your soul, now obey a bell, a bugle, or a sergeant's bark. Why, you even execute a type-written order. You call it "discipline," and have named it well. You learned the lesson quickly and thoroughly because of environment and esprit de corps—order, discipline, regularity and routine is the very atmosphere of army and navy quarters. It gets into your blood. And though you often feel like "murdering the bugler, strangling the sergeant and cutting the captain's throat," yet you obey. And deep in your heart you are proud of this new mastery over yourself. Unconsciously you have learned self-control and self-command. All unknowingly you have learned that "obedience to law is the greatest liberty."

Let us gather some fruit from this new lesson. We see that an army cannot function without discipline; we should see that an individual cannot develop without control. Restraint is the big lesson that you have learned, and if you will reflect you will see that restraint is the big need of the world, the nation and the individual. Look! A single lightning flash is perhaps more powerful than all the electrical machines in the world put together. Yet, it wastes itself in a moment, while the stored up and controlled energy in the machines means comfort, prosperity and happiness for millions. Steam, when harnessed, can do a world's work; when free, it is but a vapor to be blown about by any breeze. The

dynamite that is able to move a mountain in a flash of an eye, will burn harmless and slow when in the open air. Take a look at your own contingent: an army is always strong. A mob twice its size is weak in comparison. Why?—Discipline is the one word!—Discipline and control!

All clear? Then what you have learned of your soldierly life must be applied to your individual and moral life. You have many faculties, many endowments, many wants, many desires, many passions. Let them go unconfined and you court disaster. Discipline them, bring them under control and you are powerful! Some you must curb, some refine, some utterly deny and others entirely destroy. If you are to be a man, you must be strong; but the measure of a man's strength is not in the power of the feelings that overcome and subdue him, but in the power of the feelings he overcomes and subdues. If you are going to be a Catholic man, you must be superbly controlled and rigidly disciplined; you must be a model for those around you. Now that does not call for the build of a Hercules or the muscles of a Samson, but it does call for the moral strength and the moral stamina of that giant of all men, your Captain—Jesus Christ!

That sounds like a big order that I am giving you; but it is one you wrote out yourself! Yes, you did it! Look here, man! You were in the ranks of Christ long before you signed up with your country. You were "in the service" from the day of your Baptism. You left the ranks of "the rookies" the day you were Confirmed. You have been "a soldier of Jesus Christ" and assigned to "special duty" for years. Those are the FACTS of your Catholic existence. Is it not high time for you to take a look at your record and see what report you can make to Headquarters? Let me

help you to prepare the report by proposing a few questions.

Have you learned the discipline of Christ's army? Have you obeyed the commands of conscience? Have you kept free of entangling alliances or have you trafficked in traitor's fashion with the enemy of your only King, the enemy of your fellow soldiers and the enemy of your soul? In other words have you sinned?

Go back over the weeks, the months and the years that you have been in the service of the King. Look your days and your nights straight in the face and see how many of them hang their heads in shame. How often have you gone "A.W.O.L."? Drunkenness is going absent without leave! You take leave of your God-given senses. You become worse than a beast. Even a donkey knows when he has enough—unless, of course, he is of the two-legged species! How often have you deserted your post or been asleep while on guard? Every impure thought deliberately entertained, every impure act with self or with another deliberately indulged was to desert the high post of purity and to sleep while guarding the enemy-infested ground of personal chastity. Be man enough to ask yourself how often you have merited a dishonorable discharge.—Discharge?—How often have you deserved to

Face The Firing Squad

As you take a man's look at your own unmanliness, the important thing to remember is that just as there are no "Unknown Soldiers" in God's army, neither are there any unknown deeds! While in Uncle Sam's service you can fool men and "get away" with certain escapades by cleverness and covering up; but you can't deceive God. That is why the awful realization beats in on one that he has merited

not only dishonorable discharge but actually deserved to face the firing squad time and again. War was declared the day you were born. You have been in enemy territory every day of your life. Yet you have deserted your post, been asleep while on guard and been A.W.O.L. on many occasions.

Face these facts. Let them brand themselves into your memory and beat their way into your consciousness, not to be disgusted with yourself, but to appreciate the infinite mercy of your Commanding Officer. If man was your Superior officer, you would have had to face the firing squad long ago. And you know it! You also know that the judgment would be just. Admire then, the mercy of your God. Then do the manly thing—show your appreciation by a spotless service from now on.

They tell me that Benedict Arnold, when on his death-bed, begged those in attendance to “give him back his faded coat of blue.” They did. He put it on, and with his last breath heart-brokenly exclaimed, “Would to God I had never worn another.” But even this honest, heart-broken confession could not win reinstatement for the traitor. No. Man has no mercy for one who has betrayed his country or his country’s cause. God, however, has! You and I have been more traitorous than Arnold ever was. In moments of honest reflection we admit it. Then in all manliness we cry, “Give us back our spotless robe of innocence. Would to God we had never worn another!” And God gives it back! Let us but make an honest, humble confession to one of His anointed ambassadors, let us but kneel at the feet of a priest asking forgiveness, and an absolute pardon with full reinstatement follows. That is how merciful our God is! But let us not be like Arnold. Let us not wait for our death-bed

to make the confession. We may not have a death-bed! Let us make our confession NOW! Then let us do the manly thing: let us make the only reply a man can make: let us give God a full-hearted loyalty and heroic service. That is the only return you and I can make. Since God has been so merciful, you and I must be loyal, and loyal unto death. Since after treason and treachery, He trusts us enough to send us on special service, we will serve Him as only heroes serve; we will serve Him utterly forgetful of self, ready and reckless, anxious even to fling ourselves on Death itself for the honor and glory of our King.

Yes, you Catholics who have been called to the colors, ARE assigned to a special service! You have been assigned to carry the WHITE-NESS of Christ among men and women who are dirty—dirty-minded, dirty-mouthed, dirty in their desires and acts; you have been called to carry the REDNESS of Christ, the royal redness of love and loyalty, among men and women who know much more of hatred and sinful selfishness than they do of generosity and love; you are called to manifest the true BLUENESS of Christ, that unswerving fidelity which took Him to a Cross on Calvary and a sepulchre in a hillside cave; you are called to manifest that true blueness among men and women who think fidelity foolish and the Lover of Calvary a mad-man. That is the RED, WHITE AND BLUE that you serve! That is the commission that God has given you, as at this dread moment in the history of the world, He has placed you in the service of your country. You are on special service for the King of kings. You are to show your fellows in the service.... CATHOLICITY!

That is the glorious opportunity and the trying responsibility that is yours and to which veiled reference was made in the early pages

of this little work. Christ your Captain must be made known and loved and served.... **THROUGH YOU!** Hence, be a wise military man and use only the soundest of

Sound Tactics

It is a wise general who knows the strength of his enemy. So be wise! Know that you are warring against angelic intelligence, an alluring world, and a very deceitful and unstable self. Those are your enemies—The World—The Flesh—and The Devil. A Triple Entente that is hard to beat. And it may well be that you will meet them in the guise of Wine—Women—and Song. That has been the Waterloo for millions. It can be for you!

As you see the odds are overpowering. You haven't got the intelligence of Satan. You haven't got the numerical strength of the World. You haven't got the passionate power of the Flesh. And they tell me that a ship outranged is a ship defeated. Your guns have not the bore or the calibre of your enemies'. What are you going to do? You are outranged, outgunned, outmanned... **BUT**... you need not be outmaneuvered! Your first essential tactical move is **GET IN TOUCH WITH HEADQUARTERS** and keep in touch! Tell Christ your predicament. Tell Him you need more ammunition and some strong replacement-troops. In other words, stock your soul with grace. That means Mass, Confession and Communion just *as often as you can go!* That is getting in touch with Headquarters, for that is getting in immediate contact with God. That is how to get a supply of reserve strength and to insure yourself with strong, ever ready and fresh support.

Your next important move is to see to it that you **NEVER CUT COMMUNICATIONS.**

If your enemy can isolate you, if he can keep you from getting in touch with God, if he can decoy you into giving up prayer and taking a false view of manhood, morality and religion, if he can entice you away from your contact with Christ in His Sacraments—you are done for! Give up prayer and your communications are cut. Refuse to get down on your knees often and you will very quickly land flat on your face or on your back. Fail to frequent the Sacraments and you shut yourself off from all supplies of food and ammunition. Neglect to lift up your heart and mind to God daily and you have destroyed your essential liaison—the greatest tactical blunder a military man can commit. Be a wise man, Catholic in the service! Stay close to Christ through daily prayer and the frequentation of the Sacraments, then, though you be outmanned, outgunned and outranged, you will never be outmaneuvered!

The next essential is to **KNOW WHEN TO RETREAT**. That is the soundest of sound strategy. There are circumstances when the only advisable, the absolutely necessary thing to do is to retreat. If you would avoid a rout and complete defeat, learn this maneuver! Napoleon ranks as a fair military strategist, doesn't he? Well, his oft repeated maneuver was to retreat and retreat, then suddenly turn and overcome the enemy.

If you have heard the story of "The Victor of Marengo" you know that Napoleon had not planned a victory there; he had planned a retreat. He was going to lure the Austrians into the jaws of his trap by his tactical retreat, and when he had them fully in his mouth, he was going to snap his jaws. He often did this. But at Marengo his drummer-boy spoiled his plans. The moment came for the execution of the maneuver. Napoleon

said, "Boy, beat a retreat." The drummer-boy never stirred. "Boy! I say, beat a retreat!" barked the "little corporal." The boy grasped his drum-sticks, took a step forward and said, "Sire, I don't know how. My masters never taught me that! But I can beat a charge! Oh, I can beat a charge! I beat the charge at . . ." and there followed a list of Napoleonic victories. The "little corporal" thrilled to the compliment hidden in the words, and instead of retreating the Frenchmen charged. They happened to win that day but it was against all Napoleon's plans. He knew when and how and where to make a retreat. Do you?

Don't rush in where angels fear to tread. That is the prerogative of fools! Don't play with fire unless you are made of asbestos. That, too, is the prerogative of the stupid. Don't handle live-wires unless you are completely insulated. In other words, know when to retreat. If you cannot be temperate in drink, be a teetotaler! If you cannot keep away from houses of assignation, don't go to town! If you have an imagination that is highly inflammable and passions that quickly take fire, keep away from flames! If your temper is dynamite, avoid all sparks! If your vocabulary is taken only from the gutter, keep silence until you have at least chinned yourself on the curb-stone by learning some respectable words.

Now don't think I am asking you to be good. No! I detest people who are just good. I am asking you not to be good, but to be good for something and be good to someone! I am asking you to be good to yourself, a good for your neighbor and a glory to your God. I am asking you to be what you signed up to be at Baptism and swore to be at Confirmation. I am asking you to be "a good soldier of Jesus Christ! But know well that that consists

Not In "Don't's" But In "Do's"

The vast majority of people seem to think that religion is something negative. A mere matter of keeping away from this and that; of not being impure, dishonest or a drunkard; of not being a liar, a loafer or a trouble-maker. To most, religion means just keeping away from sin. But that's not religion! No. That can be cowardice, sham and counterfeiting. The Pharisees of old made this mistake. They kept away from the grosser external sins; but they were not religious people. No. They were the ones who killed real religion among the people. And we have modern Pharisees. We have many prudes, purists and Puritans; and they are every bit as murderous as were their ancestors. Religion is not a negative thing. Its whole heart and soul, its whole substance and essence is positive. It is not made up of a lot of "DONT'S." It is made up of many more "DO'S."

Every one of the Ten Commandments can be stated positively; and though they are negative in form, we must remember that their end and object is positive. The Sixth Commandment has not been given to keep you from being impure; no, its primary purpose is to keep you pure! It is not enjoined so much to keep you from wronging another man and his wife as it is to keep you from wronging yourself. Its primary purpose is to fire you with a respect for the God-given nobility inherent in your very body and to make you realize that the flesh of every man and woman can be a breathing temple for the Holy Ghost, is actually a house for an immortal image of God, and hence, animated clay that is holy! The Sixth Commandment then, is to keep you true to yourself as it keeps you true to your fellow man and your God. And the same can

be said for every other Commandment. It is not so much vice they aim to destroy as it is virtue to build up. There is nothing negative about God, and He is the essence, the heart, soul and whole substance of religion.

Religion's primary purpose is not to keep you from wrong, unlawful and undignified relations with men and women. No. Its prime purpose is to put you in proper relations with God and consequently in proper relations with yourself and everybody else. It is not something cold. Religion is not a "wet blanket." It is not a breath from off the ice-floes to chill the blood and kill all action. Never! It is a breath from a furnace, a breath that kindles life and inflames to ever greater action.

Religion is a burning thing and is seen at its best in passionate men and women; men and women who are big enough and brave enough and bold enough to do the more noble thing always and to do it always for God. It is not the little sniveler with the folded hands, the God-help-us expression in his eyes and a face that looks for all the world like "a grand Amen" who is the religious soul. That is a caricature of religion. If you want to see its character look at the soldier Ignatius of Loyola, who, after being wounded in the fierce defense of Pamplona, had time while convalescing to look at himself and to realize that there was a higher service than that to man, a service that called for a soldier, a nobleman, a warrior, a service that challenged the best in man. Ignatius came to the realization that if he would be more of a man he must be more religious. He came to the startling realization that he could give more and greater glory to God. And if you want to read of bravery, heroism and real soldierliness, read the life of St. Ignatius, the Founder of the Jesuits.

Easier still. If you think that religion is something negative and only for the weak, read the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. See what was negative about Jesus Christ! He "spoke as one having authority," He decried and excoriated the Scribes, Pharisees and High Priests, the leaders of the people; He called King Herod "a fox" and sent him a message that simply breathed defiance; He had the "whole world going after Him" and let me tell you that the whole world has never yet followed a weakling! He was brave enough to look Death in the face and though every atom of His being rebelled against the torture that was before Him, He had enough steel in His manly make-up to say, "I'll do it! Let it come!" . . . "Father, not my will, but thine be done." That was easy, wasn't it? That was being negative, wasn't it? That was being weak and womanish, wasn't it? — Yes, it was! —It was so difficult, so terrifically heroic, it called for so much manly stuff that it sent the very Blood from His veins spurting from His pores!—That's what real Religion calls for: Stuff!—Strength!—Steel!

The bravest Man, the strongest Man, the most soldierly of all men was Jesus Christ, and He was the world's most religious Man! Not because He did not do this and did not do that; no, but because He DID—"He did always the things that pleased the Father." He was not a negative soul. He was most positive. He lived fearlessly and generously, and He died the same way. That's real Religion: Live generously and fearlessly, and die the same way! And that is a challenge for any man!

But now, Catholic men, let me beg you: Don't preach your religion—PRACTICE IT! Don't praise it—LIVE IT! Your fellow men in the service are learning from you; they are

learning what the Catholic religion is and does and means to a person. Your fellows pay little attention to your words. It is your WORKS that count! How much Christlike stuff have you got in you? How much of His strength and steel? It takes a mighty man to carry out the commission that has been given you. It calls for a back-bone, not a wish-bone; it calls for a heart that will pump brave blood, not bad blood through every vein in your body; it calls for hands that are much more ready to give than to receive. The Commission that you have received is one that commands you to show to your fellows in the service a man who is full of life and fire, a man with strong and violent passions that are ever under the control of his will of steel, a man who has a conscience that is ever tender and true, a man who loves all beauty and hates anything that is vile, a man who owns a countenance that will never blanch at the accuser's voice, a breast that will never throb with fear of exposure, a heart that can be turned inside out and show no single stain of dishonor. That is your commission and your command. You are to show them a man who has the courage of his convictions, a man who knows that he was made to the image and likeness of God and who is determined never to defile that image, a man who can and will and does say, "No!" even though all the world says, "Yes." Are you anything like that sort of man? If not, start today to become like him!

That is giving you something to shoot at! Don't say you *can't* do it. There is no such word as "can't." General Grant could never find it in any dictionary! Perhaps that is why he became "General" Grant and afterwards, President. Napoleon said it is found only in the dictionary of fools! And that is exactly

what you will be if you do not aim at becoming the Catholic man outlined above. You know those who aim at nothing, usually hit it!

It sounds like a big order, this being all that is outlined above. But it is not as impossible as it seems. It is no more impossible to become "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" than it is to become a good soldier of Uncle Sam. You become one just as you become the other. It calls for drill! drill! drill! There is this one difference: to become "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" you must be your own drill-sergeant. You must bark at yourself, berate yourself day in and day out until you can execute every command of Christ's with the same smoothness, rhythm and perfection that you do those of your company commander. It is all a matter of fierce concentration until it all becomes second nature to you. That is how you learned the manual of arms, that is how you learned to do a "right about face." It is simply a matter of being like the little postage stamp—stick to a thing until you get there! Take one practice at a time and make that one perfect! When every day breaks, resolve to use the pieces; and when every night falls, pick yourself up and ask yourself, "Have I been half the Catholic man God made me to be and expected me to be this day? Have I really made a man's effort to serve the King of kings? Am I being a good soldier of Jesus Christ?" Don't be afraid. You can do it! Start NOW and keep at it until the sounding of

Taps

Yes, soldier of Christ, the bugle will blow over you one day, but you will not hear it. It will be sounding "Taps." You will be dead. Then the question will arise! It will not be a

question then of "good times" but of a good eternity; not of how much pleasure you had but of how much you gave to God; not of how "smart" or clever or successful you were, but of how loyal. You will be facing your Commander-in-chief then. You will be standing before One who cannot be deceived, before One who knows not only your actions, but your every thought, word, imagination and desire. You will be arraigned for a "General Court Martial" and the one question to be judged will be: "Was he a good soldier of Jesus Christ"? That will be fully answered by asking such questions as: Did he carry out the commission given him? Was he loyal to the cause of his King? Did he discharge his duty like a man? Did he show bravery under fire and in the face of the enemy? Did he show genuine Catholicity to his fellows in the service? Did he keep My Ten Commandments and the Six Precepts of My Church? Were his actions with men and women actions becoming a member of my army? Did he show REDNESS and WHITENESS and true BLUENESS? Was he a MAN?

How would the record of your service read if "Taps" should sound for you today? Have you been the soldier God made you to be and meant you to be? Have you graced or disgraced the uniform He gave you at Baptism? Did you throw away the arms He gave you at Confirmation? What use did you make of His pardon, reprieve and mercy in the Sacrament of Penance? What of His love in Holy Communion? What did Holy Mass mean to you? Were you too cowardly to get down on your knees and pray? Were you fool enough to go through life as if there were no after-life? Was all your bravery shown in doing the cowardly thing of offending God by SIN?

D. S. C.

How does your record read at the moment? Does it merit citations and decorations? God has Distinguished Service Crosses, you know. They are for American soldiers and sailors, airmen and marines who show valor under fire!

Need I tell you that you will be under fire as long as you live? It is true. You will be face to face with the enemy until the moment you come face to face with God. That's life! So, take it as you find it, but don't leave it so! No. Improve yourself. Improve the world. Improve the Mystical Body of Christ by being a real soldier for Jesus Christ.

Remember that your comrades in arms have been made by God and for God. "Taps" will blow for them one day too, and then they must face a General Court Martial. See to it that they can say a good word for you that day. See to it that they can say that they were enabled to realize more of their manhood because they saw so much of your "Godhood." That is your thrilling opportunity! That is the inspiring truth of Catholicity and the uplifting dogma of the Mystical Body of Christ:—you show Godliness by manifesting your real manliness; you give others a glimpse of divinity as you let them look upon your true humanity; you show them a real soldier of Jesus Christ when you show them a perfect Catholic soldier of Uncle Sam!

All you have to do is THINK!—Think before you act. Think before you speak. Think before you go on leave. Think—"*Am I being true to myself?*" This means: "*Am I being true to Jesus Christ?*" for you have been made a part of His Mystical Body by that Sacramental Birth that we call Baptism.

It can be done! For it has been done! Look!
It was back in '18. We were putting on the
greatest offensive of the World War. It was
push! push! push! There was no let up. No
replacements. No rest. No relief. Officers
were barking at the men. And the men were
held up only by the stamina and resiliency of
youth, the heady wine of victory and the mad
frenzy of it all. And out of that Inferno came
this:

My shoulders ache beneath my pack.
(Lie easier, Cross, upon His back.)

I march with feet that burn and smart.
Tread, Holy Feet, upon my heart.)

Men shout at me, who may not speak.
(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy
cheek.)

I may not lift a hand to clear
My eyes of salty drops that sear.

(Then shall my fickle soul forget
The Agony and Bloody Sweat?)

My rifle hand is stiff and numb.
(From Thy pierced palms red rivers
come.)

Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land or sea.

So, let me render back again.
This millionth of Thy gift. Amen.

That did not come from the pen of a con-
secrated priest. Those thoughts were not born
in the mind of some contemplative religious.
Those words are not the words of a canonized
saint. No! That is the poem and the prayer

of a doughboy! a member of New York's "Fighting Sixty-Ninth"—a man who had been in the Catholic Army of Christ only four years, but a man who showed the RED, WHITE and BLUE of Christ to each of his fellow soldiers and to all the world. That is from the pen of Joyce Kilmer, a convert to the ranks of Jesus Christ, a soldier who was killed in action "Somewhere in France."

I say it again: It can be done! For it has been done! So, you MUST do it. Remember what was said in the beginning: YOU HAVE AT LEAST TWO THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT—THOSE you take with you to HEAVEN OR TO HELL!

The motto for you is the motto of the city of Chicago: "I WILL!" Say, "I WILL be a MAN—a CATHOLIC man—a GOOD SOLDIER of JESUS CHRIST!"

That is YOUR opportunity. You can do something not only for self, for fellowman and for country, you can do something for God! What an opportunity! Don't lose it! No, don't lose it. For lost opportunities seldom find their way back! Start NOW—tomorrow may be TOO LATE! It was Our Lord Himself who said something like "Thou fool! *THIS NIGHT* shall they require thy soul of thee."

When "Reveille" is sounded on the Day of the Grand Review, when all the world is assembled for Judgment, will you be in the white ranks of Jesus Christ ready to answer "Here" when your Captain calls the roll? It is entirely up to you! You are the architect of your future—your ETERNAL future. But remember that you are building NOW!...

I cannot vouch for the truth of this story. I did not see it, nor did the one who told it to

me. But, because it is so perfect an illustration, I must tell you of

The Right Way To End

Back in '18 a regiment of doughboys was being sent into a sector that was being heavily shelled. This was not their first engagement. They were seasoned troops and they knew what was ahead of them. As they trudged up to their assigned position they passed one of those wayside shrines that are so generously sprinkled all over France. This one was a life-sized statue of the Pieta—you know, that soul-stirring representation of the Mother of God with the dead body of her Crucified Jesus in her arms.—The statue caught every eye since it stood solitary and startlingly alone, for everything about it had been levelled to the ground by shell-fire. Many a Catholic lad in the regiment whispered an earnest "Ave" to the "Help of Christians" as he passed, for he knew what was just ahead.

The boys went in. They held that sector despite a terrific bombardment. The boys came out. Not all of them, but a surprisingly large number in the face of the merciless shelling that they had been given. They made their way back along what had been a road when they came up, reduced now to a series of deep shell-holes. Over them, around them and through them, they picked their way, until suddenly they were pulled up by what astounded them. Their Pieta, by some miracle, was still standing! They were ready to cheer, but as they looked closer a sacred hush fell upon the whole body of troops, for there in the arms of Mary they saw not the Body of Jesus—that had been blown away—but resting there, in almost the identical position as the Christ, was one of their "buddies," a young American doughboy, killed in action and, by some strange

accident, blown into the arms of the Mother of God.

Every Catholic lad in the regiment who had any Catholic sense said to himself, "That is the right way to end!—Right in the arms of the Mother of God!"

Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine, that IS the way to end! And that is the way you WILL end if you start NOW to cultivate a real love and devotion to her who is the Mother of God and the Mother of all men.

Be a good soldier of Christ. Fulfill the special assignment given you by the King of kings. Show your fellowmen what God means to you and I promise that you will end in the arms of the Mother of God. But again I say: Start NOW—Tomorrow may be TOO LATE!

* * * * *

Everyone Is From Missouri

I meant to finish by telling you the right way to end; but Monsignor Dugan, who censored this booklet and who has worked many years in Army camps, asked me to add two very practical bits of advice. I gladly accede to his request and I hope that you will profit by his wisdom. I give the first bit of advice by telling you that everyone is from Missouri.

You know, World War No. 1 made many a revelation. One was that although we have 49 States in the Union, practically everyone in the Service is from Missouri. Yes, practically everyone has got to be shown. "Seeing is believing" is the one Act of Faith to which all service men subscribe. Of course it is not an act of faith at all; it is a denial of faith, for

faith is believing what we don't see. However, I am going to suppose that you claim to be from Missouri and that you assert that "seeing is believing," and then I am going to put you to the test.

I say that there is one man on the Post who is most anxious to meet you, one man who wants to be your intimate friend, one man who wants to give you something, to give you much, and for it all wants nothing in return!

Now since you are from Missouri, go and find out! Since you say that "seeing is believing," go, get your faith strengthened by meeting the one officer on the Post who wishes that he were not an officer, the one officer who wants to be with those in the ranks, the one officer who wants to be your 'pal!' Go, meet your Catholic Chaplain. He is waiting just for YOU!

Some years ago Bruce Barton wrote a book which he titled: "The Man Nobody Knows." Now Bruce Barton is an advertising man and he knew the value of his title. His book was a best seller. "The Man Nobody Knows" is a life of Jesus Christ. For once advertising and truth are almost one. Bruce Barton's title is almost correct, for there are multitudes who do not know Jesus Christ. And what Barton said of the God-Man, I say of the God-Man's Doubles. . . . The Catholic priest is The Man that very few really know! Don't *you* be one of the multitude! Be from Missouri and meet this man whom so very few know. Meet your Catholic Chaplain intimately. I'll wager that you will find him a MAN!

And that, to many, is a real discovery. Religion has been savagely caricatured, so, too, have religion's ministers. That is why "By

heavens! He's human!" is the involuntary explosion so often heard from people after their first friendly chat with a Catholic priest. I don't know what they take us to be. I don't know whether they think that we were born of some other race or come from some other world, or what; but I do know that even staid and very conservative people have been startled into the exclamation, "By heavens! He's human!" on their first intimate meeting with a Catholic priest. Make this discovery for yourself. I want you to meet a real man. But I don't want you to take my word for it. No. "Seeing is believing," so see for yourself. Don't be bashful. A real man is waiting for you, just for YOU! That is how he views his commission: he has been commanded to serve YOU!

As I said, World War No. 1 gave us many discoveries. After it most thinking people made the discovery that it was not the Army or the Navy that won the War—it was propaganda. And that discovery gave us all a good laugh. During the War hundreds of thousands of American doughboys made a discovery that gave them many a laugh. They discovered the inexhaustible fount of wit and humor that bubbles up incessantly from the soul of their Catholic Chaplain. There is something eternally young about a Catholic priest. You will find him full of life and laughter; you may even discover in him much of the boy. Oh, he is mature enough and settled enough, but he has a resiliency and a vivacity that is found only in youth. I remember a very young Superioress from France coming out flabbergasted from a consultation of a rather large group of American Catholic priests. She simply sputtered, "In all my life I never saw such a group of elderly men who were so young and

so full of laughter. Why, I am older than any one of them myself!"

Yes, it is true. The Catholic priest grows old exteriorly, but not interiorly; his hair whitens (or falls out!) his face wrinkles, his shoulders droop and his step slows, but his heart and his mind and his laugh are always young, almost boyish! Find these things out for yourself. Go and meet your Catholic Chaplain. I'll wager that you'll be able to say of him what Sambo said of himself. Sambo was one day asked how old he was and made answer by saying, "Well, sah, if yo reckons by de years, I'se only twenty-five; but if yo go by de fun and laughter I'se had, I must be way over 100." I'll wager that you'll find your Chaplain young in years but centuries old in wit, wisdom and real good cheer!

The infidel government of France met the Catholic priest during the World War and was greatly surprised by the meeting. You see, France ordered the priests to the trenches, not as Chaplains but as ordinary soldiers of the line. The priests made a dignified protest that they had been commissioned by God to heal souls and not to mangle bodies, but their protest went unheard. They were commanded to take their places in the ranks. They took them. And what was the result? France discovered her *real heroes!*

By their bravery, intelligence and self-sacrifice these soldier-priests became "stand-outs." When danger and death were to be faced the soldier-priest was sent to face them; and he went unafraid. When volunteers were called up, for something that meant almost certain death, it was the soldier-priest who stepped forward first. France gradually woke up and with her the rest of the world; they woke up to the fact that priests were not only men but

heroic men! During those four years of horror the infidel government of France made awards for outstanding bravery, and the highest percentage of those awards went to the soldier-priests! It was in those awful days that a record was made that has never been paralleled in history, a record that will be hard to equal and almost impossible to break: one Religious Order, the Jesuits, had 93% of its members decorated for heroic action! Think of it! 93 out of every 100 men so signalized themselves by deeds of bravery that a hostile government was forced to place upon their breasts the Croix de Guerre, France's Medal of Honor. That's manliness for you! Obviously there is something in the Catholic priesthood that makes men heroic.

Go, meet your Chaplain. You'll find him a man, every inch of him; you'll find him a man of life and laughter; but more—you'll find him an Ambassador from God. That is the important point for you. He is an Ambassador who wants to be your friend, not for his own sake, but for yours! An Ambassador who wants to help you live life thoroughly by making you a friend of the One for Whom he is Ambassador. Go, meet him. He has a lot to give you and he is more than anxious to give it. I do not mean only advice—though that from a wise man is priceless; I do not mean only enjoyable chats—even though such are worth more than a month's salary; but I do mean *friendliness* . . . the one thing our world, despite its Big Brother Clubs and its Rotary Clubs and its countless meetings to promote friendly feelings, sadly lacks! Friendliness demands selflessness; and that is why the world is full of "fair-weather companions" and empty of "all-weather friends." Go, meet your Chaplain and learn what I mean from

personal experience. Go, meet a man who is friendly and wants to be your friend; meet a man who, because he knows so much loneliness in his own life, can banish it from the lives of others; a man who is schooled to such self-forgetfulness that he will be thinking only of you. Go, meet your Chaplain and you will find your one changeless friend on the Post.

Just one word of warning. "There are exceptions to every rule" is a well founded axiom. But it is an axiom that gave birth to another that is equally well founded, namely, "It is the exception that proves the rule." A Catholic priest is a man, only a man. Therefore he is not faultless or flawless! There was only one Man in all history who was faultless and flawless—and He is the God-Man. But even if you should find that the milk of human kindness has begun to curdle in your Chaplain, even if you should find him full of faults as a man, you'll find him very much like the God-Man in the matter of his ambassadorship. In other words, as a priest, as a minister of God, as a man consecrated to do what Jesus did—"to go about doing good"—as the minister of God's Sacraments through which grace comes to your soul, you'll find him efficient and effective. And that is why I specially exhort you to go meet your Chaplain. He has much to give you, very much; and you need all that he has to give! Be from Missouri. See and believe! See how human a priest is, and at the same time how divine!

My second and last word of advice suggested by the good Monsignor is:

Get Used to Being Alone With God

In other words, *Visit the Post Chapel!* And visit it often!

I know an old man who was very fond of saying: "I'm never less alone than when alone." I could never understand him until I learned that he knew how to be alone with God, with God's Mother and with God's Saints. Indeed, he was never less alone than when alone, for when he was alone he prayed! So I say to you: Visit your Post Chapel and learn to be alone with God. He is your Changeless Friend!

In contrast to the old man with his puzzling saying I think of the young poet who sighed:

Face on face in the City,
And when will the faces end?

Face on face in the City,
But never the face of a friend!

That certainly is a common experience. If you have never felt desperately lonely, go, get lost in a big crowd. Or better, if you never want to feel lonely as long as you live, get used to being alone with God.

Friend of mine, let me tell you something. At life's most solemn moments it has been, and it ever shall be, just a question of *you and God!*

At birth it was really a question of just you and God. For He is the Author of Life and King of the World, and you were just coming into life in this world.

In your prayers it is always a question of just you and God. You plead, He hears. You beg, He answers. You thank, He accepts.

In the Confessional it is a question of just you and God; for the priest is God's ambassador. To him as God's representative, you confess. From him as God's representative, you receive absolution.

In Communion it is absolutely a question of just you and God.

That is why I have said that life's most solemn moments find you *alone with God*. And I hardly need to tell you that at death you will leave everyone and everything and be completely *alone with God*. Then after death comes the Judgment wherein you will again find yourself *alone with God*. So you see how eminently prudent and practical it is to get used to being alone with God. You'll acquire this habit by visiting the Post Chapel and visiting it often!

Meet the Chaplain and you'll meet a friend; go to the Chapel and you'll meet your Changeless Friend. Go to the Chapel to think and pray! You see, you need quiet in order to think deeply; and you are just about old enough to think some really deep thoughts—thoughts on why you are in life, where you are going, how well you are fulfilling your commission as a soldier of Christ. Go to the Post Chapel and get the habit of thinking thoughts that are worth-while, thoughts on Time and Eternity, Life and Death, God and Man, your body and your SOUL! Go to the Post Chapel to see the world in true perspective and to catch a glimpse of your HOME beyond the stars!

If you will visit the Post Chapel often I'll guarantee that you'll learn a lot about yourself as you think and pray to God. I'll willingly wager that you'll become a better man, a better man in the service, because you'll become a better man of God!

Get used to being alone with God in Time and I assure you that you'll not be apart from Him in Eternity! I'll end as I began: You have at least two things to worry about—God and Eternity. But you'll never get grey hairs worrying about either if you will meet the Chaplain and visit the Post Chapel.

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