

~~Trappist, A. Raymond, Father, 1903-~~
- A message from those killed in action.
A.OX 4626

A Trappist

delivers

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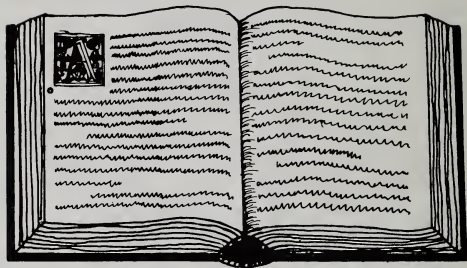
MESSAGE

FROM THOSE

KILLED IN ACTION



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die 31a Julii

IMPRIMI POTEST:

✠ FREDERICUS M. DUNNE, O.C.S.O.

Abbas B. M. de Gethsemani

die 20a Augusti

NIHIL OBSTAT:

FINTAN WALKER, Ph.D.

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IMPRIMATUR:

✠ JOSEPHUS E. RITTER, D.D.

Episcopus Indianapolitanus

die 5a Septembris

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The Abbey Press,
St. Meinrad, Ind.

To
THE GOLD STAR PARENTS
OF
AMERICA
PRAYING
THAT THEY MEET
THEIR HEROIC SONS
IN
OUR HOME
BEYOND THE STARS!

FOREWORD

THIS is not propaganda. I have no time for that. For life is a wind, you see. Eternity is tomorrow; so I have no second to spare on mere propaganda. But I must pay my debts, and I contracted a tremendous one the moment the blue star in your flag of service turned to gold. Let me pay some of it now.

I PAY it to you, for you are nearest of kin to him who is my creditor—you, the Mother, Father, Brother, Sister, Wife or Sweetheart of the lad who was "killed in action." He was your lad, but he is my creditor; for thanks to him and his all-out sacrifice, I can continue to wear the black and white of a Trappist monk and make my all-out effort to adore God. I sing the praises of Jesus Christ this day and hymn the glory of His Blessed Mother in the peace of Gethsemani—America's Hidden City of God—only because your lad was courageous enough to don the garb of a fighting man and face the forces of antichrist thousands of miles from home.

THIS is fact I speak, not fancy. I say there are cloisters in America this moment precisely because there are American graves in lands beyond the seas. And I know whereof I speak. For behold! God was praised by Trappist monks in Trappist monasteries in Germany and France before the advent of Hitler. For a time those praises ceased! But now, once again praises will rise from Trappist monks in Trappist monasteries in France and Germany because . . . I say it from a deeply grateful heart . . . because the blue star in your flag of service has turned to gold!

DO YOU see what I owe your lad? It is something tremendous! Won't you allow me to pay some of that debt by giving you my message, his message, then a command from the dead? Please do!

MY MESSAGE

Feast of the Sacred Heart, 1944

FRIEND OF MINE:

Your heart is aching, isn't it? This, then is the most fitting day I could possibly choose to address you; for it is the Feast day of Him whose Heart broke. But just because His Heart did break, yours can be healed. Never forget that the moment the point of the lance pierced the Heart of Christ there was a snapping of bolts on the gates of Heaven, and Paradise was regained for you, for me, and for the lad who was "killed in action."

THAT is the truth we want to hear in this black hour, isn't it? We want to know that life has a meaning, that human existence is not madness, and that the highways and byways of this war-wearied world lead somewhere. It is from the broken Heart of God that we hear the one soul-sustaining truth. With all the eloquence of His mangled Corpse He tells us that Good Friday's Blood and darkness is but prelude to the Easter Dawn; that suffering and sorrow purchase peace; that death is promise of a radiant resurrection. Believe Him! Believe that there is a Heaven; that it is our Home; and that every heart-beat is bringing us nearer it and Him. Believe that, and the world ceases to be black.

HAVING grasped that, go on and from the depth of this Feast draw an even more consoling truth. Realize that if the Heart of God craves anything Personal, if Jesus Christ ever speaks for Himself, the one word He uses is "Repay!" That is the cry that broke from His lips three hundred years ago when He appeared to Margaret Mary at Paray-le-

Monial. That is the cry the world of man has not heard, or hearing, has not heeded. And it is that heedlessness which has brought on this awful war. But your lad heard it! Yes, he heard the cry of the wounded Christ, and he answered that cry with the magnificent answer of his own precious life! Your loved one made a "beau geste" to God! He repaid Love with love!

THAT is the glory I write to you today, and that is the glory I would have gladden your aching heart. Twenty centuries ago God died that men might live; today, in this mid-twentieth century, American men have died, and are still dying, precisely that God might live. I mean it! With all the conviction of my priested soul I say that your lad, and many another like him, has turned the tables on Omnipotence—he has given wounds for Wounds, blood for Blood, and life for Life.

IT MAY seem strange to hear one say that your lad died for God. But that only proves that to many people the phrase, "For God and Country," is only a catch-phrase—and they have not caught its meaning! They do not see that love for country not based on love for God is at best a very shallow love; that patriotism not sprung from devotedness to the Eternal "Pater" in the eternal "Patria" is but surface sentiment, not virtue that has eternal value; that love for fellow man not rooted in recognition of his kinship with Divinity is superficial, unsubstantial and tragically hollow. I say your boy died for God—and there I place my period, because the awful onslaught of war has beaten us to our knees and we are recognizing more than ever before that our Declaration of Independence opens with a Declaration of Dependence; that Lin-

coln was speaking fact when he spoke of "this nation *under God*"; and that the motto on the Great Seal of the United States, "In God We Trust," has got to be lived!

BUT THAT the phrase "For God and Country" has meaning that is sacred, that it embodies the most thrilling truth of this heart-sickening war, I leave to be told by your own loved lad as he speaks to you from out the beyond in the second part of this booklet. The comfort I offer you is this: You've asked me to pray for your lad, haven't you? I am glad to tell you that your request was answered before it was made. I am glad to tell you that I prayed for him the day before he died and the very day he died. I am even more delighted to tell you that that prayer rose up "*in nomine Ecclesiae*—in the name of the Holy, Roman, Catholic Church"; in the name of almost four hundred million souls who call God their Father and Christ their King.

HAVE you ever thought of what it means to pray "in the name of the Church"? For your great comfort let me tell you a part of it. It actually means that I gathered all the love of the unnumbered and unknown "Little Flowers" who this moment are unpetaling the roses of their lives behind grate and grille and joyfully strewing them at the feet of their Jesus; it means that I gathered all the dauntless zeal of countless modern Xaviers who this day are squandering the rich, young energies of their manhood in the unbroken stretches of arctic snow and ice as well as in the tangled growth of fever-breeding tropics, teaching these far-away peoples the almost unbelievable truth that God has fallen in love with them; it means that I gathered up all the burning faith of hundreds on hundreds of hidden Cures

d'Ars whose thirst for souls has burned their very bodies to a state of emaciation; to this I added the adoring love in the hearts of all His anointed, from that of the youngster whose "rose of priesthood has just slipped its bud," to that of the snow-white pastor bent under the harvest of his heavy, fruit-filled years; it means that I took all the fortitude of our present day martyrs who no more shrink from firing squads or the freezing tortures of Siberia than did our early martyrs from the Arena's lions and leopards or the burning tortures of Nero's gardens; it means that I took the gratitude that throbs in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of young parents as they kneel beside the cradle of the newly-born, as well as that deeper gratitude that beats in the breast of the grey-haired grieving as they kneel beside the coffin of one who has loved much and died well. This world of love, adoration, praise and thanksgiving I took and poured out before God in one unrestrained torrent. My voice rose "like the voice of many waters," as the Apocalypse says; for it was as if I had gathered all the waters of the world and placed them in one sea, then let the wash of that full flood break upon the ears of God. Still it was not only "like the voice of many waters" but "like a voice of thunder" and like the voice of "harpers playing on their harps" that my voice arose; for in very truth I had gathered the music and melody of four hundred million souls and sent that tremendous burst of song into Heaven's high halls through the lips of the sweetest Singer Heaven or earth has ever heard—the lips of Christ Jesus.

THAT IS something of what it means to pray "in the name of the Church," and that is the way I prayed the day before your boy died

and the day he died. I took the lispings of innocence who at Mother's knees are just learning to say, "Jesus" and blended them with the broken "Aves" of the aged who slip a Rosary through gnarled fingers as life's sun sets; I took the seraphic outpourings of mystics who stand or kneel in transports of love and merged them with the sobs of Magdalenes awakened to the ecstasy of purity and the rapture of mercy; I took the prayers of the world's countless Prodigals and joined them to the praises of those whose souls have known only the stain of Original sin; I went into cloisters and convents, into homes and hospitals, into highways and hedges and garnered all the adoration, praise, thanksgiving and generous reparation that stirs in the souls of those who know Christ as Leader and Lover, and cast it into one brazier that it might rise as a cloud of incense before God. I took all that and sent it as intoxicating perfume unto the throne of the Father as if from a thurible in the hands of the Son.

COULD such a prayer go unheard? Hardly! It is the prayer of the Mystical Body of Christ. It is the prayer of four hundred million hearts throbbing in unison with the Sacred Heart. It is the prayer of four hundred million lips crying: "Abba—Father!" through the lips of the Son. It is the pleading prayer of the eyes of four hundred million people become eloquent with the eyes of Christ; for the prayer of the Mystical Body is the prayer of four hundred million members breaking upon the ears of God from the mouth of the God-Man, the Head of that Body.

THAT was the prayer I prayed for your loved one. It was the gathered eloquence of four hundred million pleading through the eyes, the

lips and the Heart of Christ. And I prayed it just before and just after he died; for I always sing my sunset song of Compline for the dying of the day and the dead. For years I have done the same. In the name of the Church and through the lips of Christ I sing the Canonical hour of Compline asking the Father to look down upon those who before the next sunset hour are to face the Judgment, as well as those who in the last twenty-four hours have faced the Judgment, and see them through the red mists of Calvary's Blood, see them in the clefts of the Heart that was broken one Friday afternoon towards sundown, see them as members of that marvelous Body of which His Jesus is Head.

DOES IT not comfort you to know that such a petition came from the lips of the Son of God? My poor prayers, of themselves, would hardly reach the ribbed roof of our Cistercian Gothic glory. Of myself, what am I? Infinitesimal is accurately descriptive. If Isaiàs could say: "I am a man of unclean lips" what can I say? I have been God's enemy. But be comforted. It was not from my weak lips that the prayer arose. No, for in choir I pray as the "anonymous anointed," a little priest calling to God through the lips of the great High Priest, Jesus, who "was heard for His reverence." Now remember He promised that whatsoever we asked in His name would be granted us. What can you expect, then, from what is asked *by His lips?*

SOMETHING MORE CONSOLING

BUT EVEN more consoling than my Compline hour is my Mass. On the very day your lad died I prayed for him just after I had brought the Son of God to birth in bread.

As Jesus Christ, Body and Blood, soul and divinity, lay before me on the white of the corporal and in the gold of the cup, I spoke of him who had been "killed in action." More! Three hundred thousand times that same day the attention of God the Father was called to the soul of your dead lad by God the Son. Four times every second the Father heard the plea: "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants and handmaids who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace. Unto these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace. Through the same Christ, Our Lord, Amen."

THINK of that! Three hundred thousand times the day he died the Godhead heard the "white Heart-break of a Host." It was the Heart of Jesus breaking in love for men—your loved one among them. Three hundred thousand times the day he died a golden cup was lifted high and God the Father heard the Blood of His Christ calling for mercy on men. Three hundred thousand different times the very day he died some "anonymous anointed," in the person of Christ, called out as did the dying Jesus: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Yes, three hundred thousand times that day, and three hundred thousand times every day since, your loved one's eternal rest has been begged from God "through Jesus Christ, Our Lord."

OH, REALIZE what it means to be a Catholic and you will know comfort. Realize what it means to have the Sacrifice of the Mass offered "from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same," and your soul will know true consolation. It is not only the lips of Christ moving in prayer, not only the hands

of Christ lifted in supplication, it is the Heart of Christ breaking as only the Heart of God can break—in a deathless love that men might live forever. From the parched and blistered lips of a God a prayer broke to God one Friday afternoon as the sun hid its light. Whenever you see a Host raised on high realize that those same lips that were parched and blistered are thirsting with a divine thirst today, and are moving in the same earnest prayer; realize that the human Heart of Christ is throbbing beneath the white of that round wafer and is, as it were, fevering His Blood with yearning for the souls of men; realize that beneath the appearances of that tiny Host a Body is hid, a Body that has five wounds blazing like five tremendous suns as if they would blind the Godhead to the madness of sinful man; realize that Jesus is pleading with all His infinite eloquence for you, for me, and for your boy.

WITH THAT picture before you, you can understand my unwearying plea that you make the Mass your life and your life a Mass. It is the surest way of having the infinitesimal become one with the Infinite, of having the impotent merge with the Omnipotent, and the creature who cringes in reverential awe pray through the lips of the God who became man that men might become like unto God.

ONE FURTHER word about the answer I made before your request was received. To the Canonical Office we chant in the name of the Church, we Trappists always add the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, and it has been my unvarying custom to make my Compline hour of that Office a plea to Mother Mary that she take care of those who have died since last sundown and those who are to

die before the next. Now that may sound like a very simple thing, but when you realize that Mary has rightly been called "*Omnipotentia Supplex*—The Suppliant Woman who cannot fail to obtain her request," you will see how sublime that very simple thing is. You parents know what it is to love your own flesh and blood; you wives and sweethearts know what it is to love a person so that you are ready to surrender your whole being to him; you brothers and sisters know what it is to yearn and burn with love for your brother. Well, let me tell you that Mary, the Mother of God, knows what it is to love your lad with all three loves! In her one Immaculate Heart these three loves are united—for she is sister through the flesh of Adam, Lady through the Kingship of Christ, and Mother through Calvary's bequest. She has loved your boy as brother, knight and son. When she pleads with God the Father she is pleading for her own! And her pleading is irresistible! For when the Father looks into her eyes He sees the light from which the Light of the World was kindled; as He watches the fair blush mantle her cheek He knows He is looking on the source of the Blood that incarnadined Gethsemani's grass and stained the Cross of Calvary; as His gaze rests on the face of the most beautiful of mothers He recognizes the features of the "most beautiful of the sons of men." Small wonder she is "*Omnipotentia Supplex*"—she mothered His Jesus and she yet mothers Christ's mystical members. It was to her I prayed the day your loved one died and the day before he died. Don't you think, then, that Heaven was very near as he lost his life in war's cruel hell?

YOU HAVE NOT LOST

NOW THAT he is gone, don't think that you have lost him. No. You have gained him so that he can never be lost! He is yours this moment more than he ever was while on earth, and he will be yours unchangeably. While he lived, the only certitude you could ever have of his unchanging love was a moral certitude. Man is mutable. The only thing we are absolutely sure of in this world is change. But the one word perfectly descriptive of Heaven is *permanence*. There is tragedy in his un-lived life, I know; but look at the romance in his love—it is now unchangeable! So I say again: You have not lost him. You have gained him so that he can never be lost.

TO YOU mothers and fathers, who had legitimate hopes that he would be your mainstay and support in your down-going years, I say be not saddened. Your hopes are not blighted! He will not contribute directly to your material needs; he will not make your old age secure by swelling a bank account; but he will help you in a more important way. He will not now be your bread-winner; but let us realize that it is "not by bread alone that man lives." Believe me when I say your son will help you as never before. You have not lost. You have gained tremendously. And not the least part of that gain lies in what I call "God's motherliness." Christ has added another touch to the mansion you are to occupy in His Father's house. He has made it much more homelike by placing your loved one there! He wants to make you homesick for Heaven. He does it by transporting your own there.

NOW LET me tell you of your greatest gain. God has conferred on you a greater honor than

that of being the honored living of the country's honored dead. He has given you something much more thrilling than that of being the survivor of the world's saviors. With reverence and awe I whisper that in changing your blue star to gold, God has given you the opportunity of completing the work of His Only Begotten Son!

DOES THAT make you start? Does it seem utterly incredible? Well the truth comes from St. Paul. He tells us something seemingly contradictory. He tells us that Christ satisfied "superabundantly"; then he says that something is "wanting" to the Passion of Christ. That would be a flat contradiction if it was not for the fact that, as St. Augustine explains, the satisfaction is "superabundant" in the Head of the Body, but there is something "wanting," something to be "filled up" in the members. In a certain sense, then, the Passion of Christ is not ended. No. There is a sea of suffering that must be brought to the flood. Jesus cannot swell that tide in His Physical Body, so He depends on you—yes, on YOU—to do it in His Mystical Body. It was with exultation that St. Paul cried: "I fill up those things that are wanting to the Passion of Christ in my flesh, for His Body, which is the Church." Do you see your sacred opportunity?—It is to take the awful ache of your heart, the loneliness, the longing and yearning that shakes your soul, the anguish that is yours for the loved one who is gone, and offer them jubilantly to God the Father. Offer them to "fill up those things that are wanting to the Passion of His Son." It is not resignation that I speak of, understand; it is oblation! I am asking you to be the heroic survivor of the heroic dead. He died that God might live; you live that men may not die

eternally. You do that by offering the agony of your heart to swell that mystic sea of suffering to the very flood. It is a divine work that Divinity allows you to do. Do it through the heart that served as scabbard for seven swords and that other Heart that was broken by the point of a soldier's lance. Yours is an opportunity to satisfy God and save men. You won't let it slip, will you? Jesus did not miss His. Mary did not miss hers. Your boy measured up perfectly. Won't you? God needs YOU. Don't fail GOD!

NOW ONE little word of explanation before I deliver the message from the dead. When I wrote my "Letter to Mothers Whose Sons are in the Service" I addressed only "Mother." That little pamphlet was hardly off the press when the very mother who had inspired it wrote: "Dad misses him as much as I do." That sentence has given me pause more than once since. I see that a certain preoccupation with Mothers has worked a real injustice to Fathers. They DO miss the lads as much as Mothers! Their love may not be as demonstrative, but it is as deep and as undying. I know. I had a father who loved! Those who say that a father's love is not to be compared to a mother's, have never seen a father's heart! With that conviction fully formed I had determined to do justice to the fathers of our American heroes in my next effort. I was just about to address this to "Our Gold-Star Parents" when a letter came in asking for prayers for a lad who had just given his all "somewhere in Italy," leaving behind him his bride of a year and a half and a baby-daughter of two months—a child he had never seen and never will see. The next day or so I received a note about a pilot who is "missing in action" since the first day of the Invasion.

His heart-broken wife contemplates the features of the man she loved in the face of a six-months-old boy. With those facts before you, you can understand why I address Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Wife and Sweetheart. It is you who are addressed in the title "Beloved" in the pages that follow.

TO THOSE who need consolation—which means everyone closely connected with the one whose blue star has turned to gold—I have a message to deliver. It is from the lad to whom I owe so much, the boy who gave his all that God might live, your loved one! Listen to him speak . . .

PART II

HIS MESSAGE

BELOVED:

From out the beyond I speak. The Government has informed you that I was "killed in action." In a general way it has told you where my body lies. But what it has not told you, because it is something it could not tell you, is the one thing you want to hear. To tell you that I speak from out the beyond.

AS LONG as I lived, you were uneasy, weren't you? Your waking hours were filled with worry and your troubled sleep broken with fears. Now that I am dead one aching robs your days of quiet and your nights of rest. With all the suddenness of the burst of a bomb it has broken on you that life on earth is flung against a background of utter finality, and that eternal issues are settled in the fleeting moments called time. Now as never before you see that one thing, and one thing alone, is necessary, no matter how many thousand others may be useful or pleasant. Now as never before you see that the only thing that really matters in life and in death is—GRACE. You have always accepted this truth with your intellect; now you feel its absolute truthfulness in the very depths of your being. Your heart aches to know what was the state of my soul when I died. Your very vitals are gnawed with anxiety about the issue of my years. Let me ease that ache and end that gnawing by saying softly and reverently: "Beloved, rejoice! and thank God!"

THAT IS my message from out the beyond: "Rejoice and thank God!" As you love me, I

adjure you to thank God unceasingly for letting me die when I did, where I did, and as I did. Thank Him night and day for allowing me to be "killed in action." It was His greatest gift to me! I know you will thank Him for all He did for me during life, but what I am especially begging of you is that you thank Him for what He did to me at death!

AS YOU change my blue star to gold, weep! I know well that tears will fall from your eyes in loneliness and love. I garner them as heart-pearls offered to me. I accept them with eternal humility and eternal gratitude. But, Beloved, I want you to weep for joy! I want sparkling diamonds to spill from those lashes of yours, and I want them to drop in brilliantly grateful tribute to God. His mercies I will sing forever. Be not behind me in paying Him your thanks. And for what?—For taking me just as my youth opened into full flower, thrusting me into the service of my country, and there hardening my body, steadying my nerves, and by those months of relentless discipline fibering my whole being for the awful shock of battle. Thank Him for all that was done to my mind and will during those days of training. It was the tempering of my young soul; and that soul needed tempering. Beloved, believe me when I tell you it was all part of His kind Providence, part of His infinitely wise and merciful plan. He was slowly working up the crescendo to the climax that came when my young life was snuffed out "in action."

FOR THAT climax I want you to thank Him with all the warm, enthusiastic love of your great heart. For that was the changing of my star of service into a star of sacrifice! Do you hear, Beloved? I say thank God for stop-

ping the beat of my heart in the heat of battle, for that has meant the setting of my soul athrob with the throb of triumph! As you love me, let every pulsation of your being be an act of thanksgiving to the God who was merciful enough to see that I was listed amongst those "killed in action," for that has meant my enrollment amongst those who live and love, and shall so live forever!

THAT IS what you've been longing to hear, isn't it? Well, hear it with a grateful heart and from it learn that God still loves paradox. For me He changed war's curse into a blessing; by robbing me of life "in action" He gave me life's greatest gift; and now, after almost breaking your heart with sorrow He will almost break it again with joy. Yes, He still loves paradox. The truth I tell from out the beyond is this: With wildly prodigal hand God's enemy scattered the seeds of hate the world over; from that mad sowing, the Divine Reaper gathers, and yet more joyfully gathers fat, full harvests of love. I am one of those fortunate and highly favored sheaves. Thank Him for that. I say it again: Thank Him for taking me when He did, where He did, and as He did. For in losing my life I have found it! In dying I live! In giving all I have received everything!

DOES THAT PUZZLE you? Does it seem strange, Beloved, that I would have you, who feel crushed under sorrow, rejoice? Do I sound harsh and unfeeling when I beg you to thank God for taking me from you? If so, I can but ask you to listen acutely. You love me. You know now, perhaps as never before, that life is not meaningless, that there is a pattern to the seeming formlessness of our days, and that time is *only* for eternity. It is

just because you love me so well that I tell you to rejoice, for I tell you that my time has not been wasted, my days have not gone up in smoke, my young years have not been without eternal issue! But, Beloved, realize that had I not been killed in action" the issue might have been different! That is the basis of your gratitude!

IT WAS De Rancé, the great reformer of La Trappe, whence the Trappists received their name, who listed fourteen occasions on which, if God had called him to Judgment, he would have been condemned to hell. He kept that list ever before him. Its fourteen points stirred him to gratitude for the Divine patience so prodigally shown him. Beloved, if we who are dead had made out our list, you can be sure that for most of us it would have been longer! Yes, for most of us there were many more than fourteen occasions on which, if our hearts had stopped beating, our souls would have been damned eternally.

YOU KNOW something of the world of men. You know full well that those in the service were not exactly angelic! Their language was not always pure, their lives were not always clean. No. Bad whisky and bad women were too often too near the camps. Many a mother, many a wife, many a sweetheart was disturbed by this knowledge so long as their loved one lived. It has frightened them somewhat since he is dead. They knew the loyalty and love of their boy, but they also knew that he was human. Beloved, that is precisely why I say thank God that He took me when He did, where He did, and as He did. The Divine Alchemist is working incessantly in this war. He is ending lives that could hardly be called "good" with deaths that are truly glorious!

He is giving boys who had not the moral stamina sufficient to withstand the allurements of the devil the courage to sacrifice not only momentary pleasure but their whole lifetimes of possible legitimate joys.

THE EXPLANATION

YOUR SOUL cries for explanation, I know. I give it by saying that the President was right, Sherman was wrong, and God is to be taken at His word.

IT WAS Roosevelt who said: "It is not so much a duty as a privilege to serve." Beloved, in saying that, he said more than he knew! He meant that it was a privilege to be allowed to fight for homes, for hearths, for fellow-men; and he was right. But the deeper truth is that we became more than warriors for our country when we donned the uniform of Uncle Sam; we became crusaders for Christ! We were battling not so much that men might be free to call their souls their own, as that God might be free to live in the world He had created.

LOOK, BELOVED! A cross marks my grave. A cross marks the grave of every brave man who has been buried. Over the waters that have swallowed hundreds, crosses have been traced. Had we not died, my dearest, most likely the world would know no crosses! Think what that would mean. As is all too evident, the swastika is no sign of salvation. No God-become-man ever flung Himself with outstretched arms on that twisted thing, there to die that men might live. Never! That meaningless zigzag can speak of no love because over it no drops of Divine Blood have ever dropped from the wounds of a dying God. Be-

lieve me, Beloved, it *was* a privilege to die that God might live!

SHERMAN SAID: "War is hell." He was wrong—at least as far as I was concerned. For me, and millions like me, war was not hell; it was Purgatory! We suffered more than we knew as we were transformed from little more than growing boys at play into grim fighters for the U.S.A. It cost us much to obey. We sweated and strained mentally as well as physically while learning to execute commands with all the promptness and perfection of an automaton. Almost unknown to ourselves we were paying the price for our sins; we were doing penance for our waywardness as we lived under the rigid discipline of the service. Not all of us were as Christ-conscious as was Joyce Kilmer, but the merciful God, who reads the hearts better than the hearts' owners' interpreted our deeds kindly. In His great love for us, God says that as we did our duty because it was duty we virtually prayed what Kilmer prayed actually. His Infinite Mercy heard our deeds saying:

"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.)

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

(Then shall my fickle soul forget
Thy Agony of 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."

BELOVED, you know that love is *not* blind. No. The warmth of the heart burns all scales from the eyes, and love sees more clearly than the eagle. Every blemish in the Beloved is sharply noted. Love, which can forgive all, seemingly can condone nothing. It is jealous, exacting, inexorable. You know that. You also know that while it wants everything, it is pleased beyond measure with whatever little is given. That is love. With that as premise, let me tell you that God *loves!* He is *love!* "This millionth of His gift" seems to have opened the very flood-gates of His mercy!

I DON'T understand it all. I cannot explain it fully. I know that love can forbear and that love can forgive. But I also know that love can never be reconciled to an unlovely object. And a sinner is unlovely! Perhaps there is deeper truth in the saying that "God hates the sin but loves the sinner" than most people realize. We mortals often find difficulty in separating the act from the actor. The act we see as final, once placed it can never be removed. But what we don't see clearly enough is that the actor can be changed! He can show remorse for the irremovable act he has placed and thus show himself a different person from the one who placed the deed. In that case we can love the actor but hate his act. I think that is the way God looked on the "millionth part" of His gift that we gave back. It was not that His love made Him blind, but that it sharpened His vision and enabled Him to see more in the last few days of our lives than we ourselves saw. What we offered as service, He accepted as sacrifice! He still hates sin with an infinite hate; but I can tell you that He loves one who was a sinner.

AND THAT is why I say God can be taken at His word. Do you remember Christ saying: "Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friend?" (Jno. 15:13) Do you remember St. Paul saying: "Love is the fulfilling of the law?" (Rom. 8:10) Do you remember how Jesus summed up the whole Law and the Prophets in the two Commandments of love? Do you remember how He said: "As long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it unto Me?" (Mt. 25:40) Well, Beloved, if you remember all those sayings, I have little more to say; for I'm sure you believe that God can be taken at His word. In truth, nothing more need be said. The whole puzzling, almost miraculous affair is solved. If you would but understand me rightly I would sum it all up by saying that I am "the man who got even with God."

I DON'T say it; for it would sound too much like a boast, and all I want to do is sing the mercies of God. But, Beloved, that *is* His mercy! After showing infinite patience with my weakness, my waywardness, my wickedness, He crowns His work with an act of Paternal prodigality. He allows me to die in circumstances that He can interpret as my act of perfect love. His omnipotent generosity says that my being "killed in action" was the "laying down of my life for my friend." He says it was "the fulfilling of the law." More! He claims I got even with His Christ; for I carried my cross unto my Golgotha and gave up the ghost that there might be room in the world for His Holy Ghost. In short, He says I actually died that He might live!

I KNOW that sounds like the language of a mystic, so I let you hear the same thing from the lips of a man—a great man! Back in

World War I Cardinal Mercier, Christ's Belgian giant, was asked if soldiers, falling in a righteous cause, could be called "martyrs." He answered that they could not, in the strict theological sense of the word; for martyrs give themselves to their persecutors undefended and unarmed, whereas soldiers die fighting. "But," he continued, "if you ask me what I think concerning the eternal salvation of a brave man who voluntarily lays down his life in defense of his country's honor and in vindication of violated justice, I do not hesitate to reply that *one cannot doubt in the least that Christ will crown his military valor, and that death, accepted in this Christian spirit, will assure the salvation of that man's soul.*"

I KNOW you will see the pivot on which the whole issue swings; and I know you will wonder if we "voluntarily laid down our lives" and "accepted death in a Christian spirit." Beloved, let me tell you that danger of death developed in us a God-consciousness that was almost equal to our self-consciousness! There were no atheists in fox-holes! Men who battled in the Solomons knew that they fought not so much under the blazing sun of the tropics as under the blinding light of eternity. Major Kenneth G. Stack, chaplain of the U.S.A., has told much about God on Guadalcanal. He has told of a little Jewish lad, tail-gunner on a B-17, who squeezed a miraculous medal he had received from the chaplain of the Cook County Hospital in Chicago, as the badly battered ship limped home and the Irish waist-gunner said the Rosary with the chaplain. That was God-consciousness, wasn't it? It was the same Major Stack who answered the question: "What does the war do to men spiritually?" by saying: "As I see it, it brings some men very close to being canonized saints

and martyrs, who are offering up their lives in the spirit of resignation to God's will for the salvation of such as you and me—who, I sometimes feel, deserve it very little."

THE ATLANTIC Charter did much to make it clear that we were fighting for God. Facts from Poland and Prussia made it even clearer. But, Beloved, the men who made it clearest are the men on whom you must pray God's unending blessings—the *Catholic Chaplains!* The Government did many wonderful things for us in the service. While in training, opportunities for wholesome recreation were afforded almost without number. Even to the combat area they sent "Jills in Jeeps," the best of our stage and screen comedians, and celebrities from many walks in life. That was considerate. Even more considerate was the unsurpassed efficiency of the medical corps. The Government was prodigal in its outlay for equipment. The medical profession of the land was spendthrift with men and women and surgical skill. Into the stinking jungles of the South Pacific, over the burning sands of Africa's desert, across poor desolate France went doctors and nurses with blood for the almost bloodless and life for the almost dead. Yes, we had much to be grateful for; but for nothing more than for our Catholic Chaplains!

SCIENCE DID all it could to bring us bodily well-being. Entertainers lifted our morale and took care of our mental health. But only Catholic Chaplains could take care of our soul-sicknesses and prepare us for eternal life. They were the men who would never let us forget for what we were fighting. They were the ones who kept us mindful of God. And thank God they were everywhere! Believe me, Beloved, we may have listened with our

tongues in our cheeks as they told us how to live. We were so stupidly sophisticated! But we listened with both ears, with all our minds, and all our hearts as they told us how to die.

FATHER JAMES J. Galvin, C.S.S.R., wrote most truthfully of them when he wrote:

In the olive groves of Sicily we lift the
Sacred Host.

In the jungle swamps of Papua where
strong Marines grow thin
And the scarlet parrots chatter and the
yellow snipers grin;
With fox-hole for confessional, we kneel
and pardon sin!

And on palm and orchid islands naked
natives gape in awe
To see strong men in brown and green
from New York and Arkansas
Gather round our altar-jeebs with beads
and bended head
And stack their guns to kneel and pay
mute homage to the dead.

And they wear Our Lady's medal and
they bless themselves and rise
And a sense of pride steals o'er us and
gathers in our eyes.

For, for this it is we follow them on keel
and wheel and wing...

By the chrism on our hands we've sworn
this oath to Christ the King:

To sleep and creep and climb with them to
keep their spirits bright,

To keep them in the Grace of God—hil-
arious delight!—

To stand abreast of each of them and
school their hearts to ring

With three eternal cheers for Christ!
(For death has lost its sting!)

*Vivat Ecclesia! Domino gloria!
Mori pro Patria! We fight for Christ
the King!"*

BELOVED, THAT oath has been, and is yet being, kept! Hearts are ringing "with three eternal cheers for Christ" because these men took all the sting from Death by showing us that we fought "for Christ the King."

IS THE pivotal sentence in Cardinal Mercier's statement proved? Listen then to how this man of God and lover of God's people went on: "Greater love than this no man hath," said Our Savior, 'that a man lay down his life for his friends.' The soldier who dies to save his brethren, and to defend the hearths and altars of his country, *reaches this highest degree of charity*. He may not have made a close analysis of the value of his sacrifice; but must we suppose that God requires of the plain soldier in the excitement of the battle the methodical precision of the moralist and theologian? Can we, who revere his heroism, doubt that God looks upon it with love?"

I KNOW how you will answer those two questions; but bear with me while I point out a difference between the two wars. The first World War was bitter. The invasion of Belgium was unjust. The Allies *did* fight in self-defense. But this second World War is different in kind as well as degree! Twenty-five years ago we were defending the rights God had given to man; today our role is somewhat reversed and in very truth it can be said that we are defending the rights some men will not give to God. I mean it. This war is a crusade or it is a crime. If we who are dead did not battle that God might live in the minds of the men He has created and be loved by the hearts He has set beating, then we were merely murdering. If we were not actually shielding Jesus Christ from the blitzkrieg of antichrist, if we did not actually give our all that Christ's

Cross might shine from steeple and spire, and that the love of His Sacred Heart might be known and had by the love-hungry hearts of men, then we were simply slaughtering; and we were slaughtered!

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON once said: "The only defensible war is a war for defense." He was right; and because he was so right, I am not wrong when I say the most defensible of all wars is the war in defense of God. And, Beloved, that is this war! Oh, we fought for homes and hearths; we battled for temples and altars; but we Catholics knew that there were homes with hearths and temples with altars only because there is a God. Back in 1917-1918 thousands fell in Flanders fields and Belleau Wood. As the Cardinal said, they deserved to be crowned by Christ; for they were avenging the outraged rights of small nations, and fighting that men might live amid justice. But today, in the Far East and in the far West, amid the chill snows of the North as well as in the tangled growths of the tropics, thousands and hundreds of thousands have died precisely that God might live. Don't you see, then, how doubly applicable the Cardinal's words are to us whose blue stars have already turned to gold? We had the honor to die for Him at whose birth a golden star of exceptional brilliance burst into the midnight blue and was seen by Wise Men in the East! What a blessing has been ours!

THE CARDINAL IS NOT GUILTY

I KNOW that there some who have called this "wishful thinking." But, Beloved, if any should again call it such, be not affected. Realize that more correctly it can be called "*thought-filled wishing!*" By that I mean that

this consoling doctrine is based on solid truth. Wasn't it you who told me about the Catholic belief concerning women who die in childbirth? Didn't you say that it was commonly held by careful theologians that God would reward with eternal life those who had given their temporal life that another babe might be born? That stands to reason; and it is backed by revelation. For the text "Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friends," certainly applies to such a mother. Don't you see, then, how consonant with Catholic belief is the truth I tell about men who have been "killed in action"?

CARDINAL MERCIER could never be accused of "wishful thinking." Not that penetrating genius! And it was he who said: "Christian mothers, be proud of your sons. Of all griefs, of all human sorrows, yours is perhaps the most worthy of veneration. I seem to see you in mourning, but erect nevertheless! standing beside the Mother of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross. Allow us to offer you not only our condolences, but also our congratulations. Not all heroes obtain temporal honors, but we have *the right to hope that to all will be given the immortal crown of the elect!*"

WHAT A statement! It does sound like "wishful thinking," doesn't it? When one thinks of the conduct of some of the service men "on leave"; when one considers the almost brutalizing effects of barrack-life in time of war; when one reflects on the proneness of man to evil and the awful purity of God, then one is tempted to say that the Cardinal *is* guilty of "wishful thinking." But, Beloved, before anyone condemns this princely prelate, insist that they read the reason His Eminence assigned.

Cardinal Mercier knew life! He was aware of the animal in man! He saw soldiers from many lands, and he saw them in many varied actions. He well knew that they were men, not angels; and not many of them angelic men! Yes, he knew all this, and yet he said: "We have the right to hope" that those who "voluntarily lay down their lives in defense of their country's honor and in vindication of violated justice," that those who "accepted death in the Christian spirit," would "be given the immortal crown of the elect." His next sentence is the sentence that proves that he was expressing "thought-filled wishing" and not "wishful thinking." It runs: "*For such is the virtue of a perfect act of charity that it cancels a whole life of sin!*"

HE WAS not thinking that we warriors were sinless. No indeed. He was only too well aware of the shameful fact that too often we were sin-filled. But, just as he knew men, so did he know the mercy of God! That is why his next line was: "In the twinkling of an eye it (the act of perfect charity) transforms a sinful man into a saint!"

THOSE WHO call that "wishful thinking" should stop and think! They should read again the parable of the Prodigal Son. It will teach them a thrilling truth! That boy was no saint! Far from it. He ended up with swine after squandering his patrimony on harlots. But how did his father receive him on his return? Why, the old man could not wait for the boy to reach home. Love gave life to aged limbs. Out onto the road he ran to meet his son! Then he would not even allow the lad to make his confession. No. He kissed him. Called servants. Commanded the fatted calf killed. Demanded the best robe, and placed

the ring on the finger of a wastrel who had flung away a fortune in riotous living. Reflection on that parable will rob every cynic of his cynicism and every skeptic of his doubt. It tells us the humbling, hope-filled, intoxicating truth that we limping Prodigals have for our Father—God!

A LATE President of Notre Dame University, the Rev. Charles L. O'Donnell, knew Christ and Christians. That is why he wrote:

He talked with *sinner*s, ate with them,
and died
With two for company on a sorry hill.
And when grey dawns have brought us
to His side,
We know, heart-brokenly, that He
loves us still!

He wrote that about Confession. If he had written about the Judgment, I think he would have changed but one word. He would have said:

“We know, *soul-startlingly*, that He
loves us still!”

BELOVED, YOU hear what I am saying and what Cardinal Mercier has said. Not that we who were “killed in action” were holy, but that we were humble; not that we led sinless lives, but that God granted us saintly deaths; not that by our own unaided bravery we have scaled the “hid battlements of eternity,” but that by the strong arms of Christ we have been snatched from the jaws of hell.

SHOULD ANYONE still smile at the message I send, I recommend to them a sober recollection of what happened as the God-man died. On His right was an individual who revelation says was a robber and who tradition gives us reason to believe was a murderer. His life had been so criminal that he himself openly ad-

mitted that his crucifixion was just. And yet, Jesus Christ, Unerring Truth, He who neither deceives nor can be deceived, canonized that man *before that man was dead!* And for what?—For a single act of Faith and a humble petition for remembrance. “Lord, remember me...” he said, and from the Cross of Christ came the canonizing words: “This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise!”

LET THOSE who call this “wishful thinking” think on that! Let them contrast the life and death of any ordinary service man with the life and death of *Saint Dismas*. Since he received Paradise for a single act of Faith and a simple humble petition, isn’t it thought-filled wishing” rather than “wishful thinking” to believe that lads “killed in action” will receive Heaven for their act of Perfect Love?

ONE DEEPER TRUTH

I HAVE called this war a “crusade,” Beloved. And I was right. For in all truth it is being waged that God might live on the earth He has made. But one deeper truth was expressed by a young English girl, Caryll Houselander by name. She said: “*THIS WAR IS THE PASSION.*” By that she meant that Christ in Christians is living over again His Agony of Bloody Sweat and His three hours of awful anguish. She is theologically exact. But, Beloved, do you see the wondrous implication in her words? Since this war is the Passion, since Christ in Christians is again sweating Blood and dying between thieves, it follows that Christians in Christ are on their way to their Resurrection!

THAT IS A TRUTH too little recognized. The Passion is not the close of the Christ

drama, Beloved, it is only its turning point! The curtain does not fall on Christ's life as the gloom of Golgotha blots out the sun. Never! That were to make of His life a tragedy, when in reality it was a triumph! It is against the background of Easter's golden dawn that we must see Christ if we would see Him rightly. For it is Sunday morning, and only Sunday morning, that makes Friday afternoon "Good." It is the splitting of the Roman sealed tomb and not the rending of the rocks or the sundering of the Jewish veil that ultimately makes Christianity a religion and the Crucifixion a redemption. That is why Caryll Houselander was actually prophesying the salvation and resurrection of man in Christ Jesus when she penetrated the blood haze that hangs over this war and saw it as the Passion of the Mystical Jesus.

THAT IS the truth that explains all that I have been trying to say: Christ is in Christians and Christians are in Christ! The Mystical Body is the world's greatest fact! It explains not only my salvation, but it tells its means! For what had I ever done to merit such a glory from God that I should be numbered amongst those whose death can be called an act of Perfect Charity? Nothing! And yet, that glory was merited! By whom?—By YOU! Yes, you and millions like you who live in Christ Jesus! Let me clarify....

BELOVED, the day I received your last letter I sat in the sands and mused on how many hands were needed before that manifestation of your heart could reach me. I saw woodsmen in the virginal forests of the Northwest cut down trees and work them into the waters that carried them to the sea. I saw bargemen lash the giant logs together and tow them to

a mill. As I watched them being reduced to pulp, then saw the pulp being moulded, pressed and dried, my mind called up the chemists behind that process, the iron and steel workers behind the machines and the miners still further back behind the ore for those machines. Then I lost count. I next fell to reconstructing the experiences of the letter since you sealed it with your kiss. A man collected it from a box; a girl sorted it and put it in a sack; after a ride in the truck it had a ride in the train. Before it reached my side of the world it got both sea-sick and air-sick. There it was sorted again, resorted and re-sacked. By this time it knew every different kind of hand possessed by man—the hard, rough, calloused, soft, gentle, careless, kind. Men, women and girls had fingered it. But now it came in possession of the Army. Those boys sent it along the regular route until my Captain gave it to my Sergeant, and my Sergeant gave it to me. What an immense amount of co-operation was necessary before I could read what your loving heart had dictated to your hand!

I HAD ARRIVED at this point in my musings when a plane passed overhead. I reflected that for one man in the air there had to be eleven or twelve on the ground beneath. To keep these twelve or thirteen in fighting trim a veritable army of scholars and workers had to contribute their share. Farmers, scientists, millhands, packers, shippers, stevedores, munition workers! The mere problem of fuel to keep that ship in the air staggered me. My imagination pictured for me the monotonous rise and fall of a pump in a California oil-field. I saw the crude oil pour into a refinery. I saw the finished product put aboard tankers. With anxious eye I watched

these bury their noses in the billows of a submarine-infested ocean. I cheered as I saw them make port, then marvelled at the efficiency and despatch with which they were unloaded. I was having a moment of enlightenment on the intimate relations shared by the most distant of men.

THE THOUGHT that all this massing of effort was only for destruction depressed me. But then, clearer than any bugle call across a quiet lake, came the question the Chaplain had fired at us just a week before: "What does the doctrine of the Mystical Body mean to you?" None of us had a ready answer, so he told us in unmistakable terms just how near you and all at home were to us mystically and how the prayers of millions were keeping us going spiritually. I forgot the war then and thought of the thousands of nuns and monks cloistered away from the madness of the world with only one work to do—to praise God and ask His mercy on the madness of men. I thought of the hundreds of thousands of priests who daily lift up a round white Host and a ruby red cup, not for themselves alone, but for me and for every other human to whom God has given the breath of life. Then it was that I caught my breath as I thought of how often you and I had asked the Blessed Mother of God to "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Instinctively my hand went to my pocket. My Rosary was there. I started to say a "Hail Mary." I got as far as "blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," when all that I had ever heard or read about the Mystical Body of Christ rushed upon me like a bursting sea. I was no longer a lone service man sitting in the sand reading your letter, I was a member of the Body that numbers almost four hundred mil-

lions as members, I was as intimately connected with Christ, the Son of the Living God, as was my hand to my wrist, my wrist to my arm, the beat of my heart to my heart!

ALL FEAR of death left me. But, Beloved, believe me when I say that it is not death that any mortal fears; it is the Judgment. Fear of the Judgment left me. With Christ as Advocate and the Mother of Christ as Suppliant; with you calling on her daily to "pray for me now and at the hour of my death"; with Him praying at the hour of His death "that all may be one," as He and the Father are one; with three hundred thousand priests renewing Calvary three hundred thousand time a day; with four hundred million Catholics as fellow members of a Mystical Body all co-operating for my soul's salvation, why should I fear?

I KISSED your letter. I knelt there on the sands and actually sobbed: "Thank You, God, for being my Father! Thank You, Jesus, for being my Jesus! Thank you, Mary, for being Mother of God and my mother! Thank you, Beloved, and you my fellow members!" Next day I was dead.

IF ANYONE whispers that I have sent you some "wishful thinking," tell them the soul-shaking truth that Christ and Christians are one, and that the most amazing thing in all creation is not that Christians should be saved but that any Christian should be so stubbornly determined as to be lost!

THAT IS the consolation that I give you from out the beyond. But now, Beloved, I must give you a command. It is:

LET NO ONE MOCK YOUR DEAD!

PART III

THE COMMAND

LET NO ONE mock your dead! Does that strike you as an idea that is fantastic? Does it stir your indignation somewhat? Do you think the command uncalled for and unnecessary? If so, just pause, look around you and realize that there can be mockery in magnificence!

GLISTENING WHITE in the National Cemetery at Arlington is an imposing and impressive mausoleum holding the bones of an unknown soldier. At the side of that mute elegance paces a stalwart sentry paying homage to the dead. Thus in the shadow of the Nation's Capitol the people of the nation would honor those unknown heroes who gave their all in World War I. Beloved, that bit of magnificence is a gigantic mockery! If that Unknown Soldier were given tongue today he would shout: "Have done with this sham! You shame us! We died that the world might be safe for democracy; you allowed it to lapse into demagogy. Twenty-five years have not fled and you who live have played truant to the trust we who were true unto death left you. Recklessly we spilled out our life's blood and won the brutal battle; but you, in carelessness and callousness, have lost the very things we battled for. This tomb is not to our honor but to our undying disgrace. It tells the world that we flung away our lives like fools!"

YES, INDEED, there can be mockery in magnificence. Can you imagine what the Unknown Soldier of France, who lies, I believe, in tragic

irony near the Arc de Triomphe, would say to his survivors? Think what he would say for the thousands and hundreds of thousands who battled and bled under Foch at the Marne! Think what he would say for the French Poilu and the four years agony he endured. Can you not hear him indignantly cry: "Was it for this that we died? Was it to have our Nation collapse within twenty-two years that we flung away our youth? Did we give our all only to have the enemy we so doggedly battled and finally subdued walk into our loved land almost unopposed? Did we make the supreme sacrifice of our un-lived lives only to have the Prussian pagan goose-step past Notre Dame de Paris? Destroy this magnificence. It is mockery! It perdures to our disgrace!"

BELOVED, LET not the dead of World War II be mocked as were the dead of World War I. We want no memorials. We demand memories! We want to live; not to be entombed! So give us no mausoleums of marble, statues of bronze or shafts of grim granite. Such things may be impressive; they are utterly inadequate; for while they tell the world that we are dead, they say nothing about the things for which we died. That is why we demand memories. Unless we live in the warm, pulsing memories of men, every memorial, no matter how magnificent, will be hollow mockery!

SUPPOSE THAT after they had defeated the British, Washington and his associates ordered a statue of the Minute-Man for Concord's Common, monuments of stone to be erected at Saratoga, Yorktown and Valley Forge, and the Declaration of Independence to be framed in gold and hung in Philadelphia, but at the same time allowed England to continue her rule of the Colonies, impose taxation without

representation, and Parliament to be supreme. Would they have honored or dishonored their dead? Would the Revolution have been won or lost? Stupid question, isn't it? Beloved, if the things these men bled and died for had not been kept alive in the memories of those who did not die, independence would never have been obtained, and every memorial erected to the honor of the dead would have stood to their undying disgrace! You see the point, and you see the parallel, but bear with me while I adduce another argument.

SUPPOSE THAT after Appomattox the North had allowed the Confederacy to keep its own government, its own army, its slaves, and its own concept of State's Rights, while here, there and everywhere it set up shafts, statues, tablets and crosses to mark the places where bloody battles had been fought and where hundreds of brave men had lost their lives; suppose that the survivors ignored the fact that these men died precisely that "the UNION might be preserved," would not every memorial be a mockery? Well, that is the danger that looms for us who have died in World War II; and that is why we demand memories!

AS HE STOOD dedicating the ground at Gettysburg, Lincoln sensed this truth. He knew that memories counted, not memorials. That is why he said: "*It is for us the living to be dedicated....*" That's the point, the essential point. It is for the *living* to be dedicated! And to what?—To what Lincoln said: "...to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased *devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of*

devotion—that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain.”

THAT IS the proper way to honor the dead. Enshrine them in living memories. Entomb them not in mute memorials. Be mindful of why they died and not only of the fact that they are dead. Lincoln was a practical man. He would have the living honor the heroes who fell by entering practical testament with them, and not by erecting impractical testimonials to them. And that is what we, the dead of World War II, demand!

WE DID not die to rid the world of Hitler. We did not die to wreak vengeance on Japan. We did not die to avenge Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia. If a country must be named, name our own loved land, the glorious United States. But, Beloved, the truer truth is that we died for God. We died that God might live in the hearts and minds of the peoples of the world, first among them the people of the United States. And mocked, hideously mocked, we shall be if you, the living, do not dedicate yourselves to the unfinished work we advanced! If you do not consecrate yourselves to the task of seeing that *God goes back into the schools*, that Religion returns to Education, then the world's Western Hemisphere was turned into an Haceldama in vain! And what is more, you prove us mad! You prove that in a dementia unparalleled we dinged much of six whole continents and countless islands in the seven seas with rotten death—the corpses of our own strong, young, full-flowered American youth! Unless God goes back into the schools a barren holocaust has been made, and you, the living, have turned the sacrifice of the dead into sacrilege!

BISMARCK ONCE said: "If you want a thing in the nation, put it into the schools." That he was right has been proved by Communistic Russia and Nazi Germany. The child of today is the citizen of tommorrow. What he learns in the class-room as a lad he will preach on the street as a youth and practice in business as a man. But why talk? We ourselves have proved the Iron Chancellor right. We have godlessness in our Nation this moment because we have had godlessness in our schools for over half a century! It is high time for us to take a page from another book. Christ told us to learn from the children of the world who "are wiser in their generation than are the children of light." Learn from Bismarck, from Russia, from Germany, from our own awful mistake of the past. Make the United States the nation we died that it might be; make it the nation Lincoln claimed it to be; make it the nation our Founding Fathers hoped and planned it would be. Make it a "nation under God," by putting God back into the schools!

THAT IS our demand. But by that we do not mean the "Sunday Schools." No. That is the fatal error we made decades ago. We divorced religion from real life. We relegated it to the realms of the unimportant. Five and even six days a week we insisted that our children worship at the altar of Science; on the seventh we hoped, more or less, that they might go unto the altar of God. Then we wring our hands and lament our juvenile delinquency, our crime waves, our immoral, unmoral and amoral adults! Where is our logic? Where, our common sense? We sow the wind and marvel that we reap the whirlwind! No great intelligence is required to see that without God there is no real authority; without

real authority there is no real law and order; without real law and order there is and ever will be social suicide! Now is the time to prove that America did not suffer an intellectual black-out. Do it by putting God back not only in the Sunday School, but in every school from "the little red schoolhouse" up to and inclusive of the majestic halls of our great Universities. Get God back in every class from kindergarten to collegiate post-graduate, and you will be keeping us in mind and not putting us in memorials!

BELOVED, THE three "R's" have not produced good citizens. Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic have not inculcated the reverence, respect and proper regard for the rights of others without which there can be no truly civilized state. And they never will! For without recognition of duties toward God why should anyone admit duties toward man? If God is not sovereign, why should men not be utterly, ruthlessly and recklessly selfish? Without religion there is no morality, and without morality you may develop manners in men but you will never develop manhood; you may produce people who will submit, but never people who will obey. You are preparing the Servile State! That is the barbarism we battled! We died that America might be civilized; that her people might be free. Prove that we haven't died in vain by putting Religion back in Education, for that is the only way to get morality back into the nation and law and order into everyday life.

YOU MAY wonder why we who demand memories instead of memorials do not, in specifying the particular memory, say something about those hideous blotches that have broken out on our National countenance and rob it

of all beauty. You may wonder why we say nothing about divorce, birth-control and abortion, nothing about the rankling injustice that has set Capital and Labor standing like two angry bulls with locked horns, nothing about that corruption in politics which has produced hordes of men for the political parties but not a statesman for the people.

IT IS true that we did not die that our country might outdo pagan Japan in its mockery of marriage. It is true that we did not leave the women we almost worshipped—our mothers and sisters—and the “one woman in all the world”—the woman we almost adored—our wife or wife-to-be—that womanhood might be degraded by that accursed thing some legislators have stupidly written into the statutes of their States. No, we did not die for that. We died that God might live, and that women might attain their God-given destiny, which is to become very like the Mother of God by bringing into the world other syllables of the Word Divine, other little redeemers of a world that needs redemption, other children to be adopted by God the Father and made heirs of Heaven. That is why we died—that God might live and that men and women might live under God! But neither can ever be done as long as men dare to put asunder what God has joined together. Neither can ever be done as long as our Nation countenances divorce.

WE KNOW that, Beloved. We also know that statistics show that out of every six American marriages one ends in the divorce courts. And yet our people remain complacent! What a proof of national paganism! If one out of every six banks in America failed; if one out of every six American business houses dropped out of existence; if one out of every six

American buildings crumbled into dust, you can be sure that the people of America would lose their complacency. A further proof of their accursed materialism. Beloved, stability in marriage is of much more import to the nation as a nation than the stability of her banks, her business houses or her buildings. The family is the nation's very foundation. How can you have a nation if you have no families? How can you have families if you permit divorce? Fogs can rest on strong mountains but strong mountains cannot rest on fogs! And yet some of our legislators plan to build a strong nation on such shifty, vaporous, unstable stuff as marriages that allow for divorce! If the foundation is not solid how can the building be safe? If marriage is not sacred what is? If husband and wife can look upon this holy contract as a "scrap of paper" why should anyone view the State or Federal Constitution in any other light?

IT IS not that we are unmindful of the hideousness of this blotch on the face of our nation, it is only that we are very mindful of its cause. A blotch on the face does not say that the skin is poor but that the blood is bad! So instead of pinching the pimple or putting salve on the blemish, we aim to purge the blood! Men and women have no respect for marriage because they have no respect for the God who instituted marriage and the Christ who raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament. Speaking in Cleveland on March 12, 1944, Chief Justice Silbert, after stating that 69% of the cases filed in the courts of the country were for divorce, said: "If the whole Country were Catholic, I'd be out of a job." There is our whole case in a sentence! Unless he does lose that kind of a job, we the dead have died in vain! In his facetiousness, the

Chief Justice has pointed to the infallible remedy. To put an end to our shameful divorces we don't need law, we need love! Not love for one another so much as love for God! To prevent divorces between men and women, we say give the boys and girls Religion! Put the fourth "R" back into Education and you have drained the pond whose waters have turned the wheels of the country's divorce mills!

THE SAME holds true for birth-control and abortion. Of course you know I mean birth-*prevention!* We the dead had no comrades-in-arms sprung from the wombs of birth-preventers. If we succeeded in keeping Washington and New York from being bombed, if we succeeded in keeping the Japanese from streaming into Seattle or sweeping through the Golden Gate, we owe no thanks to the Margaret Sangers, the Marie Stopes, or the organizers and abettors of the League for the Dissemination of Literature on Birth-Control. We the dead ask you the living if you are going to allow all that to live?

YOU MARVEL that we do not demand the extirpation of these enemies of our loved America—these people who have perverted the holiest of human relations and changed marriage into concubinage; these people who, as Victor C. Pedersen, a non-Catholic doctor, wrote, have "taught our mothers and daughters, our sweethearts and wives the common practices of the brothel." The Reverend Ignatius Cox, S.J., well named them when he called them "the executioners of our American civilization and the grave-diggers of our nation." You marvel that we who are in the grave do not demand that you level all such organizations more completely than we leveled Berlin. Beloved, we do! But instead of bombing from

above, we demand that you blast from beneath! To keep contraceptives out of the marriage chamber, we tell you to put Christ in the classrooms!

TEACH BOYS and girls their dignity and their destiny; teach them that they are breaths of God in vessels of clay; teach them that they are destined for mystical union in Christ on earth and eternal union with God in glory; teach them that their bodies are in all truth temples of the Holy Ghost and that God depends on married couples and the proper use of their bodies to bring the human race to the gigantic stature of the God-Man; teach them these truths thoroughly and they themselves will indignantly repel every advance of the Birth-Preventers; they will resent every suggestion of contraception as an outrageous insult to their mutual love, loyalty and inviolable respect; they will recognize these people for what they actually are—emissaries of the Devil who offer a barbarous affront to the manhood and womanhood of the married pair and cast an unforgivable aspersion on their dignity as collaborators with God Almighty in the work of creation.

TO MAKE Americans human, teach young Americans that they are partly divine! To make marriage sacred you do not have to out-lobby the Birth-Preventers at Washington, you only have to put the Author of marriage back into the schools. Vanishing cream has never yet cured cancer; it calls for the knife. Give the teachers of the nation the two-edged sword of the truth of Christ, and they will cut away the cancer of godlessness that allows the existence of Sangerites in our nation. Beloved, take the word of the dead: The husbands and wives of the nation will never be

forced into fidelity to one another and to God by human legislation; they must be led into it by the lofty truths of their human dignity and their human-divine destiny. That is why we concentrate on Education. If America is to have God-conscious husbands and wives, she must develop God-conscious school-boys and school-girls. As you train the twig so grows the tree.

THE IDENTICAL argument holds true for Economics and Politics. We are not asking you to honor us by purging politics or legislating for Social Justice. We know that if the rulers are wrong-minded, no matter what you label their rule, the people will suffer. Ever since World War I a continual lamentation has been wailed from one end of the land to the other about our lack of leaders both political and economic. Some have explained the dearth by the deaths of our best in Flanders fields. That explanation is partial, not total. No. Cal Coolidge, with his habitual Yankee shrewdness, gave the better and fuller explanation when he said: "Unless our people are thoroughly instructed in the great truths of Religion, they are not fitted to understand our institutions." Since we are a government "of the people and by the people," he was implicitly saying that we are governed by men who do not understand our institutions. And he was right! The blind leading the blind never end up well. There is always the ditch! And we have seen the ditch of Depression, the deeper ditch of national drunkenness, and the still deeper ditch of nation-wide materialistic paganism!

WILLIAM PENN once said: "Men will be ruled by God or they will be ruled by tyrants." We believe him to have been right. We base

our belief on the actual experience of Russia and Germany. More. We base our belief on the words of Jesus Christ: "He who is not with Me, is against Me!"

AS WE the dead see it, you the living have a choice between Religion with a Cross and anti-religion with a criss-cross; between the Religion that is God-given and the antireligion that is man-made; between Religion from the Savior and antireligion from the State. We died that you would choose the first. *Keep that in mind*, and don't put us in memorials!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

BELOVED, I hope I have not bewildered you. I suppose you wonder what I expect you to do to get God back in the schools. You marvel that I should even ask you to do something about it, you who have never mixed in public affairs. Darling, remember that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." *You can pray!* Pray importunately! Pester God! Allow Him no rest from your reverent insistence until He enlighten the leaders of the land to the darkness into which the nation is plunged because of godlessness in our schools. Pray that He raise up fearless Catholics, public servants whose every word and work will show them first to be Servants of God! Pray that He give us Catholic writers and Catholic speakers who will be as forthright as was St. Paul!

YES, YOU can pray, you can also *protest!* Protest by word and action. Politicians are always looking for votes; threaten them with the loss of yours unless they campaign to put Christ back into the classroom. Newspapers and magazines are always watching their cir-

cultation; threaten them with the discontinuation of your subscription unless they, too, honor your dead by printing only the news that is in accord with Christ's Good News! School-boards are jealous of their position and their pay; threaten both by making an issue out of Religion in the school's curriculum. Three "R's," and only three have been taught in our grade schools for half a century; make them see that the fourth is needed! Our high schools have been teaching all the sciences with never a word about Him who is Omniscience! For years pedagogues have been "crucifying Christ in our colleges." And ever since Eliot of Harvard introduced harakiri into our halls of learning by insisting on electivism and specialization, men have specialized in everything but the one thing that calls for human specialization—the knowledge of God! Bring these truths home to your school-boards, your school-superintendents, your boards of directors, your College Deans and your University Presidents. Protest with pen and paper. Protest by radio and the editorial page. Protest by your ballots and your boycotts!

TAKE WINSTON Churchill's slogan and Archbishop Spellman's title of "Action This Day" and see that it is Catholic action. You belong to the Church Militant; then militate for the honor of your military men who died that America might be what Lincoln called it —"*a nation under God!*"

SAINT BENEDICT'S watch words were "Ora et labora—pray and work." St. Ignatius explained them more practically by saying: "*Pray* as if it all depended on God; *work* as if it all depended on you." We the dead try to make them even more pointed and practical by saying: "Pray and Protest!" Pray and

protest until Religion dominates Education.
Pray and protest until God rules the land!

THERE IS much that you can do, Beloved.
You can always pray; yes, and you can always protest—at least with that loudest of all protests—a perfect Catholic life!

PICTURE THIS

THIS IS the age of the tabloid and the graphic, so we the dead give you a picture. We died that little tots might kneel beside their mother's knee and learn of the God who loved them enough to become a little Tot who toddled to His Mother's knee. We died that little tots might learn from mother's lips that God made them! that He made them to know Him! to love Him! to serve Him in this world! and to be happy with Him forever in the next! Picture that!

YES, PICTURE that, then plaster it on your billboards. Placard it in your street-cars and busses. Feature it in your Sunday Supplements. Put it on the mast-heads of your dailies. Do that and we will have some hope that we have not died in vain. Do that and you will have some comfort in the fact that you have not allowed the living to mock your dead. But before that picture will represent reality there must be legitimate children to real American mothers in real American homes, which necessarily means no birth-prevention! and no divorce!

BEFORE YOU will ever reach that blessed goal, Americans will have to rid themselves of their horrible superficiality and their sickening sophistication and live up not only to the Declaration of Independence but to the nation's Declaration of Dependence! Washington and

his fellow-workers drew up the first at Philadelphia. You will find it in the Preamble to our Constitution. Lincoln published the second when at Gettysburg he claimed that we were a "nation under God." The first will never be lived up to unless the second is observed; and the second will not even be admitted, much less accomplished, unless you put God back into the schools!

AMERICA NEEDS sanctity in marriage, stability to the home, justice in economics and honesty in politics. She can have all if she will but honor the dead of World War II by putting the "Ducator" back in the Educator! Education means to lead out; but no one can be led out unless there is a Leader. You have your choice to be *led* by the One who said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," (Mt. 19:14) or the one who says: "Force the little children to come unto me; for of such is the supremacy of the State." The first, as you know, is the voice of Christ. The second I unqualifiedly label "the voice of antichrist." It has been heard and heeded in Russia. It has been heard and heeded in Germany. "When the battle's fought and won" it will be heard in America. From the Great Beyond we the dead ask: "Are you going to mock us who died that Christ might live by heeding the voice of antichrist?"

YOURS IS the choice. But let us prophesy that unless you spurn it, there will be a World War III that will far surpass this present one in the horror of its barbaric devastation. It will be fought by the children you send to those schools!

GIVE US only memorials and not memories and you are piling up the waters for a cata-

clysm that will leave in its wake no trace of the actual civilization you know, and no possibility of the civilization we hoped for.

BELOVED, IF you are not going to pray and protest and get others to pray and protest, don't change our blue stars to gold—*black us out!*

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