

Sause, Bernard A.
Virtue in the Catholic
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in the
Catholic
Home



By
Bernard A. Sause, O.S.B.

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Discussion Club Outline

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INTRODUCTION

For many years I have advocated and attempted to practice what I like to call "long range strategy." I mean by the phrase that most problems do not have an immediate and obvious solution: they need to be examined in their causes, and solved in the light of those causes. That is what appeals to me so strongly in Father Bernard's manuscript which I have just finished reading carefully during the past three days.

In the light of the teaching of our faith he studies the problems of virtuous home life and applies the Church's remedies to today's conditions intelligently.

During my twenty-eight years as a practicing physician, I have had ample opportunity to observe many of the causes of heartbreak and failure. God has gradually been excluded from our midst. In many problems He is grudgingly granted only a secondary place. Often He is ignored entirely. This is true of society at large and the problems facing our country as it is of the basic unit of society, the family. In fact, it is true of society at large *because* it is true of families.

The whole world is no better than the countries of which it is composed. No country is better than the families that go to make it up. The family is the unit of all society. The better the families, the better will be our country, and the whole world.

Father Bernard's suggestions in his *Virtue in the Catholic Home* will do much in the way of restoring God's rightful place in the family. If this is achieved, God will automatically take His proper position in our country once more, and in the world at large.

As a father of fourteen children I have found that their education is much simplified by giving them the "long range view" of life that Father Bernard has adopted in his book. Even young children can be brought to understand that their little *bodies* are satisfied only when healthy, and that this health is quite short-lived, since in the ordinary course of events health begins to decline after one becomes middle-aged. They can also be made to grasp that their *minds* will continue to inquire until they have found the truth, and that the pleasures of the mind will last as

long as life, for old age would not be pleasant if the pleasures of the mind were lacking. Their immortal *souls* can be satisfied fully only in union with their Creator in heaven.

Under proper instruction even the child can figure out which is the most important, and consequently to be sought most earnestly.

Because Father Bernard's book helps to solve these problems for parents in a spiritual way, I think that his work deserves the highest commendation.

Salina, Kansas
June 11, 1942

B. A. Brungardt, A.M., M.D.

FOREWORD

Gratitude to God and conscious vocational pride should guide the pen of a Benedictine in any appeal for holier family life. The present occasion makes this consciousness more vivid. St. Benedict, who did so much to restore the sanctity of the home by the tremendous influence of his Order and Holy Rule, is traditionally believed to have died on March 21, 543. His sons and daughters and their numerous friends throughout the world are preparing to celebrate the fourteenth centenary of his death. These pages are dedicated with filial reverence to the great patriarch.

This booklet does not pretend to offer a complete or systematic treatise on the virtues. That is the work of the professional theologian, to be studied by theologians. Few of the ideas on the virtues are here treated in any great detail. Many of the more obvious considerations are omitted entirely.

The work of presenting these ideas was undertaken only after mature and prayerful deliberation, and after having talked the entire matter over with fathers and mothers of several large and exemplary families. Their suggestions have been incorporated into these pages.

One father has been consulted more frequently and at much greater length than any other — Pope Pius XI. He delighted in referring to himself as "The Common Father of All." Almost every page of his encyclical letters is pervaded with the deep realization of that beautiful title.

One hope underlies every line here written: that the suggestions will contribute in some degree to the family training of solid Catholic character.

Archbishop Cicognani, the Holy Father's personal representative in this country, stated in his address to the National Catechetical Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in New York City, October 3-6, 1936: "To every upright soul who lives the religion of Christ, it can be well said in the name of the Savior: 'Go you also into My vineyard.' (Matthew, 20:4) If you are united with God, and religion is the bond with God, you will readily understand the questions and answers of the Catechism, and it will not be too difficult for you to repeat them to others, and to impress them upon the minds and hearts of children."

This is the divine duty of parents. And together with the intelligent cooperation of the children, it forms the subject matter of these pages.

B. A. S.

St. Benedict's College
Atchison, Kansas,
Mother's Day, May 10, 1942.

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The Religious Discussion Club

"The needs of our times, then, require that the laity, too, procure for themselves a treasure of religious knowledge, not a poor and meager knowledge, but one that will have solidity and richness through the medium of libraries, discussions, and study clubs."

POPE PIUS XII.

Encyclical Letter "To the Church in the United States."

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

1. As outlined by the *Manual of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*,¹ "a religious discussion club is a group of about eight to twelve persons who meet regularly to improve their knowledge of religious questions, intending thereby to make themselves better Catholics. A very important purpose is to develop the power of self-expression on the part of all members. Leadership among the laity is a great need of our day. Through the discussion club latent talent is often discovered and recognized talent is developed.

"The discussion club is not merely for exceptional laymen, experts and college graduates, but for all persons of high school years or over, quite regardless of their degree of formal education. It is for busy men and women, who come together to obtain exact information, a readiness in expressing it, and an opportunity to translate it into action.

2. "In addition to a leader, a secretary should be selected by the members or appointed by the presiding officer of the parish Confraternity unit.

3. "The parish priest or some other member of the clergy appointed by him should be invited to act as spiritual director of the club.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. "Many parish groups conduct a leadership course for four or six weeks before the opening of the regular semester. The weekly preparation of a specific lesson within the regular semester is sometimes more practical.

2. "The leader, who is also a learner, conducts the informal discussion, using the 'Discussion Aids' after each paragraph, and the 'Added Suggestions for Discussion' given at the end of each chapter. Every member should be given an opportunity to take part in the discussion, and his or her opinion on the subject should be considered and respected. The leader should keep the discussion within the limits of the day's topic. At the close of the session he should give a summary of the points covered in the meeting. The particular topic chosen for this year's discussion regarding the practice of virtue in the Catholic home may at times present a problem of charity. Discussions should be kept absolutely free of personalities. Names of parish members, or discussions of "what we do at home" should not be mentioned. These can be avoided through the tactful direction of the leader, and by bearing in mind the purpose of the religious discussion club, and by remaining within the scope of the topics suggested for discussion. Leading is a drawing-out, not a filling-in process. A good leader does very little talking.

1. Issued by the National Center of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, N.C.W.C., Washington, D.C., revised edition, 1939, pp. 37-44.

3. "The secretary calls the roll, keeps a brief record of the meetings, and performs any other duties belonging to the office.

4. "The spiritual director or moderator need not attend all the meetings, but he may encourage the members and show his interest by occasional visits. When a question arises which cannot be answered correctly by the members of the club, it should be referred to the spiritual director.

THE MEETINGS

1. "The meetings should be held weekly in the homes of the members, in the parish hall, or in a classroom of the parish school. All members should feel personally responsible to attend each meeting: one gets returns in proportion to his personal effort and participation.

2. "The meetings should begin promptly, close on time, open and close with prayer, and should not continue longer than an hour and a half.

3. "The order of the meeting follows: prayer, roll call, secretary's report, reading and discussion of the text, summary of the meeting by the leader, assignment of the discussion topic for the next meeting, announcement of the home where the next meeting is to be held, adjournment with prayer."

THE TEXTBOOK

1. The material for the present discussion club is outlined in sixteen chapters or discussions. All the topics deal with matters which have an almost daily application in ordinary home and parish life. The first eight discussions should be completed in the Autumn session. The remaining eight discussions should be completed in the Spring semester.

2. Every member of the club should be provided with the textbook and should read over the lesson selected for discussion before the meeting.

3. At the end of each paragraph there is a list of "Discussion Aids." They are largely a review and practical application, in discussion form, of the material given in the course of the preceding paragraph. When the member reads over the material before attending the meeting, he will find it helpful if he indicates on the margin of his textbook where the answers to the different questions can be found.

4. At the end of each chapter there is also a list of "Added Suggestions for Discussion." These suggestions do not necessarily correspond to any direct statement in the chapter. Very often they simply take up where the text leaves off. Much of the information under this section is already possessed by the different members of the club. A little added reading will give whatever information is required. A good dictionary will be of great help.

5. Under the heading of "Suggestions for Practical Resolutions" will be found some hints to enable one to live a more active part in the life of virtue in the home. The purpose of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, after all, is not merely to help Catholics acquire information, but to teach them to live more practical Catholic lives.

6. Books, magazine and newspaper articles, pictures, and other materials which have a bearing on the discussion for the particular meeting, should be brought to the attention of the club by anyone who possesses them. Newspaper clippings and pictures could most helpfully be preserved in a club scrapbook.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. A patron saint should be selected for the club. The practice of placing religious studies under the patronage of the saints is in keeping with Catholic ideals.

2. Occasional lectures or informal talks by members of the clergy or the laity on certain phases of the subjects touched upon or suggested in the textbook will stimulate interest and widen the field of discussion. These activities should not be promoted, however, at the expense of the regular club programs.

3. At the close of the club season, a joint meeting of the discussion groups of the parish or of several parishes may be arranged.

PRAYER BEFORE MEETING

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

(Versicle) Send forth Thy spirit and they shall be created.

(Response) And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let Us Pray

O God, Who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Indulgence of five years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if the prayer has been recited daily for a month. *Preces et Pia Opera*, 265.)

“All men know that prosperity, public and private, depends chiefly upon the constitution of the family. The more deeply virtue is rooted in the heart of the family, and the greater has been the solicitude of parents in teaching their children by word and example the precepts of religion, so much the more abundant must be the fruit springing up for the benefit of the race. It is thus of sovereign importance not only that domestic society should be sanctified in its constitution, but also that it should be ruled by holy laws, and that the spirit of religion and the principles of Christian life should be developed within it constantly and consistently.”

Pope Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, *Neminem Latet*,
June 14, 1892.



“In an ideal home the parents, like Tobias and Sara, beg of God a numerous posterity ‘in which Thy name may be blessed forever,’ and receive it as a gift from heaven and a precious trust; they strive to instill into their children from their early years a holy fear of God, and true Christian piety; they foster a tender devotion to Jesus, the Blessed Sacrament, and the Immaculate Virgin; they teach respect and veneration for holy places and persons. In such a home the children see in their parents a model of an upright, industrious and pious life; they see their parents holily loving each other in Our Lord, see them approach the holy Sacraments frequently and not only obey the laws of the Church concerning fasting and abstinence, but also observe the spirit of voluntary Christian mortification; they see them pray at home, gathering about them all the family, that common prayer may arise more acceptably to heaven; they find them compassionate toward the distress of others and see them divide with the poor the much or the little that they possess.”

Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter on the Catholic Priesthood,
December 20, 1935.



“The souls of children given to their parents by God and consecrated in Baptism with the royal character of Christ, are a sacred charge over which watches the jealous love of God. The same Christ who pronounced the words ‘Suffer the little children to come to me’ has threatened, for all His mercy and goodness, with fearful evils, those who give scandal to those so dear to His Heart.”

Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Summi Pontificatus*,
October 20, 1939.

DISCUSSION I

The Ideal Catholic Home

I. The Father

The father's dignity rests, first of all, upon the fact that Almighty God has bestowed upon him the privilege of cooperation in the greatest natural mystery, the creation of human life. Sons and daughters are *his* in a sense that nothing else that he may ever possess can be called his own. That thought carries with it an honor that is unique. Even modern society that has striven to forget the sanctity of marriage retains this basic recognition.

The children bear the father's name. In a far deeper sense than is usually recognized under the term of the law, they are his "dependents." The close observer notes that quite unconsciously they imitate many of his mannerisms, gestures, modes of thought. But much more than that: if he is a worthy father, and they worthy children, they carry with them through life the training in virtue which he alone can impress on their young minds.

Pope Pius XI approves the clearness of thought and the precision of style of St. Thomas of Aquin in these utterances: "The father according to the flesh has in a particular way a share in that principle which is in a manner universal found in God The father is the principle of generation, of education and discipline, and of everything that bears upon the perfecting of human life."¹ This is not poetry, but stern reality expressed by the Angelic Doctor and commended by Christ's Vicar to bring order out of chaos in modern education.

The father must dwell on this thought often, lest he lose the spirit which God in His wisdom has determined for the moral development of youth. The mother must carry it deep in her heart, for only in cooperation with this divine plan can she hope to achieve what nature has instilled in her to want to achieve, the perfect mental, moral, physical, and social development of her children. The children must absorb this spirit for upon their understanding of it depend the honor they owe their father by divine command, intelligent obedience, the acquisition of virtue, and a life-long sense of gratitude.

When first dwell upon, such thoughts are almost frightening. They *do* mean weighty responsibility, not here alone, but in accounting for one's stewardship before God's throne. But God does not demand anything impossible. Fatherhood is a voca-

1. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 45.

tion in His service, not to be heeded lightly or frivolously, but with the serious determination of serious men. Since it is a life's work in His service, God offers His aid at every important step along the difficult road. On the part of the father, He expects cooperation with this grace, which in turns calls for persevering good will, a spirit of sacrifice, conscientious observance of God's law made known by the Church. The very nature of everything under consideration places a high premium on good common sense.

Speaking from the fullness of his "Own paternal heart,"¹ Pope Pius XI, who often referred to his title of Father of Fathers, has called attention to the following duties of fathers. Pope Leo XIII reminds them that they are "the head of the family"², which is more a duty than an honor, and speaking of the marriage bond, calls the father "the ruler of the family and the head of the woman."³

Commenting on the Condition of Labor, Pope Leo terms "the family the society of a man's own household,"⁴ and stresses that "the right of property which has been proved to belong to individual persons must also belong to man as the head of the family." This follows logically because "it is a most sacred law of nature that a father must provide food and all necessities for those whom he has begotten, as well as what is necessary to keep them from want and misery in the uncertainties of this mortal life."⁵

"The father's power is of such a nature that it cannot be destroyed or absorbed by the State, for it has the same origin as human life itself."⁶ It is the *paternal* instinct which turns the child with confidence over to the Church for education, certain of finding the protection of family rights.⁷ The father is the natural instructor for his son in the facts of life.⁸ In the full program of domestic education the father is cautioned to have great care that he make the right use of his authority.⁹ The Pope says that normally the vocation to the priesthood will be the result of example and teaching of a father "strong in faith and manly in virtues."¹⁰

Examples could be multiplied, but these indicate the dignity and the seriousness of the father's vocation in God's service.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

2. Pope Leo XIII, "On the Condition of Labor," in *Five Great Encyclicals* (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 6.

3. Pope Pius XI, "On Christian Marriage," quoting Pope Leo XIII, *ibid.*, p. 85.

4. Pope Leo XIII, "On the Condition of Labor," *ibid.*, p. 5.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

6. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," quoting Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, *ibid.*, p. 46.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 47. 8. *Ibid.*, p. 56. 9. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

10. Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter "On the Catholic Priesthood," December 20, 1935, in *Catholic Mind*, February 8, 1936, p. 74.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Grouping the various duties outlined above from the words of the Holy Father, what particular personal qualities do vocation to the married state call for? Certainly seriousness and highmindedness are evident. So are strong faith and manly virtue. What others can you mention?
2. What is the legal meaning of "dependents"? What deeper meaning is attached to the word?
3. Why cannot the father's power lawfully be absorbed by the State?

2. The Mother

As the father is the head of the family, the mother is its heart. Although her educational influence is of an entirely different nature from that of the father, her vocation is equal in importance to his. In fact, the memory of most grown sons and daughters will attest that she has had far more to do with the shaping of their character than he. But so necessary are both that if either is lacking for any cause whatever, the education of the children is seriously, and sometimes fatally, handicapped.

It is significant that in describing homes in which vocations for the priestly and religious lives are developed, Pope Pius speaks of the father as "strong in faith and manly virtues," but of "a pure and devoted mother."¹ Elsewhere: "As the father occupies the chief place in ruling, so the mother may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love."²

It is to be noted, however, that His Holiness speaks of *supernatural* love, not of the tender maternal love-instinct upon which the supernatural is built. Natural love, which is excellent in itself, and offers the possibility of untold good, may even at times be a hindrance, when mothers are imprudent and cannot keep the children in truly obedient subjection, refuse what is harmful, punish if necessary, or where they selfishly abuse it and over-emphasize it and make it a wedge of separation from the love of father.

This supernatural love is the beginning of all the finer instincts of the children. Its delicacy and tenderness exercise the strongest appeal. Of it are born, for example, piety, modesty, purity, fear of the Lord, all learned at the mother's knee.

The worthy mother is usually at home with her children all day long. Often she is, for whole days, their only companion. But there is a far deeper mystery to the entire process of education in virtue than mere association. The mother is by nature more closely attached to her children. As in babyhood the child was incapable of taking solid food but was nourished by its mother, so in the early formative years, nature has determined that it

1. *Ibid.*

2. Pope Pius XI, "On Christian Marriage," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 85.

is she who must nourish it in virtue. Even in mature and advanced years, the appreciation of these natural facts is only intensified. There is no finer instinct in the world than a grown man's mature love for the mother who bore him, and nourished him, and trained him in virtue.

Every human being has a supernatural destiny — to be worked out in time. He must be educated "for what he must be and what he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created."¹ That education is the result of the combined efforts of both parents. But in its youngest years, the child will be almost exclusively under the mother's guidance. Her efforts are to produce effects which will have their final reckoning only in eternity.

On the morning of her marriage, the priest prays for this holy vocation, which must be entered upon only after serious thought and conscientious preparation. The nuptial blessing, bestowed after the *Pater Noster* of the Mass, is primarily for the bride. The graces for which the priest implores Almighty God are in preparation for her duties. Among them may be selected: "May she be true and chaste . . . dear to her husband . . . wise . . . long-lived and faithful. . . . May she fortify her weakness with strong discipline . . . be grave in demeanor and honored for her modesty . . . well taught in heavenly lore. . . . Let her life be good and sinless."²

As the educator and trainer of immature minds entrusted to her by God, the mother's vocation is difficult. It calls for many qualities that are virtues in themselves. The burden is lightened by the ease of moulding the child's mind and will. But to train them calls for zeal, painstaking effort, patience in weariness, and the humility that joyfully stoops to the level of the child. It is hard work, and the temptation must come at times to abandon the effort and take life easy. Only the seriousness of the undertaking and the knowledge that it is done for God can sustain the untiring effort demanded. "Let the children be, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew, 19: 14)

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Pick out from the above lines the worthiest sentiments for Mother's Day.

2. Why do most dioceses insist that all Catholic marriages be contracted at Mass?

3. For what graces should a girl pray in preparation for her marriage?

1. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 39.

2. *St. Andrew's Daily Missal*, Nuptial Mass, p. 1928. The English translation of the St. Andrew's Daily Missal is distributed in this country by the E. M. Lohmann Co., 413 Sibley St., St. Paul, Minn.

3. The Children

The relationship between the children and their parents is briefly told. The fourth commandment of God expresses it in six words: Honor thy father and thy mother. Obedience, honor, balanced respect, gratitude. They sum up the duties of the child.

The father has a beautiful example in St. Joseph, the head of the Holy Family. Mothers strive to imitate Mary of Nazareth. But the Boy Jesus Himself has left a divine example to be copied by sons and daughters. And again, that is recorded briefly by the Evangelists: "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them." (Luke, 2: 51. Gospel of the feast of the Holy Family.)

Obedience is of the divine law, for by it parents are believed to hold the place of God Himself in the lives of their children. Numerous other virtues and habits are good and holy, and many observe them with great fruit. But unless sons and daughters progress in intelligent submission, they will not please God nor advance in anything virtuous. God has not called them to great and heroic undertakings, but to the simple and humble perfection of learning from their natural teachers, their parents.

Young men and women, still under obedience to their fathers and mothers, often complain today that they are not understood, and that parents do and say things that "get on their nerves." Certainly parents do and say things that are unpleasant! So does the State. So does the Church. God does the same thing. In fact, it is only because they are doing God's own will, which has no guarantee of being agreeable, that their commands are found to be unpleasant. Obedience is separately considered in Discussion XI.

Honor is shown by the proper respect and deference for parents. It calls for proper address and titles. It makes the boy and girl proud for the world to know their parents, and never to feel the slightest shame or embarrassment at their clothes, their employment, uncultured speech, or anything else except open and manifest sin.

Gratitude is an attempt to repay parents for their sacrifices. It is only an attempt, for full payment is impossible. It seeks to show itself by full interest in the home, in all that concerns father and mother, brothers and sisters. Its possessor does not find his principal pleasure among friends acquired outside the home circle. One who is truly grateful to parents is not bored with home life, silent, sullen, irritated by younger brothers and sisters, while amazingly gracious to outsiders. Gratitude prompts pleasing companionship, helps to realize the dream of a home that

father and mother have worked for, makes for a sympathetic understanding of parents' wishes.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Every act of obedience is an act of faith, or of belief that parents hold the place of God in the lives of their children. Is today's child disobedient because he is not strong in faith?
2. Why are parents' commands often unpleasant?
3. Point out some specific acts of gratitude which will have a beneficial effect on the home.

4. The Family as a Unit

With infinite wisdom the Savior of mankind made it His first public duty to sanctify the home. He had already left His own home, and had set about to purify society. He began at society's source. To be pure, society must be pure in its home life. The stream is not purer than its source. Hence our Lord began by purifying marriage itself.

To accomplish the high purpose set for it by nature, and regulated by Divine Providence, the family must normally act as a unit. It is recognized a unit by Church and State, both of which cherish and protect it as the basic unit of all society.

"Now there are three necessary societies distinct from one another and yet harmoniously combined by God, into which man is born: two, namely the family and civil society, belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order. In the first place comes the family, instituted directly by God for its purpose, the generation and formation of the offspring; for this reason it has priority of nature and therefore of rights over civil society."¹

In fulfilling this double purpose, the home becomes a little world in itself, quite self-sufficient in its youngest years. As time goes on, the more that parents and older brothers and sisters can do to focus all attention within the family, the better it is for the children. It is a pleasure to observe parents who have kept apace with their youngsters. They have a deep and abiding interest in everything that the boys and girls do, welcome their friends into the home, consider no happening at school of trivial concern, follow the conversation of even the youngest at table, are interested in their sports, reading matter, games, little ambitions. Everything that goes to make up the life of their children concerns them. They bind their children to the home with the strongest bonds of affection and love.

It will be noted that here and in subsequent discussions the use of the word "home" is not necessarily meant to restrict the thought to the family residence. The family forms a home as

1. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 39.

here understood when on vacation, visiting, driving in the family car, watching a baseball game. The main idea is that they live together.

In many of its actions, the world about it takes the unity of the family for granted. All its members bear one name. They eat, sleep, live under one roof. If anyone wishes to see a member of the family, he logically calls for him at home. They worship together in the family pew. They are a unit.

The separation comes with high school days, working outside the home, establishing friendships independently of the family, company keeping, recreation away from the family. These are the years when family spirit is firmly cemented, or broken, and the outcome depends, to a large extent, on youthful training.

Family consciousness, leading to intelligent love of family, is to be instilled from earliest childhood. Subsequent considerations in the following discussions will show the necessity of a reasoned family pride. With maturer years a duty arises for the family to wield its influence and give a good example as a unit, particularly within the parish. This will be possible only if they have practiced the humbler virtues within the sanctuary of the home.

Catholics need a return to the sacredness of the family hearth. The love of family must begin early, and every intelligent effort of both parents must be consecrated to the task.

"Home, marriage, love, and children, are still the great heart-words of humanity, and must continue to be so unless civilization is to sink."
Dame Beatrix Lyall.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What Gospel stories can you recall to show Christ's love of the home, and His desire to purify it?
2. What measures can you suggest to be taken by parents to prevent the "separation from the family that comes with high school age?"
3. Try to describe how the family is a unit of the parish.

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you think that the Church's program of Rural Life in the United States has a direct bearing on the present discussion? Are rural families more united than city families? How? Are the virtues of Catholic life more easily practiced in a rural settlement? Why?
2. Enumerate the various advantages that you can think of that derive from ownership of home, as far as virtuous lives are concerned. It necessarily means, for example, continued residence in the same parish. Does that have an effect on purity, charity, religion, temperance, justice, vocation?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To be proud to be at Mass with your entire family on Sunday in the parish church, and on that occasion, to pray earnestly for the blessing on the home, and its unity.

DISCUSSION II

Faith

1. What Faith Is

Acting under God's grace, faith is the virtue that causes the mind to give a firm assent to the revealed truths of religion, precisely because they are made known on the authority of God. It is a light that shines on every problem that man faces. If his faith is strong, every feature of his daily life will differ radically from that of his fellow man who has no faith, or little faith. Faith prompts him to gaze on the elevated Host and say: "My Lord and my God." Faith makes him see and serve the same Lord in his children, in the people who walk into his office, his fellow machine workers. It gives Christ the first place in the home.

This virtue is the solid foundation on which our whole spiritual life is built. Faith makes it possible for us to talk with God in public worship and private prayer. It lies concealed in every act of charity by which we prove ourselves generous with God. It gives meaning to all the other virtues that go to make up life in Christ: hope, obedience, justice, prudence, holy purity, humility.

Faith is a gift from God in the sacrament of baptism. It is strengthened particularly when one receives confirmation. From then on, like all other virtues it is strengthened through practice and exercise. Just as it comes from God, it leads back to Him, directly and indirectly, in a thousand ways. Possessing it, men are never satisfied with their efforts to adore God.

The man of faith will be found often at the Communion Table, to be nourished with the Bread of Angels, which only the eyes of faith can perceive. In his desire to be one with our Lord, he will be impelled to perform many acts of charity, because he firmly believes that in serving those less fortunate than himself, he is serving Christ. (Matthew, 25: 31) After having sinned, he knows no rest until he has regained peace with his God, because his faith makes him realize that God will never despise a contrite and humble heart. (Psalm 50: 18)

When the Church teaches, he bows his head in humble submission, because he knows that "He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me." (Luke, 10: 16) For all roads lead to the City of God. All are brightly illumined with the light of faith. Shadows, darkness, blackouts are unknown, for "He who follows me does not walk in the darkness." (John, 8: 12)

Faith's ideal qualities are firmness and strength. We also

pray for a lively faith, or more properly, a life-giving faith. It is amazing today, that despite all the temptations to which men have exposed their faith, they believe as strongly as they do in the things of God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Mention some of the practices that have strengthened your faith. What kind of sermons? Reading the Bible? Good books? The example of good companions? Continue the list.

2. The man of strong faith often receives Holy Communion. Can you mention other manifestations of faith than those suggested above?

3. We pray for an increase of faith at the beginning of the rosary. Can you name other examples?

2. Faith Within the Home

Today's students of the Church's problems stress the necessity of a return to family exercise of faith. Their recommendations include prayer within the home, recited by the entire family. There is a growing insistence on the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass as families, in the family pew of the parish church. Greater frequency in receiving the sacraments together will knit the family members more intimately than any other power on earth.

The home should be cherished as a protection against any grave dangers to one's faith. Virtue is easily practiced within its circle, and temptations are usually absent altogether, or lightly cast aside. Serious temptations against faith begin when the young man or woman leaves the family circle (which can be done while still "living at home").

The home must so build up and strengthen faith that it can withstand all temptations. Fellow workers in factory, shop, or store may be the cause of difficulties and doubts. Schoolmates may argue morality and sow the seeds of sin. "Scientific theories" may be advanced which will cause the destruction of high ideals. If baptism and confirmation and the practice of faith have been kept alive in the sanctuary of the home, triumphant victory is assured.

When pastors are asked the size of their parishes, they generally indicate the number of families in the parish. This should not be thought of merely as a convenient method of estimating the number of parishioners. Its significance is deeper than that. The whole life of faith centers principally about the altar and the home, and it is in the nature of things for the Church to think in terms of families.

Many of the means employed to strengthen faith are necessarily connected with the family. Besides prayer and other spiritual practices, these will include the diocesan newspaper, and sub-

scriptions to religious magazines and books, most of which find their way into the family circle. They are printed to appeal to every member of the family. Religious articles and decorations which help to keep faith alive and vigorous, have their logical place within the home of sincere Catholics.

Most of the joys that have real meaning in life are shared in the sanctuary of the home. Sometimes these joys are so intimate as to exclude outsiders. Practically all of them are spiritual in character. Birthdays, or, much better, the anniversaries of baptism, confirmation, first Communion, and so on, are sacred to the family circle and occasion some of the happiest moments recalled in later years. Father's and mother's wedding anniversary is for Catholics either the grateful remembrance of a sacrament, or nothing. Christmas, when the Christ Child is welcomed in a special manner into the intimacy of the home, father's day, day, and mother's day, bring pleasant memories to all who have learned to love their families. These celebrations are built on faith, and the home is the logical place for their enjoyment.

In much the same way, most sorrows affect families as families. However close his friendship, a person not of the family circle feels himself an outsider, almost an intruder, on these occasions. We offer our condolences to bereaved *families*. We sympathize with them in their afflictions, visit their homes, or write to them, when sorrow has struck the intimate circle of our friends. Charity prompts us to offer our services when sickness disturbs the order of the home. Sorrow unites them but it is really faith that stands them in good stead in the hour of trial. The virtue of belief in God, and in His Providence, which is directed to their best interests, makes them see God's hand in all that befalls them.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Do you automatically think of faulty home training when you hear: "He fell away from the Church." "She was married at the courthouse.?"
2. About how large is your parish? Have you any idea how many families are in it?
3. If you were writing a letter of condolence to a bereaved family, to whom would you normally address it?

3. Today's Loss of Faith

Statistics on the number of adult conversions in the United States are published yearly. No record is made of the losses to the faith directly suffered by those who fall away from the Church. This would be impossible. Conversions are definite and positive, whereas losses to the Church are usually gradual and negative, and always balanced by the hope that the person will return to his duties. There is no way at all of discovering the total number of those who *might* have been won to the Church.

But this much can definitely be stated: Just as most conversions have some family connection, most losses to the faith are also traceable to the home.

While making allowances for those mixed marriages which turn out happily for the faith, the Church has lost more heavily through this cause in the United States than through any other. One authority on the problem went so far as to maintain that all dispensations should be refused in the future.

Sad experience shows beyond all doubt that there is definite danger in every mixed marriage. The Church's prohibition is based on that sad experience. Faith has been lost by the Catholic party and the children in many thousands of cases.

Even the home of the Catholic party to the mixed marriage suffers. All too often the non-Catholic husband or wife brings the first rift into the Catholic home. It simply is not in the nature of things that they be received on equal terms with their brothers- and sisters-in-law, for the very thing that united the family is lacking — the faith.

Schools have also been a serious cause of loss of faith. Parents who disobey the command of the Church by sending their children to forbidden schools when they could send them to Catholic schools, or who do not cooperate with the work of the Catholic schools, are inviting disaster for the faith of their children.

Undesirable companionship, both within the home when guests are received or when the family visits friends, and particularly outside the family, can also be a serious cause of falling away from the Church. This is constantly to be feared in a nation where more than fifty per cent of the population never cross the threshold of any church as worshippers. It is not too much to state that Catholics have a definite minimum norm to follow: not to welcome or admit to their homes those whom the Church must refuse to accept.

There is a general decline in morality throughout the country today. This is as true, in many instances, of Catholic life, as it is of those who are not of the faith. The cause is often to be found in unworthy home life, and in the faulty training of the children. Pope Pius XI indicated what must be expected of parents:

“The first natural and necessary element in this environment [the ideal Catholic home] as regards education, is the family, and this precisely because so ordained by the Creator Himself. Accordingly that education as a rule, will be more effective and lasting which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family; and more efficacious in proportion to the clear and constant good example set, first by the parents, and then by the other members of the household.”¹

1. Pope Pius XI, “On the Christian Education of Youth,” in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 57.

Failure in fulfilling this obligation will only increase present extreme cause for worry.

Indifference and neglect of religion in the home are taking a terrible toll. It is high time to study the whole situation. The Church and our beloved country need a generation of parents humble enough to go down upon their knees and ask guidance from Almighty God in this most serious obligation toward their children. They have tried their own methods, and have failed in all too many instances. Now they must return to His.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Although baptized a Catholic, Mr. Jones is divorced and "remarried." He is successful in business and socially prominent. Would you admit him regularly to your home, or invite him and his wife to dinner (they have no children)?

2. Comment briefly on the causes of loss of faith today. Can you mention others that *originate in the home*?

3. About how many children are enrolled in your parish school? How many Catholic children of the parish attend public schools? High schools?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Faith in the Home

1. To pray together as families. The father of the family should always devoutly pronounce the blessing at the table, and direct the common prayer of the home. Most of the prayer can be led and recited by the children.

2. To receive Holy Communion as families, making necessary allowances for grammar school children, who are with their schoolmates in church (which should not be every Sunday: they belong with their parents and the rest of their families much of the time.) Boys and girls who have been privileged to kneel beside their parents at the Communion table will not readily lose their faith.

3. To decorate the home with the Crucifix, sacred pictures and other objects of devotion, which create an atmosphere of Catholicity. Anyone walking into a Catholic home should recognize it immediately for what it is — the cherished dwelling of Catholics.

4. To insist on knowing the companions with whom their children associate, the homes they visit, the books they read.

5. At times, consciously to direct the conversation at table or in the living room to topics dealing with matters of faith. Thus, to speak of the Church's viewpoint on some problem of the day, to discuss some matter treated in a recently read Catholic book or periodical, or the diocesan newspaper, to remark about school work, to refer to a sermon heard, will all serve to make home life a little more Catholic.

6. To encourage an increased knowledge of the things of God and His Church — by listening to the Catholic hour on the radio, by “hearing the children’s catechism,” by subscribing to and reading Catholic periodicals and papers.

7. To encourage recreation within the family circle. The money wasted in frivolity could make Catholic homes so attractive that the children would cheerfully find their entire recreation within its embrace.

8. Never to tolerate flippant or irreverent remarks about holy things or persons. The sacraments, priestly and religious vocations, the wedded state, the parish church and school, are things that are pleasing in the sight of God, and never to be spoken of lightly.

9. To warn the children, prudently, with regard to lurking dangers, especially in commercialized recreation, objectionable “movies,” the theater, unwise reading, unworthy companions.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Mention the decorations that you think best produce a truly Catholic spirit in the home. What pictures? Statues? Other objects of devotion?
2. What are the best sources for the adult Catholic to learn of his faith?
3. Which of the above nine suggestions for fostering the faith appeal most to you? Can you add others?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. A recent (Canadian) parish bulletin announced: “In future there will be no ‘Children’s Mass’ at eight o’clock. Children must attend the Sacrifice with their parents or some adult person from their homes.” What do you think of the pastor’s plan?
2. The Catholic faith is one of the most beautiful and powerful forces in the world. Why do you think men have wandered so far from its spirit today? Why is it so persecuted? Do you see a parallel between the persecution of the faith and the disregard of the sanctity of the home?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION

To recite the “act of faith” daily, if possible in the evening with the other members of the family.

DISCUSSION III

Hope

1. What Hope Is

Hope plays an important part in every intelligent person's life. The boy hopes that the weather will be fine for Saturday's game. His worried mother hopes the children will arrive home safely from their picnic. Father cherishes the hope that his eldest son will follow his own trade or profession. After ten crop failures, farmers in Western Kansas soberly planted their crops with the hope of an abundant harvest.

But all these hoped-for things find their fulfilment in natural goals.

Supernatural hope unites us intimately with God. It works much as do our natural hopes, but its objects are our eternal salvation and the things that lead to it. It is a gift from God, and leads us constantly back to Him. In so doing, it wields a tremendous power in our lives, deeply influencing our whole outlook.

Like all other virtues, hope holds the solid and reasonable middle course between two unreasonable extremes. It makes men rely on God's infinite goodness to obtain pardon when they have sinned. This keeps them from the extreme of despairing of God's mercy, and from the foolhardy assurance that God will forgive them without their cooperation.

In the same way it brings men to depend confidently on God's grace and help in the difficulties of their state of life. Once they have learned its secret, they are neither timidly fearful of hardships and temptations, nor overconfident in relying on their own power. Hope is humble, and places its trust in God's goodness. It avoids any undue emphasis on natural means of acquiring the things for which it longs: the pardon of sins, the increase of grace, and life everlasting.

Hope might be called the virtue of the cheerful and the buoyant. It sustains in trials and hardships. It takes some of the sting out of life's disappointments. Because of it, privations are borne calmly. Even the hardest things in life, the death of loved ones, life-long afflictions of those who are near and dear, injustices, and things unpleasant generally, are seen in their proper perspective by the person who has learned to place his trust in God. There is an enviable calmness to the man who has learned the lesson of hope. He is at peace with God and man.

Hope is the virtue, too, which prevents morbid worry about

one's final reckoning with an all-just Judge. It promises men the means of attaining salvation. Reliance on God's unfailing goodness burns strong in the breast of the true Christian. Firm belief in the reward of final perseverance as the climax of a life in God's service is certain to color a man's whole attitude toward life.

It is a very positive virtue, and must be built up by every spiritual means which the Divine Wisdom has placed at our disposal. We need it today more than ever before, to oppose the influences that tend to draw us away from God.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. The Catholic cannot help comparing himself with those whom St. Paul describes as "having no hope." It is easy to offer sincere sympathy to a Catholic who has lost a well prepared relative. How would you console a mother whose deceased son belonged to no church?
2. Almost immediately after having sinned, we can (and should) recite the act of hope, and mean every word we utter. How can you account for the great strength of our hope, despite all we have done to lose it?
3. Does the "act of hope" include the petition for final perseverance?

2. Hope in the Catholic Home

As with practically all other virtues, hope finds its ideal setting within the solidly Christian family. In the ideal home, father and mother strive from the earliest childhood of the first baby to instill this virtue in all its applications. Long before going to school, the child learns of God and His goodness at its mother's knee.

Those with whom one has shared from babyhood joys and sorrows will be the sharers of our most sacred hopes in maturer years. No one else can enjoy our confidences so unreservedly as those with whom we have played, and worked, and prayed, and shared secrets not known outside the sanctuary of the home. Strangers, acquaintances, or even intimate friends, never are taken into the bosom of the family's hopes. They are too sacred to be shared with outsiders.

The offering of prayers for deceased relatives, a beautiful expression of supernatural hope, built on faith and charity, is a sacred duty with the members of the family. Anniversary and other Masses for the deceased are usually announced in the parish church as "requested by the family." Many a grown man recalls today his mother's frequent reminders to include the family in his prayers, when the children recited their prayers before her. Boys and girls have prayed for years for the conversion to the faith of a non-Catholic father or mother.

When spiritual danger lurks, prayers are redoubled in the Catholic home. Should anyone in the family "go wrong," intense

prayer by all the members of the family storm heaven for the erring one.

The sacrifices of parents and older brothers and sisters to procure a "good Catholic education" for fortunate younger members are another expression of the virtue of hope. In fact, Catholic America's school system, a monument to the voluntary offerings of the poor, represent for the greatest part, the sacrifices and the hopes of the Murphys and the Meyers, the Smiths and the Browns of the country. There is much of beauty in the humblest of America's Catholic homes, much of which it would be gravely sinful to abandon, for it is pleasing in the sight of God.

All this is a perfectly natural outgrowth of God's own design for the family. Mutual help, which is one of the purposes in the marriage contract and sacrament, is to be, first of all, aid in the practice of virtue. Pope Pius XI calls the attention of the Church to this truth in the following words:

"... Love is proved by deeds. This outward expression of love in the home demands not only mutual help, but must go further; it must have as its primary purpose that man and wife help each other day by day in forming and perfecting themselves in the interior life, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue, and above all that they may grow in true love toward God and their neighbor."¹

The children share in this sacred character of mutual help in virtue within the home. It is their part in the "great sacrament" mentioned by St. Paul. (Ephesians, 5: 32) Toward the end of his encyclical on Christian Marriage, Pope Pius expresses the desire that all Christians:

"... as members of the great family of Christ... may be thoroughly acquainted with sound teaching concerning marriage, so that they may ever be on their guard against the dangers advocated by teachers of error, and most of all that 'denying ungodliness and worldly desires, they may live soberly and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'" (Titus, 2: 12-13)²

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How often do you think person of means should have Masses offered for deceased relatives? For a departed father? uncle? brother or sister?
2. How is mutual aid, as a purpose of the sacrament of marriage, linked with the virtue of hope?
3. Do parents who send their children to public schools through no necessity of doing so, sin against hope?

3. What Has Been Lost Today

These are very trying days. Compared with any period of the history of the Christian era, they are among the most frighten-

1. Pope Pius XI, "On Christian Marriage," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York; Paulist Press, 1940), p. 83.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

ing. The hand of God rests heavily upon the whole world. Death and destruction, dire want and sickness, war and all the horrors of war, have struck their blows over the face of the earth. Few indeed have not been affected by the general upheaval.

God is trying once more, to speak in human terms, to bring us to our senses. He wants to restore to us the appreciation of hope in divine things, and all that that hope will bring with it. He wants to destroy the false standards that have led us away from Him.

We have sinned as a race, as a nation, as families, as individuals. We are a generation boastfully forgetful of God's commands. But man cannot forget his God. God does not permit that. He may permit it for a while, but always there comes the rude awakening like the present, for those who will see the light. It is as though God were forcibly directing our attention once more to the things for which He taught us to hope.

Married couples closed their eyes to the obligations of their state of life, turned deaf ears to the warnings of the Church. They practiced a sinful "control" of their most sacred natural cooperation with God, the prime purpose of their marriage union. Many refused belief in Christ's words, "Your Father knows that you need all these things." (Matthew, 6: 28) Their unbelief and lack of hope, and the presumption on God's mercy kept heirs of heaven from being born. They deceived themselves with talk of "impossibility" and "better advantages for a smaller number of children." In many instances even more selfish motives guided their actions.

The quest for excitement and artificial pleasure that has done so much to destroy the family spirit has tended to deaden the virtue of hope as well. Hope unites us to God and draws us away from the things that prevent union with Him.

The man with supernatural hope hates sin, and wants to give up, to the best of his human ability, all attachment to sin. He knows he must avoid occasions of sin, harmful practices, evil company, sinful entertainment. But these, and the things that lead to them, are the very forces that have taken people out of their homes today. On the other hand, the spiritual power that makes them strong, is generally to be found within the family circle.

Overemphasis on natural means, and complete dependence on personal efforts to the neglect of the power of the supernatural is one of the most serious faults of modern education. Learning, culture, eloquence, are all splendid. It is only when the student is given the impression "*These* are the things that really count" that harm is done. Much of the supernatural part of education must originate in home training. People today must try to re-

establish the broken lines of grace between the altar and the home, between their needs and the sacraments and sacramentals.

Harmful reading, not sufficiently checked within the home, is another cause of the evil.

Unwillingness to bow one's head to Christ's sweet yoke and to shoulder the burden of the cross He makes light, keep people from following Him in hope. Much of the yoke, and many of the burdens are found within the family.

We have lost something precious. Today's vocation must be an all-out effort to reestablish in ourselves the solid hope that our religion offers. Most of the effort must be expended within the home. It will mean the humility of abandoning presumption and overconfidence in our own powers. It will mean constant care not to allow despair in any form to enter our lives. It will be the search for the positive and the beautiful. And it will be found again, most frequently, within the Catholic home.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Do you think that considering today's world conditions as from God's hand is common? Are the people whom you know better for the crosses they have to bear?
2. How does modern education tend to destroy hope?
3. Show how the quest for excitement and pleasure affect hope.

4. Suggestions for Encouraging Hope in the Home

1. To provide as complete a Catholic education as possible for every child to prepare for the spiritually difficult days that lie ahead. Only deep motives guarantee the life of faith and charity which the baptismal and confirmation characters demand. Only the well rounded training by all the forces of home, the Church, and the full Catholic system of education can equip the child for the spiritual difficulties of life.

2. To read, occasionally, a chapter or two of the New Testament, or of Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*¹ until one finds a sentence which expresses the hope answering our present need or mood. Such a practice is particularly helpful in the time of trial. Once the reading of such passages aloud is regularly reintroduced into the family, much that America has lost will have been regained.

3. To learn to sacrifice some material pleasure for the sake of Christ, in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins and an increase

1. The New Testament, or, preferably, the entire Bible, should be found in all Catholic homes, invitingly available for ready reading. The *Imitation of Christ*, also called *The Following of Christ*, can be procured very reasonably at any good bookstore. Care should be taken to obtain a Catholic edition.

of grace. To remain at home when outside pleasures call so that one may cherish intimate union with those whose lives are the natural protection of our virtue of hope.

4. To offer encouragement and assistance when any member of the family stands in need, even more especially if the need is spiritual in character. This lesson of mutual help and sympathy must be taught from the earliest dawn of reason. Often enough it is a form of character training forfeited in "restricted" families.

5. To be cheerful and strong in the virtue of hope when other members of the family, or relatives, or close friends suffer adversity.

6. Parents must endeavor to develop as serious an appreciation of hope as possible in the children as a preparation for their life-work and vocation. All too often the choice of a state of life is thought of only in terms of financial success, social position, security, happiness through the gratification of desires. Home training and inspiration must go far beyond these limited bounds, and must prepare the child for "what he must be and what he must do here below, in order to obtain the sublime end for which he was created."¹ In choosing a life's work or profession, this will mean first of all to select that work in which they can best please Almighty God. The Choice of a state of life is treated in Discussion XVI.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Why is Catholic education so important for hope?
2. How is the virtue linked with the choice of a state of life?
3. Mention some specific ways in which you can strengthen your own hope and the hope of others.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDED DISCUSSION

1. How would you endeavor to explain God's infinite mercy to one who had sinned gravely and was on the point of despair? What would you suggest that he do to regain hope?
2. What part of the practice of your religion gives you the greatest hope? Does it strike you as impressive that the "act of hope" and the last prayer of the priest's absolution in confession ask for the same three favors?
3. Father McReavy says in his sermon on hope: "Hope gives a motive and a meaning to all our crosses and trials, for we see them not as stumbling blocks, but as short cuts to our journey's end, and far from being merely resigned to them, we begin to welcome them."² Do you think that is a picture of many Catholic homes?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To see to it that each day closes, at least, with the reflective recitation of the act of hope, — if possible, with the entire family.

1. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 39.
2. McReavy, Lawrence Leslie, "Sermon on Hope," in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 40: 1161.

DISCUSSION IV

The Love of God

1. What the Love of God Is

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him." (1 John, 4: 16) The love of God is a supernatural virtue, a gift bestowed upon us by which we cherish God above all things, simply because He is infinitely good, and worthy of all our love. The above quoted words of St. John make us realize that God is always close to us, and desirous of being united with us. For that very reason He brought us into being. The child in the catechism class learns that "God created me to know Him, and love Him . . ."

When we consider our many sins, this teaching may seem difficult, but it really is not. The saints loved God in an heroic degree that few of us can succeed in imitating. But in practice, almost every act of an upright life can be made an act of the love of God.

For instance, one moment's reflection in which we desire a deeper share in the Masses being offered throughout the world at this hour is an act of love. We mention that desire in the morning offering, but often we recite the words from memory, without really thinking. Morning prayers are an act of love of God in themselves.

Prayers before meals, and especially a word of thanks to God for His benefits and blessings are another act of the love of God. This act of thanksgiving can attain a very high degree if we direct our attention to the Giver rather than to His gifts. An ejaculatory prayer before an hour's work offers the whole work to God as an act of love and consecration. The average ejaculatory prayer will hardly consume five seconds of our time.

Promptly turning away from temptations, fulfilling our duties of our state in life, little acts of voluntary mortification, a five minutes' visit to the Blessed Sacrament on the way home from work or shopping, are all acts of love that can easily be developed in the ordinary life. Training ourselves to think of them is the important point.

We rightly consider the saints far above us. But we are called to imitate, not them alone, but God Himself. "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew, 5: 48) We must ever strive toward this perfection. God helps us constantly by abiding in us, dwelling within us through His grace.

It is a life-long work on the part of man, a growth until death stops growth and a new order begins. The man who loves God will always keep on trying to reach perfection, whatever the failures and mishaps he suffers on the way. St. Augustine, who had a really difficult time beginning his love of God, acknowledges humbly that "We are created for Thee, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

This love of God makes us entirely new beings. We are lifted out of our sinful selves, and become one with God. Here is the way Father Tanquerey explains the idea:

"It [love] unites to God the whole soul with all its faculties and powers. It unites the *mind* to God through the esteem conceived for Him and the frequent thought of Him. It unites the *will* by perfect submission to the Divine Will. It unites the *heart* by the subordination of all our affections to the Divine Love. It unites our *energies* by dedicating them all to the service of God and souls."¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. St. Paul's passage on the love of God (I Corinthians, chapter 13) is considered one of the most beautiful chapters of the world's literature. What did he mean by concluding "So there abide faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity"?

2. Is the love of God the most excellent of all the virtues because all virtues are directed by it?

3. Can you recite the act of love?

2. Love of God in the Catholic Home

The love of God makes us give ourselves to Him as completely as we can. Our first effort must be obedience to the Divine Will, made known to us in the law of God and the law of the Church. Many questions have been brought to our attention by the Holy See in recent years which focus the interest on the home once more. Suffice it to mention the reestablishment of the Feast of the Holy Family, the model of all Christian homes; Pope Pius XI's encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth, much of which must be imparted within the family circle; his encyclical letter of Christian marriage. Obedience to these laws of the Holy See can be realized only through love of home and family.

If one loves God, he will naturally want to be where he is united to God. If the home is what it should be, nothing will remind us of Him so forcibly, with the exception of the church, which is God's own special home. "My house is a house of prayer." (Luke, 19:46) In its own limited way, the Catholic home should be that, too.

Love will draw the soul to seek God's greater glory in the way that He Himself has indicated He wants to be adored. The wor-

1. Tanquerey, A., *The Spiritual Life*, (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Co., 1930), §1219, p. 572.

thiest possible celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass with the parish priest is one of God's first claims upon us. The ideal of family participation in the Sacrifice is not being realized, particularly in city parishes. Sometimes the ideal is not possible, as when the father of the family works on Sunday and must attend the earliest Mass, or when someone must remain at home to care for infant children. Making allowances for similar exceptions, many American families are ignoring a spiritual and educational means of the greatest importance. A family is never more united than when kneeling together as a family before the altar for full participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Every one of the sacraments has a direct relation to the home. Baptism is an occasion of spiritual joy for the family. Confirmation intensifies the gifts of the Holy Ghost which enable the child to enter more fully into the spiritual life of the home. Nothing better indicates true parochial and family spirit than to see father, mother, and children at church of a Saturday evening for confession, unless it is to see them nourished by their Divine Savior at the communion table as a family. In extreme unction Jesus comes personally into the home to strengthen, console, and anoint a member of the family for the glory of heaven.

The sacrament of marriage, offering actual grace throughout the years is the solid rock upon which Christian families are reared. Although holy orders exceeds the spiritual needs of the individual home, it is God's chosen means of furnishing the family its spiritual assistance, because all help comes to men from God through the priest, and through him we offer all our prayer and sacrifice to God.

A divine order is here revealed. In giving us the sacraments, Jesus took care of every spiritual need of man. And the sacraments have their logical setting within the family and the parish.

This spirit must be kept alive in the home. Sacred pictures will remind the members of duties they are prone to forget. Holy water and other sacramentals are spiritual powers that must protect the home and increase the love of God within it.

Fervent family prayer should daily ascend to God's throne from the lips of every serious Catholic. May God bless and protect our homes, and make them intense centers of His praise and glory!

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How are the pope's encyclicals made known to the faithful? How did you learn of his encyclical on marriage?
2. How do the sacraments, as means of grace, affect the home?
3. What practical resolutions should be adopted by parents with baby children to increase their family love of God?

3. Loss of God's Love in the Home

Since family life is God's own ideal for fostering His love, the growing modern disregard for home life suggests itself as an explanation of much of today's sinfulness. A simple investigation shows this to be true. Jesus spoke to His disciples, and through them to us all: "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John, 14: 15)

I am the Lord, thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. — Most false gods are erected outside the home. Artificial and commercialized amusements can be erected into an idol. Dangerous education, at variance with Christian home training and Catholic principles, worships gods of its own.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. — It is only when the home is completely forgotten, and father and mother have ceased to be what God intended them to be that cursing, swearing, or any vile disregard of the Holy Name can occur in the home.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath. — The ideal family spirit for observing the Sunday is destroyed if one member fails to go to Mass or if he drives across town to attend a late Mass away from the family and the parish. Breaking away from the family, arrangements to spend the day outside its fold, often mean the end to any effort to "keep the day holy."

Honor thy father and thy mother. — Lack of due respect on the part of the children, disobedience, and brazen "talking back" to parents are finding their way too frequently into Catholic homes — from the outside influences at school, through association with the wrong kind of companions, and so on. Parents, too, are bound by the law of obedience. Forgetfulness of their dignity as the head and heart of the family, and their position as representatives of God who placed the children in their custody, is almost as common a failure as the disobedience that it has often brought about.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. — The shameful vice shuns the brightness, the natural purity and warmth of the family circle. Lustful desires take the person out of the spirit of the home, erect invisible barriers, destroy confidences that were formerly spontaneous. Where lust reigns, family spirit is dead.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods. — Contentment, peace, tranquility are the marks of the home-loving. Their opposites are too often the price paid for a break with one's family.

Only a few points are here indicated. The same principle will be found true when applied to the commandments of the Church.

The virtues taught by the Church in its yearly cycle of sacred worship are all petitioned in the name of the entire parish. But examination will reveal that most of them are to be practiced in daily life in the intimacy of the home.

This is a principle underlying the whole worship of the Church. From Calvary's Cross graces stream to us through the society of the Church into our every-day life. Little time or thought is necessary to convince one that loss of family spirit breaks the flow of grace. For years the whole teaching power of the Church has warned us of what is wrong: we have lost the sacred character of family spirit. We cannot progress until we return humbly to God's plan for us.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Do you remember the commandments of the Church? Can you show how they, too, affect the *family*?
2. How are parents bound by the law of obedience?
3. What is wrong with attending a late Mass at a neighboring parish?

4. Suggestions for Increasing the Love of God in the Home

1. To build up, as far as possible, the "love-motive" of spiritual life, and to suppress the motive of fear, of "having to do" this or that under the pain of mortal sin.'

2. To realize the need of consciously giving good example in the practice of God's love. Being good is easy when others about one are good. Children who give such example are to be commended. Anyone acting otherwise should be corrected firmly but charitably. Parents must feel the weighty responsibility of taking the lead in such good example.

3. To endeavor to regain a more truly Christian appreciation of the Lord's Day, making it very specially a day cherished by every member of the family. Recreation together, picnics, outings, sports in which all can participate or at least share with interest as spectators, family dinners with guests invited, are all to be encouraged. Parents should reluctantly grant permission to spend the day away from the family in doing things that will cause the child to lose sight of its sacred character, and never for anything opposed to God's law. Besides attending Mass together, some part of the day, at least, should be spent by the whole family in God's service, as in sacred reading or common prayer.

In his encyclical letter on the Christian Education of Youth Pope Pius XI finds serious fault with those militaristic countries "which usurp unreasonably on Sundays the time which *should be devoted to religious duties and to family life at home.*"¹ He certainly could not logically commend many American families which, despite their great political liberty and the freedom to practice their religion and to live their home life, have retained even less than the Catholics in persecuted countries.

1. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 50.

4. To encourage little acts of self-sacrifice by every member of the family in procuring sacred objects for the home. A statue or picture of the Blessed Virgin procured by the little acts of self-denial of every child in the family would be an ideal Mother's Day gift. Sickroom equipment for the administration of the sacraments, crucifixes for the different rooms of the house, holy water fonts, a holy water bottle for the mother or father to bless the children at night, a good family Bible, a nicely framed picture of the Last Supper for the dining room, could all be procured in this manner. No finer spirit of gratitude could be shown than for all the children to arise for early Mass and Holy Communion on their parents' wedding anniversary.

5. To remind the children of special intentions for which to pray, or the significance of a special feast, for instance as they leave home to attend Mass. Such brief instructions remain long after childhood has passed, and if given after careful thought and study, can present a fairly complete education in the love of God.

6. To have anniversary and other Masses offered for the deceased members of the family, to be participated in, if possible, by all the living members.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Only a few obvious suggestions are made here. The possibilities are unlimited. What other means do you suggest to increase the love of God by families?

2. What would you tell a twelve-year-old boy as he left the house to serve early Mass?

3. What do you think of a family that dials for some other program during the Catholic hour on Sunday afternoon?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Does ownership of home, which will mean dwelling in the same parish, more permanent friendships, and so on, have any bearing on the love of God? Are rural communities more ideally suited for fostering this virtue?

2. What has happened to the beautiful custom of singing together in families? How many of the club members came from families where there was singing together?

3. Can you give a list of books that would foster a love of God in the home?

4. On the occasion of his silver jubilee as a bishop, Pope Pius XII stated, "God wills that husband and wife, in loyal fulfilment of their duties to one another and to the family, should in the home transmit to the next generation the torch of corporeal life, and with it spiritual and moral life, Christian life; that within the family, under the care of their parents, there should grow up men of straight character, of upright behavior, to become valuable, unspoiled members of the human race, manly in good or bad fortune, obedient to those who command them and to God. That is the will of the Creator." How much of this utterance refers to the love of God?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To recite the act of love most devoutly every night.

DISCUSSION V

Charity Toward One's Neighbor

1. What Charity Is

The love of our fellow man is second in importance only to the love of God. We love God for His own sake, because He is what He is, all-wise, infinitely good, merciful. We love the man who lives across the street from us for the sake of Christ. We believe that Christ is in this man, in all others whom we love, and in the vast numbers whom we should love. Charity simply is not charity unless it is directed to Christ, and modelled upon the general lines that Christ set for it.

Charity is giving oneself to another in some manner or other. The doctor who gives a part of his professional services to the poor, gives himself primarily because he believes he is serving Christ in the person of the suffering poor. So do persons who offer counsel in doubt, console the sorrowing, give alms to the needy, or find other ways of helping in difficulty. Unless what is offered is first of all oneself, and unless this self is offered to Christ, what is commonly called charity is not charity at all.

After the Last Supper, Jesus addressed His apostles:

"A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: that as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John, 13: 34-35)

It is important to consider the whole setting in which these words were solemnly pronounced. The Last Supper had just been finished. The Apostles are humbled now, in their role of first communicants. Jesus has spoken to the "Twelve", whose number has within the hour been reduced to eleven. The thought in these sacred moments before His departure from them is most serious and fundamental. It ends three years' intimacy, and is to lead to the most difficult trials. It is uttered in a spirit which sheds a divine light on many of the teachings of our Lord's public ministry.

How difficult a first serious reading makes this commandment sound: "*that as I have loved you, you also love one another!*" Like our Lord's love, ours must be universal. He loved all men, dying for all. Like that of Jesus, our love must anticipate the needs of our friends. Our love must be forgiving, as Jesus forgave those who tortured Him and put Him to death.

On another occasion, Jesus described this love of neighbor in terms of eternal reward, in words that have struck home their message to every thinking person of every age:

"Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me. Then the just will answer him saying, Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee; or thirsty and gave thee to drink? . . . And answering the King will say to them, 'Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.'" (Matthew, 25:34-40)

You did it for Me! Every act of charity is done for Jesus. That is the keynote of charity as Christ commanded it. Without it, generosity is charity without a soul. Without this love, built on faith, which finds Jesus in the one served, much of morality loses its meaning and scope. The commandments of God and of the Church would be useless burdens. Love would be only an empty sentiment.

The love of Christ in our fellow man is a tremendous power and a thing of striking beauty unknown in the life of the self-centered, those who are greedy for money, the lustful. It is found where Jesus was found in His life on earth — in the homes of the poor, among the humble.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Why is the St. Vincent de Paul Society's work so ideal?
2. Does the motive of charity lie behind the work of the other societies in the parish? Give specific examples.
3. Slowly recite the act of love, and compare it with the above citation from St. Matthew.

2. Charity in the Home

Homes are built on love. Parents reach the highest natural dignity of men and women in cooperation with Almighty God in the mysteries of generation. Their cooperation leads to the creation of human souls. This, in turns, leads them to a share of God's own divine love. For God uses them to communicate His love to the world of His creation. This share in the divine love strikes the note for all further acts of cooperation and love within the home.

Love necessarily prompts mutual aid, which as Pope Pius XI points out in his encyclical letter on marriage, refers especially to the help husbands and wives give each other in leading virtuous lives. Constant mutual aid is necessary in many of the works of the married couple. But their primary aid to each other is spiritual, in the exercise of virtue, particularly in mutually encouraging each other in faithfulness to marriage vows, in the practice of faith, in the steadfastness of hope, justice, patience, and the full beauty of Catholic life.

In the home training given the children, the obligations of married life again lead to Jesus. This training is a work of love, often performed at great sacrifice. It is undertaken for God and is rewarded by Him. The results always exceed the efforts, because God will not be outdone in generosity, and gives His grace to complete the parents' efforts. The parents who have brought up their children in obedience see the Boy Jesus "who was subject to Mary and Joseph" in their children.

The mother and father who know that their children are chaste and pure, and trained to preserve the holy virtue, breathe a frequent prayer of thanksgiving, for they can see the Divine Child reflected in their own children. Pride is permissible in viewing the conduct of children who give evidence of Christian home training in imitating the Savior.

The acts of self-sacrifice within the family become so numerous down through the years as to be almost routine and automatic. But they are performed out of love.

Care of the sick within the home is a work of love, in this sense, because Christ will say: "I was sick and you visited me." It is a seeking of Christ. Mother's love, which is a spark of divine love, knows no bounds.

Denials of self, and sacrifices to give children advantages of a good Catholic education are willingly carried to degrees far beyond what is demanded of parents. The sustained efforts of father and mother to train their children to virtue, the care to give good example and to avoid all scandal for the little ones, fraternal correction by older brothers and sisters can have only Christ for their object.

The intentions for which prayers are said in the home unite the family more closely to God in the common bond of charity. Patience in bearing with the faults of members of the family is a spirit that comes from God and leads to Him. Occasions to forgive injuries arise even within good Catholic homes. Brothers and sisters, and even parents, are human in their faults. They forget themselves. They may sin grievously and be guilty of serious injustice. But the charity of forgiveness will unite the home more intimately than ever before.

All through our lives, charity truly begins at home.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How would you explain "mutual aid" as a purpose of the sacrament of marriage to a non-Catholic?
2. When, particularly, is pride in their children permissible in the parents?
3. Is the difficulty of patience and the forgiving of injuries in the home a sign of love? Does it lead to a more intense love?

3. Loss of Charity in the Home

Brazen disrespect for parents has become an all too common occurrence today. It is an unworthy attitude which comes from outside the home. It sometimes assumes the form of smart-alecky conduct, a flippancy intended to impress outsiders. It is thought to be a matter of no great importance, and at times even unwisely sanctioned by the parents themselves. Of such a nature are calling their parents by their first names, or by nicknames, the lack of proper deference, deriding the parents, or any of the other attitudes that disregard or break down the holiness of the relation of father or mother to son or daughter.

While every possible intelligent means must be used to foster intimacy and confidence between parents and children, such conduct destroys something basic, without which neither the sacred obligations of parents or their children can ever be realized.

Parents hold the place of God with regard to their children, and are answerable to Him for their conduct. Once the respect and reverence which grow out of the children's full dependency is lost, disobedience, "talking back" with all that the phrase implies, and grosser forms of misconduct are to be expected.

The sin of scandal is one of the commonest losses of charity in the home. Scandal is generally defined as any evil word, deed, or omission which leads others into the occasion of sin. Particularly in the case of the parents, the necessity of avoiding scandal can mean giving up things which are even lawful in themselves, or at least not bad in themselves, but which because of circumstances can be the occasion of sin for young people.

Parents are obliged not only by the ordinary understanding of the virtue of charity, but also by their divinely ordered position as parents, to protect those committed to their spiritual care from the occasion of sin. Scandal can cross the path of the child from the conduct of older brothers and sisters, whom parents have the obligation to check and correct.

Even the slightest immodesty in the presence of the children, quarrelling between the parents, the use of vulgarity, profanity, or swearing, disregard of the law to sanctify the Sunday, even to the extent of missing Mass, accompanying the children, or permitting them to attend movies that are "dangerous for their souls" are failures in charity that cause present scandal for the children, and may be the cause of future sins.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How would you go about correcting, in charity, the smart-alecky conduct picked up from the child's schoolmates?
2. What are the principal dangers from which parents must protect their children? Had you thought of the matter from the standpoint of charity?

3. Can drinking in the home be a source of scandal for young people? Do you think that any of the unwise drinking of youth tries to excuse itself with this reasoning: "It is all right. Father and mother and their bridge clubs drink regularly until all hours of the night"?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Charity in the Home

1. To reflect on the dignity of holding the place of God in the children's lives, and never to do anything to forfeit that right. Parents must humbly encourage the recognition of this truth, not for themselves but for their children and for God. Obedience performed out of a motive of seeing father and mother as Christ's representatives, is the perfection of the child, and God's greater glory.

2. To contribute cheerfully, as families, to works of charity that do not flatter vanity. Christ is all the more honored where personal gratification is completely subdued. For the family, acting as a family, to contribute to the St. Vincent de Paul fund, to the home and foreign missions, to the local Catholic hospital, to Boys Town, or the preparation of some young man for the priesthood, where they do not know whom they are aiding, and to help known friends without drawing any attention to themselves, is an imitation of Christ dear to His own Heart.

3. To be strong, not only in avoiding scandal, but in the more positive exercise of good example and prayer for those in need of spiritual help. The good example of a worthy family is many times more powerful than the example of an equal number of individuals.

4. To encourage the children to welcome, with father's and mother's approval, their schoolmates and other friends into the home for study, recreation, meals. This begets a love of and a pride in the home. But the understanding must be that while the invitation is extended by one member, it is the family acting as a unit that actually receives the guest.

5. The charity that sees and considers Christ in our fellow man receives a rather broad but sound application in the following recommendations of the young people themselves:

"Courtesy to all the members of the family; a spirit of cheerfulness while in the house, cooperation in making the home an attractive and pleasant place in which to live; proper respect and consideration for the older members of the family, a spirit of peace and ready kindness, neatness about one's person, room, and the whole house; punctuality at meals; quietness of manner, especially through a well-modulated voice; willingness to undertake one's share of the work in the house."¹

6. Parents must eliminate, by rigorous and intelligent self-control, all nagging, bickering, disputes between themselves, especially in the presence of the children, and they must also

1. Lord, Daniel A., S.J., *Youth Says: These Are Good Manners*, (St. Louis: The Queen's Work, 1939), pp. 5-6.

strive to keep such disagreements to a minimum among the children.

7. To learn to exercise a sharp but cheerful control over the emotions, particularly those to which we give vent in the spoken word. In the intimacy of the family failure in this matter can cause rivalries, jealousy, discord, antipathy, bitter and sarcastic speech, strife and discussion — and all thought of home life and peace are gone. This exercise of control of speech does not include sullenness, however, which is equally destructive of the peace of the home.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. If you wanted to make your appeal to the children on this point of charity really spiritual, of what part of the Mass would you remind them? The Offertory? (See Matthew, 5: 23.) Holy Communion?
2. Please take the first point mentioned above and show how you would commend a child for obedience in a rather difficult matter.
3. Do you think that the boys and girls (meeting in a Sodality convention) have given a fairly good description of charity in the home in number 5 above?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are loyalty to one another in the family, and pride, the results of charity as considered in this discussion? Have you noticed that families that "stick together" in an almost fierce loyalty in mature years, quarrelled much as children?
2. Does the following statement suggest any connection with *family* life for you? "The less amiable, therefore, your neighbor may be from the natural point of view, the more divine your charity. For when you love your friend, you are loving largely yourself, but when you love your enemy, you are loving only God. It is the purest and highest form of love."¹
3. In his first plea to the world after his election to the papacy, the saintly Pope Pius X addressed these words to the faithful in the hope of "restoring all things in Christ." "The times we live in demand action — but action consisting entirely in observing with fidelity and zeal the divine laws and the precepts of the Church, in the frank and open profession of religion, in the exercise of all kinds of charitable works, and independently of self-interest or worldly advantage. . . . When in every city and village the law of the Lord is faithfully observed, when respect is shown for sacred things, when the Sacraments are frequented, and the ordinances of Christian life are fulfilled, there will certainly be no more need for us to labor to see all things restored in Christ."² Is all this an application of the principles of charity in the home?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To begin each day with the resolve to perform some little act of charity with the completest possible belief that we are serving Christ Himself in the person of our neighbor. "As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me."

1. McReavy, Lawrence Leslie, "Sermon on the Love of One's Neighbor," in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 40: 1259.
2. Pope Pius X, *First Message of Pope Pius X to the World*, (Encyclical Letter "E Supremi"), (Chicago, The Truth Society, 1903), pp. 20-21.

DISCUSSION VI

Prudence

1. What Prudence Is

Prudence is a virtue which leads us to God, although not so directly as do faith, hope, and love. It is immediately to be distinguished from the trickery and worldly cleverness by which it is sometimes known, through which men gain their points in a world that does not recognize Christ. Although it can be infused, as in the life of the Curé of Ars, it is normally a moral virtue which is acquired and perfected by practice. One becomes prudent, or more prudent, by acting prudently.

Prudence makes us choose the best means for accomplishing what we have set out to do, or, more often, what is determined for us by God's law, always keeping our final end in view.

Thus, we say that "prudence demands" that the person who sincerely desires to overcome a sinful habit must avoid the places and persons that have been occasions of his past sins. Or we say that Mr. Jones prudently bought his home within two blocks of the parish church and school. Or, again, one might say correctly: "I would advise you to speak with Father Miller about your problem. I know that he is a very prudent man, and I am certain that he can suggest the means to aid you in your difficulty."

At least in its more complicated problems, prudence involves several acts. It leads us 1) to investigate the matter as far as it is a moral problem, either by study, or by the memory of our own or others' past failures and successes, or by consulting with some well informed person. 2) After we have so investigated, prudence enables us to decide for ourselves what is the morally correct thing to do. 3) Most important of all, it sets our forces into the right direction.

If the children, for instance, want to "go to the show" on Saturday afternoon, and the mother does not know the picture they mention, prudence demands that she check on the list of approved pictures for children, that she come to the conclusion from her investigation that the picture is unobjectionable for them, and that she act accordingly. Not to take every one of these steps would be highly imprudent.

In so simple and so frequently occurring a problem, the different functions seem to be only one act. But in more complicated problems, such as deciding one's vocation, settling a difficult question of justice, or determining which of several Catholic schools or colleges to attend, they will stand out prominently.

St. Augustine gives a thought-provoking description of prudence without using the word at all. He says that we should always pray as though everything depended on Almighty God and always act as though everything depended on ourselves.

We see the same elements constantly present in prudent action. 1) The selection is of the best means to attain the purpose in view. 2) The choice is always made with regard to practical conduct or moral problems. 3) The selection of the means is something that is pleasing to God. 4) Ultimately, through creatures, prudence leads to God.

From this it can be seen that prudence is a great deal more than tact or diplomacy. The use of tact refers to *how* a thing is done. Prudence governs *what* is done, and *why* it is done.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. The gifts of the Holy Ghost, bestowed in baptism and intensified in confirmation, are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Which of them influence one's prudence, in the light of the above considerations?

2. Which of the three steps mentioned above for prudent action seems to be lacking most frequently? Will the answer differ with different persons?

3. Can you show why spiritual and moral writers frequently mention reserve in speech when dealing with prudence?

2. Prudence in the Home

To approach the ideal, prudence must manifest itself almost constantly in the home life of Catholics. There is always a spiritually correct view on every moral problem that presents itself for solution. It frequently is not the most appealing solution. Our weakened wills often incline more readily to what is harmful for us. Prudence is the virtue of the strong and the resolute. It learns the right solution at whatever cost, and adopts it resolutely.

The choice of a wife or husband is one of the most serious acts of a lifetime. For the Catholic it is the unbreakable union in which one is to work out much of his eternal destiny. Ordinary prudent business partnerships, which can be dissolved almost at will, call for a sharing of common views and purposes. Certainly the lifelong cooperation in duties that are of divine origin and responsibility, the living together and sharing everything in common, "for better, for worse, until death" demands prudence of a much higher order. Pope Pius XI teaches the necessity of prudenceful foresight in the choice with the words:

"They should, in so deliberating [about the choice of a partner], keep before their minds the thought first of God and of the true religion of Christ, then of themselves, of their partner, of the children to come, as also of human and civil society, for which wedlock is a fountain head.

Let them diligently pray for divine help so that they may make their choice in accordance with *Christian prudence*. . . .¹

But this initial prudence is only the beginning. The immature characters that approach the altar together so confidently must grow a great deal before they measure up to their newly assumed Christian duties. They must develop constantly during the years of their married life, ever striving to be worthy of their more and more mature obligations. The major portion of this development, if they are good Catholics, will be through the grace of state. But much of it will come through mutual spiritual aid. And that also calls for prudence of an uncommon order in both parties.

"This outward expression of love . . . must have as its primary purpose that man and wife help each other day by day, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue, and above all that they may grow in love toward God and their neighbor."²

From the child's dawn of reason until dependence on the home is definitely broken the work of education must be carried on untiringly, day after day, year in and year out. And every lesson must be seasoned with Christian prudence.

Prudence will win the children to love their home and admire their parents. The prudent appeal will elicit their good will and cooperation in work to be done about the house, which is an important part of their home training. It will be a strong force in the development of character.

It will wisely direct the hand of punishment, never permitting the parent to chastise in anger, or when the child is angry.

Its earnestness will command respect and submission in the critical hours when the child's love and obedience might easily be lost. When it voices its warnings with regard to harmful persons and dangerous temptations, it is guaranteed a worthy reception.

Prudence will guide the parent in the avoidance of unwarranted partiality within the family. It will bestow the ability to accommodate oneself to every need of the children. Generally parental prudence will be kind, cheerful, loving. It must at times be stern and severe. At all times it must remain sympathetic and understanding.

Little reflection is needed to bring one to the humble realization that prudence does not come from books, but is a power of divine origin, a gift from God. It is something to be prayed for, not "figured out" for oneself, although it calls for complete cooperation with the help given. In its roundabout way it leads back to God, through all the creatures that make up our daily

1. Pope Pius XI, "On Christian Marriage," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 113.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

contacts. It is a spirit to be built up, fostered, lived in the home. And because it is elevated in directing God's own work within the family, the home protects it as no other environment can protect it.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What prayers do you say for guidance when you are faced with serious problems? The "Come, Holy Ghost"? The Litany of the Blessed Mother? The Our Father?
2. During what years must prudence season the education of the children? How will this show itself particularly?
3. If you were requesting your pastor to offer the Sacrifice for your intention when about to make an important decision, would you request him to say the Mass of the Holy Ghost if the rubrics permitted?

3. Lack of Prudence in the Catholic Home

One might mentally close one's eyes and picture the Church on earth as a huge throng of some 350,000,000 souls united in Christ working patiently at their chosen or assigned tasks in an effort to praise Almighty God. Consecrated leaders specially chosen to carry on the work of Christ Himself, brilliant scholars, souls that are outstanding for their holiness, are numbered in this tremendously large body. With the experience of the wisest and holiest of men, directed by the Holy Spirit, the Church maps out our lives and offers her counsel.

Here, she says, presenting her doctrine, is what I want of you. It is what God wants of you. The way is tried, tested by millions of faithful souls. It is based on the teaching of our Lord Himself.

With the accumulated wisdom of the ages to direct her, the Church makes a constant appeal to the faithful to guide them in the path of virtue. Like a fond mother she outlines the far-sighted, strong-minded course to lead men to their ultimate goal. But behind the pleas of the popes, Christ's personal Vicars, stands a more than human knowledge painfully gathered through the centuries. Our spiritual fathers, the bishops, close to the conditions in which the faithful live, interpret the law of God for the welfare of their flocks. In their sermons, pastors, instructed by long years of study, bring these provident lessons home to us.

But a glance into the homes of the people to whom their words are directed shows that the prudence of obedient submission is often lacking. We are not humble enough to learn from the wisdom and experience of the ages.

The Church outlines the means for the avoidance of the occasions of sin, the grace of the sacraments, wholesome instruction, exalted motives, counsels, and warnings. Often it is to little avail. Sin abounds. New wounds are inflicted upon the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, because of our imprudence.

The Church's law warns of the serious perils of company-keeping with non-Catholics, and the dangers for the faith of the Catholic party and the children of the unions where marriage is contracted with those not of the faith. But young people continue to gamble with happiness and eternal destiny, heedless of warning, confident that they will succeed and be happy where others have failed miserably.

The admonitions voiced by all the bishops assembled in Washington in 1919 with regard to the protection of faith have remained unheeded by many.

"For this disaster [the loss of faith] is usually the end and culmination of other evils, of sinful habits, of neglect of prayer and the sacraments, of cowardice in the face of hostility to one's belief, of weakness in yielding to the wishes of kindred and friends, of social ambition and the hope of advantage in business or public career."¹

But thousands have suffered the shipwreck of their faith on these very scores since 1919.

Under the heading of Catholic Education, the bishops on that occasion also reminded us that "There, especially, [in Catholic education] the interests of morality and religion are at stake; and there, more than anywhere else, the future of the nation is determined. For that reason we give most hearty thanks to the Father of Lights who has blessed our Catholic schools and made them prosper."² These words are now truer than when they were written almost a quarter of a century ago, but numerous Catholic parents still insist on sending their children to the public schools when they could easily enroll them in the schools of the Church.

The list could be continued indefinitely.

The Church's wisdom is shown in the modern Rural Life Conference as one of the most ideal forces in present-day America. It shows itself in the workings of the Catholic Press, which, under the directions of the hierarchy, strengthens, protects, and teaches the faithful. It is evident again in the workings of the Catholic societies which bind laymen together in united effort to serve God. It speaks to the individual soul in the whispered admonition of the confessor to abandon unworthy companions and dangerous practices.

And all of the wisdom of the Church directly or indirectly affects homes and families. It is the height of folly to disregard so loving a mother.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Have you attempted to outline the Sunday sermon mentally? What part is occupied by the Church's doctrine. When is the practical appeal made?

1. *Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States . . . September, 1919*, (Washington: N.C.W.C., 1920), p. 12.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Can it not be said that most of the practical appeal of the sermons you have heard recently might be grouped in a general way under the virtue of prudence?

2. How many of the above mentioned points (in paragraph 3) have a direct bearing on the home?

3. St. Paul speaks of prudence as one of the outstanding qualities of bishops? (See I Timothy, 3: 2; Titus, 1: 9) With what will his prudence deal particularly?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Prudence

1. To train the youthful mind to take all its difficulties to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament or to His Blessed Mother in prayer. No small part of prudence consists in the humility of submitting problems to the persons whose expert counsel can guide and direct wisely. This is true in dealing with ordinary fellow men. It is infinitely more consoling when we enlist the aid which Jesus and His Mother so generously promised.

Mother of good counsel, pray for us . . .
 Virgin most prudent . . .
 Seat of wisdom . . .
 Refuge of sinners,
 Comfort of the afflicted, pray for us.

2. *For parents:* to encourage in every way possible, the confidence of the children, and to be most careful never to do anything to forfeit the same (as by a dishonest or insincere reply). *For children:* to realize that full confidence in parents, and consultation with them on all important matters is not only the prudent thing to do, and the most flattering tribute, but is God's own command: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

3. To realize the impossibility of personally investigating every moral problem that presents itself even within the family. The Church has offered many means to meet this difficulty. Wisdom suggests that we use them. The spirit of obedience demands that we do so. The following examples come to mind readily. Catholic Action, under the direction of the hierarchy, usually centers about the works of the apostolate that will have a bearing on family life. Practically all the modern encyclicals discuss problems that at least indirectly touch the family. The classification of motion pictures is a helpful guide to prudent parents. The bishop's pastoral letters consider the needs of the local diocese and its home conditions. These things all tell one what is morally correct. Prudence demands that we follow them.

4. "Most mothers, — not all, but we of the big cities see a rather alarming proportion of them — most mothers make up their rules from day to day. Mary asks separately for permission to go to each party; there is no law about it at all. Sometimes Mother lets her go to a really undesirable gathering, just because she is so sick of disappointing the child! 'You can't say 'no' every time!' . . . Perhaps it didn't occur to this mother [whose daughter was killed in a night automobile accident], but it might to us, whose tragedies haven't befallen yet, that you don't have time to say 'no' all the time, if the code says it for you. If a baby

asks for matches you don't deliberately sigh, frown, mitigate the situation with a 'Not tonight, dear.' Matches mean fire, and fire destroys life, and therefore the baby is left in no doubt as to whether he may have them or not."¹

5. To make a habit of examining one's conscience regularly on imprudent (not necessarily sinful) conversations and conduct in the presence of the children, and to make effective resolutions to avoid whatever could interfere with the whole plan of the Christian upbringing of the children.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Is the dislike of disappointing the children the reason why parents "give in" so often to the requests of the children?
2. It is cowardly to grant permissions against your more prudent judgment, simply because you are tired of saying "No"?
3. Do you think Kathleen Norris has touched upon one of the most serious causes of imprudence in family training in the citation given above? What do you think of "letting the rule decide for you" and not assuming the burden yourself?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Parents are under obligation to discontinue newspapers and magazines whose general reading matter, pictures, and advertisements are objectionable for immature minds. Do you think that sometimes Catholic papers and magazines are imprudent in accepting advertising copy, as in depicting supposedly ideal homes of two children in their early teens?
2. What do you think of the following description? "Prudence is a doing of one's share toward securing the petition of the Lord's Prayer: 'Lead us not into temptation!' For the prudent man avoids temptation; he foresees the occasions of sin and resolutely shuns them. . . . Prudence makes us wise enough to learn through the experience of others that certain courses are dangerous."²

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To select a prudent confessor and to give him your complete confidence, so that he may become what a confessor is supposed to be, a spiritual guide in your life.

1. Norris, Kathleen, *Unreasonable Mothers*, (New York: Paulist Press), pp.2-3.
 2. Ross, J. Elliot, "Sermon on Prudence," in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 40: 1265.

DISCUSSION VII

Justice

1. What Justice Is

The Latins give us a workable definition of justice in two words: *Suum cuique* — *to every man his rights*. Our duties are more concretely outlined for us in the seven last of the Ten Commandments, which we recall from catechism class.

Justice is the supernatural virtue that inclines a person at all times to render to others what strictly is due to them. By it we respect our neighbor's rights, of whatever nature these may be. Men who are by admission little inclined toward other virtues like to think and speak of themselves as just. They express their relations to others in such familiar terms as "fair play," "straight shooting," "the square deal."

One does not have to look far to see that this boast is largely a matter of wishful thinking. The fourth, sixth, and ninth commandments are divine expressions of justice to protect the home. They are often grossly disregarded by the very men who are loud in their claim of fair play.

The fifth commandment protects life and health in the broadest applications of the natural right. The seventh commandment protects our neighbor's rights to his property, and to his just return for his labor or services. Many persons who talk of "dealing squarely" with their fellow men have sizable hospital, dentist, automobile, and even grocery bills of long standing. The eighth commandment forbids lying: but calumny, backbiting, robbing defenseless persons of their good name, breaking confidences, and just plain untruths are practices of injustice that are all too common.

In his work *Cur Deus Homo*, St. Anselm gives a somewhat broader idea of justice than men ordinarily employ today. He says: "Justice is that freedom of the mind which renders to everyone his due, according to his particular status, reverence to superiors, equality to equals, consideration to inferiors, obedience and homage to God, patience toward an enemy, mercy and compassion toward the needy."

Such a standard is more applicable to the problems of home life than the ordinary definitions set up. It establishes the relationship of every member of the family to every other member, and to all outsiders.

Under the general heading of *restitution* are included all the acts by which a person endeavors to make good what has in any

way been taken from its rightful owner. It is frequently only an endeavor because full restitution is often impossible. But the duty is a serious one, and must be taught by parents, because upon its practical appreciation will depend much of the children's later contribution to and preservation of well ordered society. They must be trained to recognize property rights of others, their physical well-being, and their good name. A wise father will see to it that his children are properly humbled, and will force them to apologize and restore any stolen property to the person from whom it was taken, make good any property damage, retract harmful statements about others.

Great prudence is called for in such action. Sometimes an apology is impossible, or the humiliation would be entirely out of proportion to the damage done. But the educative power of good example, a reprimand where beneficial, and the instruction on the appreciation of the right of the good name of others are always possible.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Which of the Ten Commandments deal with the matter of justice toward one's fellow man? Can you mention them from memory? Show in a general way how they protect other people's rights.
2. If the child receives a small allowance, would you deduct the price of a new window to replace one broken in a baseball game? Smashed in boyish acts of vandalism?
3. How would you correct backbiting? Webster defines it as speaking evil of an absent person.

2. Justice in the Catholic Home

Particularly in its broader acceptance the virtue of justice has the widest possible scope both within the restricted confines of the home, and when the family is considered the unit of society. Space and the purpose of the discussion club necessarily limit the present consideration almost to a bare enumeration of examples. Practical instances which are frequently disregarded are purposely chosen.

In the relations of husband and wife, as outlined in the purposes of marriage, almost everything is based on charity and justice. Common usage speaks correctly of marital *rights*. Each party has a right to mutual help and cooperation in all the complicated means, spiritual and material, in accomplishing the purposes of the union. Any violation of these rights constitutes a violation of the virtue of justice.

The children have a right to a befitting education, especially as regards the preparation for what they must be and what they must do to realize the purpose of their creation. Parents usually

strive (not always wisely) to give them the "best education" within their means. What constitutes a strict duty on the part of the parents, however, is that outlined by Pope Pius XI:

"As this duty on the part of the parents continues up to the time when the child is in a position to provide for himself, this same inviolable parental right of education also endures. 'Nature intends not merely the generation of the offspring, but also its development and advance to the perfection of man considered as man, that is, *to the state of virtue*.'"¹

Preservation of the family good name is a duty incumbent on every member of the household. Society, particularly the local society of the parish, has a strict right to the good example of the family. Although not commonly thought of in this light, a family fails in the broad understanding of justice when it gives evil example. How far we *have* failed may be appreciated by considering that for the past three years persons nineteen years of age have predominated among those arrested by the law authorities throughout the country.

Because of the social nature of education in the Church, the family, with or without children of school age, and unmarried wage-earners have an obligation of supporting the parish school. The school has a just claim upon them, and not merely on the parents of children in the school.

The father, as head of the family, has the duty to make certain, as far as possible, that the family car is driven with proper precaution and care. This is an increasingly serious problem of justice.

Filial duty, corresponding to the right of the parents, demands that wage-earning sons and daughters help out at home, and particularly that they provide a worthy home for their parents in advanced age and widowhood. Shameful examples of neglect exist in almost every parish.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Are accidents caused through culpable negligence while driving a matter of justice? Would a father be bound in *conscience* to pay doctor and hospital bills and make good the time lost from employment by a person injured when his son was driving the car?

2. Granted that it is not necessary to add, when confessing negligence in educating one's children that one has been unjust, do you consider it advisable to weigh this point in the examination of conscience?

3. Why is the upkeep of the parochial school an obligation on all wage-earners? Is the taxation for public schools based on the same social character of education? Why?

1. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 45.

3. What Has Been Lost in the Appreciation of Justice

Every self-respecting person resents being called a thief. The use of the name is "fighting language." But many dishonest practices amount to thievery, even though they do not have the appearances of outright stealing.

Disregard for justice by regular frequenters of the sacraments, among others, has closed many neighborhood groceries and other small businesses. "Bad bills" mounted high while the debtors simply took their trade elsewhere when credit was no longer extended to them. With good will and a little sacrifice and the denial of luxuries they could have settled their accounts honorably and on time.

A doctor who has deserved well of his community in many years of practice stated recently that if he could collect his outstanding bills from men and women who are able to pay for his past services, he could retire and live comfortably for the rest of his days.

In many parishes the tuition for the school children has remained unpaid, and teaching Sisters have drawn little or no salary for months and even years, while parishioners have apparently continued to indulge in luxuries without restraint or moral misgivings.

Confusion on the whole question of justice reigns in the minds of many today. They are confused as to what are necessities and what are luxuries and generally end by trying to live up to their slightly-better-off neighbors across the street. They are too weak to set the principle for themselves: Pay as you go for luxuries, *after the necessities have been paid for*, or forego the luxuries.¹ They are slaves of installment plan buying in which they hand over their money in weekly payments to big corporations for things they have bought beyond their means, discovering that they have to postpone payment to the little grocer around the corner. They have not learned the lesson of living intelligently within their income, and their actions are unjust.

Children from such homes receive a very poor training in moral virtue. Their parents are under serious obligations to correct their ways, and make restitution to the best of their ability.

Certain other virtues, more or less identified with justice, fall short of the strict definition for obvious reasons. They are important because they have an almost daily occasion for practice in the home. Their brief examinations reveals how far American homes have wandered from the spirit of justice. Authors list the following:

1. See: Hagearty, Charles E., *Pay Your Bills*, (New York: Paulist Press), pp. 6 ff.

Religion: Religion is the obligation of rendering proper worship to God. Man can never offer a fully worthy adoration to his Maker. Therefore we cannot speak strictly of worship as a matter of justice, even though it is something we *owe* God.— About sixty per cent of the American public belong to no form of religion whatever.

Filial piety is the virtue by which sons and daughters show proper honor and love for their parents. This is not strictly a matter of justice, since parents can never be fully repaid for the sacrifices they have made. — But failure in filial love is a common occurrence.

Reverence and respect for persons of great virtue and dignity is not precisely a question of justice because outstanding virtue is never adequately rewarded in this life. — But reverence and respect for elders and the virtues they have practiced is a duty with children, best fulfilled by imitation.

The following virtues fall short of the idea of strict justice because they do not consist in matters strictly *owed* to others. It is sufficient to glance at them to see that they have a constant place in the home, and to see also that they are closely connected with the virtue. a) *Truthfulness* and *faithfulness* to one's promises; b) *simplicity*, that is, showing oneself exteriorly as one really is interiorly, which is opposed to hypocrisy and pretense; c) *gratitude*, or appreciation for favors and benefits received; d) *liberality*, or the moderation of love of money, so that a person is freely inclined to bestow it for his own and his neighbor's utility and God's glory. A family's record in contributing, according to its means, to the causes of the Church, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic University, the local orphans' home, or such works as the construction of the Catholic high school, may be taken as a fairly good indication of its Catholicity. e) *Affability*, the pleasing relationship to one's neighbor. To be grouchy, sensitive, and wear a long face at home, and to be cheerful with outsiders is certainly not related to justice.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Necessities are things that are essential for a normal, comfortable human existence. What are luxuries as compared with these necessities? Is the family car a luxury? for all people? a refrigerator? a radio?
2. Reading over the above list do you get the impression that the virtues that are linked with justice, like filial piety, religion, reverence, truthfulness, are more important in the home than strict justice? Why?
3. How are children to be taught to show their gratitude?

4. Suggestions for Developing Justice

1. Occasion should not be neglected to reprimand where necessary and to impress upon the mind of the growing child practical

appreciation of justice, in such cases as: a) showing greater care for borrowed books and other objects than for one's own; b) helping parents with their work where possible, each child having been assigned some particular task to develop responsibility; c) respecting the family budget and exercising care in money matters; d) respecting other people's property; e) and in general, doing to others as they would have others do to them. (See Matthew, 7: 12)

2. However common they may be, luxuries for which the family, or any of its members cannot immediately pay without depriving the family of a necessity are simply to be foregone. For the children, the little self-denial so occasioned can be a most valuable lesson for maturer years. Acquainting older boys and girls with the family financial standing and enlisting their help if necessary (not merely as paying boarders if they are working), is not only a sign of confidence in them, but a matter of justice.

3. The full and promptest possible payment of the grocer, the landlord, the doctor, the dentist, and others who have rendered the family material services is a matter of strict justice. The fifth precept of the Church commanding the support of one's pastor, and the works of the Church, is something offered to God and presented at the Offertory of the Mass. In many parishes even grammar school children have their little envelopes for the Sunday collection. They should be encouraged to use them regularly. Although they are taught the spiritual part of Church support in catechism and from the pulpit, they need to be reminded of this point occasionally by their parents.

4. Parents must see to it that restitution of any property pilfered by the children is promptly made, and the guilty child reprimanded and instructed.

5. Each child should have some place in the home, however humble it may be, that he can call strictly his own, even if it is only a bureau drawer or two. Toys, sporting equipment, favorite articles of clothing, or any other property within this designated place must not be touched without permission. In the same spirit their privacy is to be respected in all matters that are not of common interest to the family, such as letters, telephone calls, prizes, things that they have bought for themselves.

6. Insistence on proper greeting and address of parents, older relatives or guests, on the respect shown parents when they enter the room, on etiquette, especially at the table, and on a general consideration of others cannot be begun too early or easily overemphasized.

7. Parents themselves must do all in their power to foster an equal love by the children for each other. Father *and* mother

have each cooperated in their own distinctive ways with Almighty God. Both have serious and equal claims on the love of their children. Justice demands that the father foster a love for the mother among his children, and the mother foster the children's deep love for their father.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What does the promptness of payment have to do with justice?
2. Explain how you would teach the child to make a virtue of necessity when conditions do not permit the enjoyment of luxuries. What influence will this self-denial have in later life?
3. Why is it desirable to have even young children use envelopes regularly for the Sunday collection?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What restitution should a person make who has deliberately harmed the good name of another?
2. Throughout her entire history the Church, especially in the persons of her leaders, has done much to protect justice and the rights of her subjects. Her law, founded on that of the Savior, is largely a recognition and protection of rights. In modern times the popes have wielded much influence by their encyclical letters for the rights of labor, education, marriage, and underprivileged classes. Do you think that the average American has cooperated in the Church's efforts intelligently?
3. "Rash judgments must be avoided. To censure others on mere appearances or for reasons more or less trivial, without knowing fully their motives, is nothing less than to arrogate to oneself divine rights. . . . It is an act of injustice against the neighbor, who is thus condemned without a hearing. . . . and oftener than not, under the influence of prejudice or passion."¹ Is rash judgment common within the home? What means should be used to correct it?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Regularly to check over this matter of justice, especially in its broader references to the home, when examining my conscience and in preparing for confession.

1. Tanqueray, A., *The Spiritual Life*, (Philadelphia, The Peter Reilly Co., 1930), §1043. a., p. 491.

DISCUSSION VIII

Fortitude

1. What Fortitude Is

Fortitude is the supernatural virtue that makes the soul strong in pursuing moral goods that are difficult to acquire, and firm in bearing hardships when it is difficult to be firm. Fortitude *endures* hard things. It is more passive than aggressive. It keeps the soul from giving way to fear, even to the fear of death. Among the expressions commonly used to describe it are "moral courage," "strength of soul," "resoluteness," "firmness." Whatever the opposition, the true follower of Christ never abandons the good fight.

Because all virtue is difficult, fortitude affects, at least to some degree, every virtuous act. Every good act requires a firmness and immovable quality of the mind.

Because it is so necessary in the persevering pursuit of what goes to make up a Christ-like life, fortitude is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost bestowed in baptism and greatly intensified in confirmation. It enables us, with God's help, to act without either cowardice or rashness. This gift accompanied the persecuted Christians into the arena and down into the Catacombs. It carries the modern martyrs of the concentration camps through their trials and difficulties.

As in all ages, numerous attacks have been launched against the Church today. Some of them are open persecution, as the one in Russia. The persecution in Germany has been described by the Holy Father as "so grave, so to be feared, so painful and so sad in its most profound effects that it is unique in history. It is a persecution in which are wanting neither the brutality of force, nor the pressure of threat, nor artifices of cunning and deceit."¹

In a less heroic manner, every follower of Christ is called upon to be strong. Fortitude is an essential quality of "taking up one's cross and following Christ." (Matthew, 16:24) The humble homes of the parish know fortitude. Suffering of every description, illness, and death of loved ones, frustrated ambitions, poverty, ridicule heaped upon one for the sake of Christ — these figure in the life of almost every Christian. The great reward promised those who fight the good fight is not obtained unearned. Heaven is for the strong and the courageous.

1. Pope Pius XI, Sermon in addressing the College of Cardinals, December 24, 1937, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 30: 21.

Four other virtues are listed by spiritual writers which, although different from fortitude, are quite like it in many ways, and grow out of it. They, too, form a necessary part of the Christian's life.

Magnanimity, or nobility of character, also called greatness of soul, prompts the Christian to undertake great things for the honor of God and the good of neighbor. The terms sound rather heroic and far beyond ordinary effort, but the reality is quite common. The priests and Sisters in foreign missions have it, as do the missionaries in this country, for that matter. It is not necessary to go far from home to find it. A careful observer can look about in most parishes and see examples of true nobility in God's service. And all can share in the work of the missionaries.

Munificence, or great liberality, is also connected with fortitude. As a class American Catholics have been most liberal in their works for God. Beautiful churches for His glory, the parochial school system that represents millions of dollars of sacrifice, hospitals, monasteries, convents, orphanages, homes for the aged, dot the land. Some individuals have stood out prominently in these undertakings for God's glory and the spiritual and temporal welfare of neighbor. But most of the works of the Church represent the combined efforts of poor people.

Patience, which is close in spirit to fortitude, makes the soul bear all evils in union with the sufferings of Christ. It is separately considered in Discussion XIII.

Constancy makes its possessor suffer and fight bravely, never giving way to discouragement. It is most necessary in the struggle against evil habits.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is fortitude? Can you give examples of it which could likely be found in your parish?
2. The Church describes the Christian acceptance of death as resignation to God's holy Will. Is fortitude exemplified in such resignation?
3. This is an age of martyrs. Must we strive to develop the same virtues that Catholics are practicing in persecuted countries, in order to be one with them in spirit?

2. Fortitude in the Catholic Home

No small degree of moral courage is called for by those who desire to live good Catholic family lives today. A forgetful generation of Catholics has permitted itself to be greatly influenced by, and too often even to adopt, the immorality of birth controllers. Christian fortitude has now become necessary to despise the remarks and insinuations of those who ridicule having large families.

Many a child, born to increase God's greater glory, when its mother's own life hung in the balance, owes its very existence to her steadfastness in her vocation. Pope Pius XI recognizes this courage in the words:

"Who is not filled with the greatest admiration when he sees a mother risking her life with *heroic fortitude* that she may preserve the life of the offspring she has conceived? God alone, all bountiful and all merciful as He is, can reward her for the fulfilment of the office allotted to her by nature, and will assuredly repay her in a measure full to overflowing."¹

More common are the difficulties of financial character and other worries which in times of need make parenthood a responsibility to which only those measure up who are strong in Christ's sacramental grace. Writing to the faithful of the whole world, the same Holy Father sympathizes with those who face their hardships bravely, but warns against any violation of the duties of their vocation:

"We are deeply touched by the sufferings of those parents who, in extreme want, experience great difficulty in rearing their children. However, they should take care lest the calamitous state of their external affairs should be the occasion for a much more calamitous error. *No difficulty can arise* that justifies the putting aside of the law of God which forbids all acts which are intrinsically evil. There is no possible circumstance in which husband and wife cannot, strengthened by the grace of God, fulfill faithfully the duties and preserve in wedlock their chastity unspotted. . . . God does not ask the impossible, but by His commands instructs you to do what you are able, to pray for what you are not able that He may help you."²

Just to take a definitely Catholic stand on many problems affecting the home requires much courage for the whole family. In a complicated modern world, pitiful victim of decades of false teaching, it is hard to say sincerely: "We know what is right. God has taught us. The Church constantly instructs and warns us. We shall allow no interference with the practice of that belief!"

To preserve the home the innocent consort heroically bears the insults and taunts of the world (including Catholic relatives and friends) that suggests the easy way of divorce.

The more general difficulties that must be borne with fortitude, such as sickness, the death of loved ones, serious accidents, disgrace upon innocent ones, are usually centered most vividly within the family circle.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Did our Lord promise peace and tranquility in the practice of virtue? See Matthew, 5: 11-12.
2. God does not ask the impossible of us. What does He command?
3. Is it ordinarily more prudent simply to ignore and despise unchristian remarks about large families, or to instruct, and protest?

1. Pope Pius XI, "On Christian Marriage," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 93.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

3. The Loss of Fortitude

So beautiful and inspiring are the words descriptive of Christian fortitude addressed by Pope Pius XII to the world on the occasion of his silver jubilee as a bishop (Ascension Thursday eve, 1942) that they are quoted here without comment. They need to be read and reread. Then Catholic fathers and mothers must examine themselves, discover what they have lost in imitating unchristian influences about them, and set to the difficult task of developing strong characters in themselves and their children.

"The spiritual profile of primitive Christianity, whose beginnings are recalled for us by the coming Feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost, is refulgent with four unmistakable characteristics: 1) Unshakable confidence in victory, based on profound faith; 2) serene and unlimited readiness for sacrifice and sufferings; 3) Eucharistic fervor and recollection arising from the deep conviction of the social efficiency of Eucharistic thought on all forms of social life; 4) a striving after an ever closer and more enduring unity of spirit and of Hierarchy.

"This fourfold character of the Church's youth presents in each of its dominant notes an appeal and at the same time a hope and a promise to the Christianity of our day, for the true Christianity of today is not different from that of the early ages. The youth of the Church is eternal, for the Church does not grow old, changing her age as she does according to the conditions of time while she marches on to eternity. The centuries that she has passed through are but a day as the centuries that lie before her are but a day. Her youth in the days of the Caesars is the same that speaks to us now. The confidence in victory of the primitive Church drew its life, soundness, and imperturbability from the words of the Master: "I have overcome the world." (John, 16: 33) They are words which might well have been inscribed on the wood of His cross, the standard of His victories.

"Let the Christianity of today be penetrated and inflamed by the burning and luminous fire of that watchword and you will feel in your hearts the peaceful, quiet confidence of victory that reassures you with the passing of these dark days in which so many are living in terror and discouragement. . . .

"If the seal of blood which beautified the Church's youth through the centuries of trial, suffering, and sacrifice, appear to us now as the brightest stone in her triumphal diadem, so, too, for the Christendom of today, the greatness of her future victory, won in the fire of terrible tribulation, will correspond to the generosity of her sacrifice."¹

1. Pope Pius XII, Message to the world on the occasion of his silver jubilee of Episcopal Consecration, May 13, 1942, by radio to the N.C.W.C. News Service.

We have wandered far from this spirit today, and hesitate even at the smallest acts of voluntary mortification, which would unite us in spirit with those who suffer great hardships for Christ.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What are the marks of the Church's eternal youth, as described by Pope Pius? Do you think that they are easily found in American Catholicism?
2. How would they be developed in the American Catholic home by the parents as necessary marks of a truly Catholic character?
3. What words might fittingly have been placed on the Cross of our Lord? What are the four letters on the top of the Cross? For what do they stand?

4. Suggestions for Developing Fortitude

1. The zealous parent will closely observe the child when ridiculed or made fun of for having performed some virtuous act. It may be as simple a matter as calling a girl "Sister's pet" for having volunteered to help about the sacristy. A boy may be taunted for having made an "extra" visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or questioned with undue inquisitiveness about a priestly or religious vocation. Objections may be offered to either for the practice of religion in the presence of non-Catholics. The courage of a definite, principled stand in such circumstances is warmly to be praised. Instruction on this point is very necessary: wise parents seek for ways and means to encourage their children never to sacrifice any spiritual good through human respect.

2. Prayer and a sympathetic, understanding attitude, in helping any member of the family to regain his self respect, courage, and desire of serving God, after he has failed in any manner (drink, money matters, secret sins, disgrace) is most important. Winning the confidence of the one who has failed in such matters is a high compliment. More than that, it is an excellent chance to practice virtue in the home, and to cement the spiritual solidity of the family.

3. Parents must, at whatever cost, be always interested in the children's problems, with a view to encouraging them to face them courageously.

4. A copy of the Lives of the Saints, God's heroic friends whom He has given to us for our example and encouragement, should hold a place of honor in the home. Its periodic reading as an incentive to virtuous life, and particularly for the grace of fortitude, must be recommended. This practice should be used as a means to foster devotion to patrons and favorite saints. Children have their own heroes, but they should also become acquainted with God's friends.

5. Parents are not to give in to pleas of feigned illness or other trumped up causes for abandoning work assigned, or discontinuing practices that have been undertaken. Missing the appointment to serve early Mass because of inclement weather, breaking a Lenten resolution, absenting oneself from school because of a slight headache are some of the things that have taken us away from the spirit of what Pope Pius calls the strength of the Church. Such humble occasions are splendid opportunities for developing a spirit of fortitude.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Boys with vocations to the priesthood and girls called to the religious life usually do not like to discuss the matter. How would you instruct them to avoid undue inquisitiveness into their choice of life?

2. Jimmy has been appointed to serve the seven o'clock Mass. At 6:30 he is very sleepy, thinks he has a stomach-ache, and can hear the October morning rain. What must be his mother's approach? How must she talk to him later in the day?

3. How would you appeal to a child who has been disobedient out of human respect? Instruction is certainly very necessary in such circumstances.

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Fortitude must not be thought of as a rare and unlikely occurrence in our lives. It may be called for within any Catholic home. "God's grace is sufficient for us, if we correspond to it with fortitude. Our trial may be in . . . temptation or in some loathsome disease; it may be in some disagreeable carping relative; it may be the ingratitude of those on whom we have showered blessings; it may be the persecution of enemies. In any case, God's grace is sufficient for us."¹ Can you mention other likely conditions that will call for fortitude within the ordinary Catholic family?

2. "Human respect is a vice diametrically opposed to the virtue of Christian manhood. Human respect is a base condescension by which a man either from the dread of offending others, or from the hope of conciliating their friendship and good will, speaks or acts against his own intimate convictions."² Is there much of this human respect in the practice of Catholicity among Americans?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To dwell in thought frequently on the terrible sufferings of Catholics for their faith in persecuted lands, and in each Mass attended, to ask God in the words of the Sacrifice to "grant us some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and Martyrs." (Fifth prayer after the consecration of the Mass.)

1. Ross, J. Elliot, "Sermon on Fortitude," in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 40: 1368.
 2. Gibbons, James Cardinal, *True Manhood*, Commencement Address given at Worcester University, 1907, p. 14.

DISCUSSION IX

Temperance

1. What the Virtue Is

Temperance is the last and the least of the moral virtues. It has a wide application, nevertheless, in the lives of right-minded men. In fact, it can safely be stated that no other virtue exercises so constant an influence or contributes more to pleasurable living with fellow men.

Monsignor Sheen points out in his sermons on the seven last words that:

"There is a world of difference between what we *need* and what we *want*. We need those things which are essential for a normal, comfortable human existence; but we want more than that. Our needs are quickly satisfied, but our wants rarely. . . . Because our needs are limited, but our wants unlimited, a virtue is necessary to restrain our inordinate appetites and desires, — and that virtue is called temperance."¹

Temperance regulates, according to reason, the gratification of the *lower* pleasures and desires of sense. All the senses of man cause pleasure when they are gratified. Prudence moderates the enjoyment of the *higher* senses, sight, hearing, smell. But the virtue of temperance keeps in check the *lower* senses, taste and touch, which are called lower because they usually rebel more against reason, and because unlike sight or hearing, are enjoyed in a more animal manner.

To understand the virtue, it is helpful to look at extreme results of intemperance. Gluttony, which is intemperance in the use of food; drunkenness, which is intemperance in drink; and lust, which is abuse and disorder in matters of the flesh, all make men slaves of passions of which the brute is capable. Unlike other vices they have no redeeming qualities, nothing that makes them attractive when seen by others, or that would give them the appearance of virtue.

Moderation in things of the lower senses makes all human actions fit into a plan of life. That plan gives man the answer to why he lives, and what use he is to make of the enjoyments of a lower order. As the common phrase has it: he eats and drinks to live, and does not live to eat and drink. His common sense tells him that a thing is not evil and to be avoided because it is pleasing, or good and to be practiced because it is unpleasant.

1. Sheen, Monsignor Fulton J., "The Fifth Word — Temperance," Radio Address, March 17, 1940, *Seven Last Words*, (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1940), p. 45.

The Creator in His Wisdom has attached a feeling of pleasure to the satisfying of the lower appetites, and as Father Davis teaches:

"It is neither contrary to His Divine Will nor to right reason to be moved to the exercise of these functions by the concomitant [accompanying] pleasure, provided that the end of their exercise, namely, the preservation of the individual and of the race is not positively excluded, and the pleasure is used in a rational degree and in due order."¹

Several virtues are associated with temperance in a broad sense.

Meekness, for example, moderates anger so that its possessor never gives way to unreasoning rage or becomes indifferent to insults. *Clemency*, a most necessary quality in parents, controls punishments and excludes both unreasoning mildness by which the child is spoiled, and cruelty. *Modesty* and *continence* guard holy purity. All Catholics know the word "*abstinence*" and the virtue it stands for from its connection with the Friday abstinence from meat. In like manner still other virtues regulate the golden mean between excess in the gratification of sense and the defect in the enjoyment of the same.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is the difference between prudence and temperance with regard to the objects they control? Can you illustrate your answer with examples of each?
2. Point out some concrete examples to show your understanding of the virtue of temperance according to Monsignor Sheen's distinction between what we need and what we want.
3. Why is it not wrong to enjoy moderately the pleasures which accompany the gratification of our lower desires? Under what condition is this true?

2. Temperance Within the Home

Practically all modern papal encyclical letters have brought the necessity of temperance and voluntary mortification to the attention of Catholics. In their Lenten pastoral letters bishops usually make strong appeals for self-denial which is temperance spiritualized and performed out of love of Christ. The word of God preached from the parish pulpit, the instructions of the Catholic press, the radio, and various other agencies of the Church's teaching all warn the faithful against the sins of intemperance.

An underlying current stresses the thought that moderation, mortification, and temperance foster and protect home life, whereas excesses tend to destroy the unity and beauty of the family. Lack of temperance generally either takes a person outside the home, or shows a complete disregard of the sacredness of the family bond.

Speaking of the influence of the Church on the Condition of the Laboring Classes Pope Leo XIII states that:

1. Davis, Henry, S.J., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), vol. I., p. 268.

2. In what way does temperance affect family life? How does intemperance break the family's unity?

3. How does Pope Leo XIII describe the wages to which a man is entitled as far as they have a bearing on family life?

3. Lack of Temperance and the Family

Want of temperance carries with it many evils which directly and indirectly have a far-reaching effect on home life.

The abuse of drink produces some of the saddest disorders in families. It frequently means the profanation of the Sunday, either by missing Mass entirely, or attending mechanically with little spiritual profit, — an abuse sometimes punished with the permanent loss of appreciation for the Sacrifice.

Cursing, swearing, and too often, blasphemy, result.

Parents in their cups abuse their children. Grown children rise up against their parents in total forgetfulness of their debt of gratitude.

Excess casts modesty aside and descends to lewdness.

It causes fathers to neglect their work, fail to provide as they should for their families, disregard their most sacred obligations. Small wonder that St. Paul lists it among the sins that exclude from the kingdom of heaven! (Galatians, 5: 21)

Despite the Church's every effort to protect the holiness of marriage and the sacred obligations of the wedded parties to each other and their children, in extreme cases it is necessary for the bishop to permit a separation of the married couple. And almost all the causes in the Church's toleration of so sad a procedure have their source in some form or other of the lack of temperance.

The saving feature of good Catholic sense rarely permits matters to go to such extremes. But there are many degrees of family unity between the ideal home and actual separation. Only Christian discipline, self-control, the spirit of mortification, can guarantee the ideal. It is forfeited to some degree by every selfish indulgence.

Part of the price paid is the loss of the children's respect, confidence, love, without which the parent can never fulfill his God-given duty. As Pope Pius XI repeatedly indicates, poverty and want usually follow in the wake of unbridled intemperance. Shame and humiliation fear to welcome guests into the home, and at times even keep innocent victims away from Church, or at least from any fully active share in parish life.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Most of the above deals with intemperance in drink. Do other forms of intemperance also affect home life?

2. Is most of marriage's unhappiness caused by different forms of intemperance? Of the really happy families you know, is not temperance one of their outstanding virtues?

3. Father J. Elliot Ross in his sermon on temperance says: "If we take 'family' as including not only parents and children, but also aunts and uncles and cousins, there is hardly a family in this country which has not at least one member wrecked by drink."¹ What prayers do you suggest for those so afflicted?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Temperance

1. Moderation in the eating of candy and desserts, in the enjoyment of commercialized recreation, and various similar pleasures of child life, is important in teaching temperance. A spirit of discipline and control must be instilled, and it must be exercised in those things which the child's appetite craves. The appeal should be spiritual, and kept to the level of the child's understanding. Younger children should be encouraged, for example, to give up pleasures for the love of Jesus during Lent, to make their sacrifices out of their own little allowances or savings, to undertake the unpleasant tasks assigned to them as matters of self-discipline. The watchful elder will never fail to praise discreetly any spontaneously practiced mortification of the boy or girl.

2. Pope Pius' suggestion places the training and education to temperance on a high spiritual plane:

"'Folly is bound up in the heart of a child and the rod of correction shall drive it away.' (Proverbs, 22: 15) Disorderly inclinations, then, must be corrected, good tendencies encouraged and regulated from tender childhood, and above all the mind must be enlightened and the will strengthened by supernatural truth and by means of grace, without which it is impossible to control evil impulses, impossible to attain to the full and complete perfection of education intended by the Church, which Christ has endowed so richly with divine doctrine and with the sacraments, the efficacious means of grace."²

3. Special care must be exercised in making one's appeal with regard to things to be avoided on the score of temperance and self-discipline. Simply to say, "Do this" or "Don't do that" will teach nothing. One of the world's curses today is forgetfulness of the price paid by our Lord in atonement for the sins of excess. St. Peter Damian develops the thought that no means can be employed so helpfully in cutting out the very roots of unlawful pleasures and desires as the remembrance of the sufferings and death of Christ. He shows that every suffering of the Passion was in atonement for some particular offense of man. By humiliation Jesus atoned for the sins of pride, by His obedience for disobedience, by His physical pain for the sins of the body, and so on.

1. Ross, J. Elliot, "Sermon on Temperance," in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 40: 1269.

2. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 54.

This idea can be explained in terms easily understood by the child.

The temporal evils which result from intemperance in all its forms are also to be emphasized, but they should not be allowed to form the principal argument.

4. The dignity of man sacrificed in unworthy or intemperate conduct must also form a part of the motive for temperance. Even quite young children can be made to understand that reason is the light of God in man, that it is what makes us different from all other creatures. Reason, as shown in our actions, should be likened to a bright light which it is wrong to put out or dim. It is like a beautiful ornament to be prized highly and guarded carefully, a God-given glory to be cherished zealously. The mother can interpret these thoughts in words that will be grasped even by the younger children. The father and adult relatives will also have occasion to present them, for here, too, the process of education must be complete.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Do you consider it wise to give the children general permission to attend movies every Friday evening, granted that the shows in question are Class A, Section 1? Or should such concession be in the nature of a reward for work done? Do you think that father and mother, or some older person, should accompany them? Why?

2. Can you demonstrate how you would proceed to explain the thought in number 3 above about our Lord having to suffer and die in atonement for the sins of excess, if you were speaking to a ten-year-old boy? To his fifteen-year-old brother?

3. What practices would you encourage for grammar school children during Lent? How would you commend them?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Great effort has been expended in recent decades on the Church's Rural Life Program in the United States. Will the whole problem suggested by this present discussion work out more easily and satisfactorily in a rural community than it will in a city? Why?

2. Have you heard of "Alcoholics Anonymous"? As a non-sectarian society it has accomplished wonders in apparently hopeless cases of alcoholism. Its members find the courage they themselves need in banding together, and in helping others less strong than themselves. Individual Catholic priests have praised its work highly. Two fundamental demands are made of all members. In their humility they must acknowledge that a Supreme Power can help them, and they must realize that there is no such thing for them as temperance. Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. And it is either a question of teetotalism or confirmed alcoholism for the alcoholic.

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To develop in small things the spirit of voluntary mortification in union with our Lord's sufferings, for God's greater glory and to train oneself for greater trials.

DISCUSSION X

Humility

1. What Humility Is

The word humility has been used several times in this booklet. Even in ordinary conversation it is referred to rather often, if not always accurately. But it is necessary for anyone who wishes to live a virtuous life to know humility, for on it all spirituality is built. Architects are always much concerned about the foundation of a building. In the same way spiritual masters devote much of their effort to the solidity of the foundation for a Christian life. Humility has appropriately been called the mistress of all the virtues, for it wields its influence on them all. And yet, there is one condition for its possession: although a person must know what humility is, and strive to be humble, it is granted only to those who are unaware that they possess it.

Humility is the supernatural virtue which by giving us a deep self-knowledge, makes us know ourselves for what we are. It makes us despise our sinful selves, and realize that any good that we have comes from God's hand, and that any good action that we perform is through cooperation with His grace.

Humility is essentially truth. God is honored only by the humble, because only the humble recognize Him as the one supreme good. To honor God fully means to keep our own nothingness before our eyes. Nothing but sin is our own. St. Augustine worded this thought for us in a prayer that every Catholic should learn by heart and repeat often: "Grant, O God, that I may know Thee and know myself, and that knowing Thee and knowing myself, I may learn to love Thee and despise myself."

Health, talent, virtues, the gift of faith, a good Catholic home, gainful employment, a share in the world's goods, a good name: they all come from God. He can take them away from us when He wills. Any virtuous act to which they lead must be credited to Him alone. This thought keeps the humble man from unduly desiring any personal honor or esteem of his fellow men. He seeks to avoid any singularity that will draw the limelight to himself, because to that degree he will forget God and take the credit to himself.

Our blessed Lord was ever insistent on humility. His Mother possessed it in an eminent degree. She inaugurated her divine motherhood with the *Magnificat*, the perfect prayer of humility. (Luke, 1:47) Jesus chose His apostles from among humble fishermen. All the way through the Gospel we find one constant

condition for those who would approach Jesus — they came to Him in humility and simplicity. The saints became saints because they were humble. They learned the lesson that Jesus Himself wanted to teach: "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart." (Matthew, 11: 29)

Pride, on the other hand, is really forgetfulness of our complete dependence on God. God resists the proud man. As we examine ourselves, we find that humility brings peace and tranquility of mind, and freedom from spiritual trouble and care. Pride causes most of the spiritual misery and heartaches that we experience. God rewards the humble with an appreciation for His beauties that surround us, whereas these things are denied the proud man. "I praise Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent [proud], and didst reveal them to little ones." (Matthew, 11: 25)

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is the relation between truth and humility, especially in praising God?
2. Does the realization of complete dependence on God make for humility? How?
3. Who are the outstanding examples of humility? Can you mention others than those listed above? What modern saints gave wonderful examples of humility?

2. Humility and the Catholic Home

No natural institution can compare with a family of growing children for curbing pride and instilling humility. Even younger brothers and sisters have ways of their own for deflating conceit, shaping selfishness into social-mindedness as they understand it, and, in general, of taking the spirit of greed out of the offender. Their methods are not always gentle or considerate. They are rarely subtle. When necessary they continue for an indefinite length of time. But they are invariably efficient. The virtues that modern society needs so sorely, as stressed by the popes in their encyclicals, are born within the family.

Brothers and sisters can be most helpful in training to humility, but parents remain the natural teachers. They have frequent opportunity of pointing out that all good works, however praiseworthy they may seem, are really imperfect in the eyes of Almighty God who sees all that one does. There is always the want of fully proper intention, or some other hidden imperfection that God judges, regardless of how elated one may be with the work.

Poverty helps to keep people humble. Some degree of privation and necessary self-denial are rarely unknown to larger families. Parents are unable to grant every desire of their children, — often enough few of them. They worry over unpaid bills, toil at jobs

that pay poorly because they did not have the opportunities for education that would have fitted them for better employment.

Large families usually present other causes for humiliation and embarrassment: There is, all too often, the mystery of the "black sheep," who despite his home training has disgraced himself or even fallen away from the Church. There are the secret causes for shame, so direct a blow to family pride, which the family endeavors to hide, with the constant fear of being discovered. The inability to support the Church as other parishioners do hurts deeply. All the beautiful things said about home may at times seem an empty mockery when one enters a home in the poorer section of the parish. There is not much to foster pride or vanity in wearing clothing that has been made over or simply handed down from one child to the next in line.

But these are the very elements out of which God's Wisdom fashions the souls He loves. So often the exterior humility of the lives of the poor reacts upon their souls, under God's grace, to produce marvels of patience, suffering in union with Jesus, heroic acceptance of crosses. When these sacred gifts are presented in union with the priest at the altar during the Offertory of the Mass, all honor and glory ascend to God through Jesus, and with Him, and in Him. Such true humility is found among the poor, the underprivileged, the people who are looked down upon.

They are really happier than people of wealth and means, and if the full truth were known to them, would never exchange lots with them. The boys and girls from large families who decide upon gratifying ambitions, limiting their families, while acquiring and enjoying the world's goods, will never enjoy the lives their parents enjoyed. Their conscience will give them a bad time of it, for they will never be at peace with their God. And thousands of times they will look back wistfully to the days of their youth and humility.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What training in virtue can only a large family give?
2. How does God use humility to develop unusual virtue?
3. What is the sacrifice of the natural order paid by those who wish to forget God and their humble origin?

3. The Forgotten Virtue

"The gods we worship write their names on our faces." The man attached to sin worships at many false shrines. Pride, impurity, disobedience, greed, and all the other failings by which sinners deny God what is rightfully His, mark their victims. And all destroy the beauty of soul that only humility can bestow.

The lustful person is not humble: he seeks self in the most selfish of all pleasures. The search influences his whole spiritual life. Prayer means little to him. He cannot raise his mind and heart to God because his whole being is bound by the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. His imagination is crowded with shameful pictures. His desires have one goal — self-gratification. He lives in forgetfulness of God while attached to his sin.

The greedy are never humble, for they tend to become one with the things they seek. That effort binds them to earth, with rarely a thought of the Giver of all good gifts. "It is easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew, 19:24) Man must be stripped of his sinful attachment to material things to go to God.

The disobedient man is not humble, because he has not learned to submit his will to another who holds the place of God in his regard, and thus closes his life to a share with God.

Pride and all anti-social acts which have become so common today, like the intellectual stubbornness that refuses to submit to the Church's teaching, self-sufficiency to the neglect of God's grace in attempting to conquer evil habits, refusal to see the dangers of non-Catholic schools, are all opposed to humility.

What the Church needs today, a need that can be supplied only by the Catholic family, is humility of the heart, and of the mind, fostered by humiliation of the external senses.

We humble the heart by subduing our evil inclinations, by frequent sacramental confession, by frankness and openness with those who direct us in our spiritual difficulties — parents, teachers, confessors.

We humble the mind by freely admitting our shortcomings, by simple and childlike acceptance of the Church's teaching, by thanking God for whatever goods or ability we possess. It is false pride and a lie to say that we do not possess ability when we know that we do. Humility consists in acknowledging the Giver of the gift and in not taking the credit unto ourselves, much less seeking the praise of men.

We humble the body and its external senses by a suppression of curiosity, by simplicity and modesty of dress, by voluntary mortification, by the occasional observance of silence for the love of Christ, by the avoidance of any singularity in what we do.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Why can those who are lustful never be humble? Does this explain the often repeated statement of spiritual writers that humility is the best guardian of purity?
2. Why can the disobedient not be humble?
3. How is confession a humbling of the heart? Can you mention other humiliations which serve the same purpose?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Humility

1. While still young children must learn to respect *all* their fellow men. The lesson must be taught early for two reasons: lest the opposite practice begin to assert itself, and so that the parents can observe and correct the children in any manifest faults. According to their capacity they must be made to understand that *every* person with whom they normally deal will be their superior in some matter or other. One person will be outstanding in patience, another in modesty, others in charity, prudence, hope. Still others possess hidden traits, the ability to pray well, courage in secret difficulties, charity which is never discovered.

They must be trained to look for beauty of character in others, striving to recognize as many of the flowers in God's garden as possible. For they must learn to worship God not only in formal prayer within the church, but wherever they find God's beauty shared with men. It is amazing how much goodness among our fellows can be found for the looking, and the search itself makes for true happiness.

2. Parents are to reprimand with fitting severity any indications of pride or haughtiness in their children, as in speaking unkindly to others, taking a mean pleasure in their embarrassment, humiliation, physical defects or deformities, or in any other words or actions intended to show off imagined superiority. In general they should insist upon a humble apology when any one of the children has offended any other person.

3. Every child capable of doing any work about the home must take his assigned part in performing the tasks. Excuses should not readily be accepted in this matter. The less desirable duties should change hands regularly, with no quarelling about who did the dishes last evening, or who tended the furnace and carried out the ashes last week.

4. "It is good for me, O Lord, that thou hast humbled me." (Psalm 118, verse 71) A prudent parent will make use of the opportunity offered by the child's little humiliations to help him advance in this virtue. When he has made an embarrassing mistake, spoken unkindly with immediate regret, done poorly in classwork despite having really studied, or has overheard some disquieting remark about himself or his family, kindly words mean much. These unpleasant occurrences must be pointed out as means to keep one humble, stepping stones to advance in virtue and closer association with God. It can always easily be shown that what is gained more than makes up for the losses.

5. Other ways of curbing pride and encouraging humility are:
 1) to see to it that the rights of others are properly regarded in

the home; 2) not to tolerate smart-alecky conduct, "grandstand playing," or a general desire to impress others; 3) to encourage frequent approach to the sacrament of penance, the sacrament of God's great mercy and our humiliation; 4) to teach the children how to receive compliments and congratulations modestly. The boy who has learned to say simply: "Thank you, Sir" when commended gives probable evidence of an excellent home training; 5) to discourage the spirit of undue criticism. Those who tend to criticize set themselves up as superiors.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Does learning to respect *all* our fellow men lead us to a better knowledge of God? How?
2. How would you correct a fourteen-year-old girl who had spoken unkindly to a classmate?
3. In what way would you speak kindly to a high school boy or girl who had given evidence of serious study but had done poorly in the semester grades? Would it be wrong not to comment at all, or to put the matter off as of little importance? If the youngster had failed to get the prize in an oratory contest among six finalists, what would you say?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In his Lenten Pastoral of 1909 Cardinal Mercier, the Archbishop of Malines, addressed his people: "The most lamentable service parents can render their children is to exempt them, not from the *law* of labor, because that is superior to their wills, but from the *necessity* of labor, without which can be formed neither strong characters nor a hardy people."¹ — Do you think that we have lost an appreciation of the dignity of manual labor? Some professional men daily strive to do a limited amount of manual labor, dressed in old clothing. Do you think them wise?
2. "This virtue of humility is the essential quality of prayer: so much so that true prayer cannot subsist without humility, for prayer in its very nature is an acknowledgment of our dependence on God, and at least in the prayer of propitiation [admission of sinfulness] it is likewise the sorrowful confession of our deficiency and shortcoming. Therefore it is that the Holy Ghost assures us that 'the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds.' (Ecclesiasticus, 35: 21)"² Can you mention some prayers whose composition prove this point?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To develop the virtue of admitting our shortcomings honestly to God and ourselves, and not to try to conceal them by pretense from our fellow men. Affectations and pretenses are easily detected, and only prove a lack of faith in our true selves.

1. Cardinal Mercier, *The Duties of Conjugal Life*, A Pastoral Letter (Lent, 1909), printed and published by Catholic Truth Society, London, 1911, p. 15.
 2. Northcote, P. M., "Sermon on Humility," in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 27: 320.

DISCUSSION XI

Obedience

I. What Obedience Is

Obedience is the submission of one's will to the will of a superior precisely because that superior is believed to hold the place of Christ in the matter under consideration. Doing the bidding of another is only the lesser half of obedience. Soldiers, grudging employees, and prison inmates obey after a fashion. But faith alone can tell one: "This order is God's will. I believe that my father commands me with God's own divine authority. Being my father gives him a share in the authority of God when he commands me."

This faith alone can give obedience the qualities it must possess to make it acceptable to God and pleasing to men.

First of all, the submission of the will must be an intelligent act. Otherwise what is done is mere good order, obedience without a soul. Obedience is the offering to God of man's noblest gift, his free will. That can never be easy. To develop a spirit of obedience calls for a deep appreciation of religious motives. And this in turn demands much intelligence on the part of him who commands and him who obeys.

Obedience must be prompt. To "argue the matter," or study the advisability of what we are told to do, or to examine the motives of the one who commands is to kill obedience. This is all-important for life, because obedience makes its demands at the most unexpected moments, and unless a spirit has been trained from babyhood, failure in the important matters of life's critical hours is certain.

True obedience is vigorous and hardy. There is never any hesitation or fear in its response. Timidity is unknown to it. It does the bidding of parents and other superiors without delay, gladly, with a joyful countenance, cheerfully, for "God loves a cheerful giver." (II Corinthians, 9: 7)

It also makes the obedient person perfectly safe. The only thing that can be lost by it is one's own free will, in return for which is gained God's will, union with God. It even makes acts that by themselves are neither good nor bad pleasing to God. And by it good acts become highly meritorious. It gives true nobility of character, for one of its rewards is true liberty. It frees the obedient man from the tyranny of his own will, the severest of all masters.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is obedience? Must it be built on faith?
2. Is it in the nature of intelligent obedience to be difficult? Why?
3. The fourth commandment is called the first commandment with a promise. What is the promise? See page 96)

2. Obedience in the Catholic Home

By God's own Providence the Catholic home is the training ground for intelligent obedience. In their early years, children rely on their parents for everything. For food, clothing, and the home's shelter, the dependency is total for many years. Moral education and spiritual training are just as much as physical care a part of that dependency until the home shares the duty with the school. Even then the home training continues to be the more important part of the children's dependence on their parents. This is all in accord with a divinely ordered plan.

Father and mother, too, must be obedient. This does not mean merely that they are bound to give an example of obedience to *their* superiors. They must do this, of course. The truly obedient boy or girl comes from the home where parents have demonstrated their submission to the authority of God, and His Church, and civil society.

But a still deeper meaning explains the obedience of parents. As God's representatives they are the custodians of their children. These children have souls which are precious in the sight of God, souls to be trained to seek God's glory in everything. The reward of such effort is heaven itself, a destiny which parents must strive to make them realize. For the child, the principal condition for gaining this goal is obedience. And such are the workings of Divine Providence that God chooses human representatives, the children's parents, to be the trainers and recipients of this obedience.

Submitting one's will in obedience is never easy. But to make it less difficult, God has invested the parents with His own authority. When father and mother train to obedience, or exercise their parental powers and honor in receiving submission, they are sharing with God Himself in something divine.

That thought eliminates all arbitrary action in commanding. There is a norm to follow — God's law. Everything demanded of children must be based on that law. To make obedience intelligent, the matter should be explained to the children in language that they can understand. With this in mind, harshness in correction, impatience, anger, and loud words, or the sentimentality that accepts disobedience only as a personal hurt must seem to be entirely foreign to the divine order of things.

Daily contact with anything noble usually dulls finer appreciation of it. It is hard to think in divine terms when Willie returns home from school almost three hours after classes have been dismissed, having completely forgotten his daily errands. Patience with disobedient older sons and daughters is even more difficult. But however much routine and human frailty have blunted the appreciation of the parents or of the children, home training must be such that on any serious occasion the appeal can be elevated to the most exalted heights.

"Honor thy father and mother." Their duty is born of a sacramental union. Their efforts are seconded by an ever present sacramental grace. Intelligent and wholehearted obedience to them is offered to God, but it venerates parents as His representatives, and honors them as nothing else that sons or daughters can ever do will honor them.

Very brief observation is needed to see whether a home is deeply Catholic in spirit or not. Like murder itself, disobedience will out. And if obedience is lacking, nothing else can have much importance in a Catholic home.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Every act of obedience is a praise of God. Does the word "honor" in the fourth commandment take on a new meaning by considering the parents as sharing in divine authority?

2. Is gratitude to parents for their efforts and sacrifices an important element of obedience?

3. Punishments must be inflicted when they are necessary to make the child obedient, or to return to obedience. Would it be sinful to resort to physical punishment when the same purpose could be realized by instruction, warnings, advice?

3. Disobedience in the Home

Numerous causes have contributed to the breakdown in the spirit of obedience in the present generation of Catholic homes. The following reasons are offered because they seem most important and come readily under observation. They are by no means exhaustive.

Parents themselves have grown remiss. They know, or should know, the law of God. They were taught it in their own homes and in school. They have read it in the family Bible. Each Sunday they learn of it in the Mass. The solemn pronouncements of the popes have brought it to their attention. The bishop of the diocese preaches it. From the parish pulpit the pastor explains its place in the Catholic home. Nevertheless, parents disregard many points of God's law, and at times even make fun of them in the presence of their children. To realize that this is true, it is sufficient to examine oneself on God's commandments,

the precepts of the Church, and the virtues that have been preached from the altar in recent months. Giving a good example is a vital part of training in virtue.

Failure to appreciate the importance and power of grace in home training has taken its toll in many American Catholic families. Too many lines of powerful aid from the altar to the family hearth have been ruthlessly broken.

A life of virtue is difficult and can be fostered only with the aid of all the spiritual means placed at the disposal of the parents. It is comparatively easy to develop a spirit of obedience in the boy or girl who has regularly knelt at the Communion table with father and mother. No amount of insistence on natural motives can take the place of sacramental confession, or prayer with and for the family.

It is of the utmost importance that children feel deeply and manifest an equal and balanced devotion and obedience toward father *and* mother. Each parent has his own distinctive contribution to make toward developing an obedient character. Failure by either, and particularly the selfish seeking of the children's affection by one or the other partner to the marriage destroy this balance.

"Naturally, many relations will be personal and individual, toward father *or* mother. The deepest and most common of all human emotions is the love which a person owes to the mother who bore him. And the dignity of fatherhood and headship of the family circle is in turn quite as unique, despite the lack of sentiment with which it is ordinarily expressed. But more fundamental than these personal elements is the sacred bond and unity through which the role of father or mother finds its true explanation in each instance."¹

Too often parents do not second the efforts of the Sisters in the parish school with that positive cooperation which is necessary for proper education. Unless the child can return home and see lived what he has been taught in school, progress will be very doubtful. At times parents are even inclined to "take the part of the children" when sterner measures have been found necessary. Such an attitude confirms the child in stubbornness and disobedience.

"Right education must begin even in the first tender years and within the home itself. The home, rudely shattered today, will never be restored to its true dignity, save by the observance of those truths revealed to the Church by her Divine Founder. Only by fidelity to those truths will we preserve the dignity of the home and also secure the desired betterment of human society."²

1. Sause, Bernard A., O.S.B., *Why Catholic Marriage Is Different*, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1937), p. 159.
2. Cicognani, Archbishop Amleto, quoted in *A Guide for Modern Life*, edited by Henry Brenner, O.S.B., St. Meinrad, Indiana, Rule n. 206, p. 176.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What are the principal channels through which we learn the law of God?
2. Why is a balanced devotion and equal readiness to obey both father and mother important? Must this remain so, despite obvious defects in one or the other?
3. In what must the parents' cooperation with the Sisters in the parish school consist?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Obedience in the Home

1. To develop a *spirit* of obedience, so that even though no formal command has been given, the knowledge that something is desired by the parents, or is in conformity with their teaching, is a sufficient guide for son or daughter. Writers on obedience usually point out three ascending degrees of the virtue, namely: a) to perform a given work at the time and in the manner prescribed; b) to fulfill not only the external work, but interiorly to submit the will wholeheartedly, accepting with equal readiness pleasing and displeasing commands; c) not only to perform the work, and submit the will, but also to submit the judgment in simplicity of heart, no matter how the will of the superior (parent) is made known to one.¹ Such a spirit will determine companions chosen, books read, the places of recreation frequented.

2. "For obedience is better than sacrifice." (I Kings, 15: 22) St. Gregory teaches that God most fittingly prefers obedience to sacrifice because in sacrifice we offer Him victims distinct from ourselves, but in obedience we offer our own selves. Generally speaking it can be said that the higher the person disobeyed, and the more serious the command, the more grievous the sin of disobedience. Parents hold the place of God Himself in the home. Therefore disobedience is never a light matter and never to be treated lightly by the parents. "Children, obey your parents in the home, for that is right." (Ephesians, 6: 1) "Children, obey your parents in all things, for that is pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, that they may not be discouraged." (Colossians, 3: 20-21)

3. The spirit of obedience calls for a spirit of *sacrifice*. In obeying we give up what is most dear to us, namely our will and judgment. True obedience is an imitation of Christ, often in important and distasteful matters. "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me." (John, 6: 38) As an athlete must be trained by daily practice and rigorous self-denial for months in preparation for the season's strenuous games, so the child must be prepared for the hardships and submission of obedience.

1. Pruemmer, Dominic, O.P., *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, (Freiburg in B.: Herder, 1922), II, §575, p. 445.

4. Wise and prudent parents make it an invariable practice never to air their conflicting views on matters of discipline in the presence of the children.

5. Sons and daughters have the duty to make the home the delightful dwelling place planned by thoughtful parents — a plan that has often involved scrimping and saving, labor and sacrifice. By obedience, more than anything else, the children can cause the parents' dreams and hopes to be realized, just as they shatter them by disobedience.

6. Never to permit oneself to be carried away with indignation or anger in the correction of children. Angry words and expressions, loss of temper without suitable punishment, or punishment that is excessive or cruel, completely destroy the role of God's representative. They never bring the child to rid itself of its faults.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Which arguments in the preceding paragraphs — or any other arguments that you may want to use — can be employed to develop the spirit of obedience mentioned in n. 1. above?

2. Why must true obedience always be a sacrifice?

3. Why is obedience never a light matter, lightly to be treated by the parents?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What wields the greatest and most lasting influence on the minds and characters of the children: a) the intelligent use of their own authority by parents who are conscious of holding God's place in accepting the obedience of their children; b) or the example of humble obedience by the parents themselves in the fulfilling of the law of God; c) or a spiritual appeal made to the children after disobedience?

2. What examples would you point out for imitation in obedience by the children? The Boy Jesus gives a divine example. Whom else would you suggest?

3. What is the highest motive to strive for in the practice of obedience?

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS

For parents: To devote lengthy and prayerful thought to the subject of obedience, so that one may never hold God's place unworthily, and become the cause of the children's disobedience by unreasonable use of a divine power.

For children: To learn, at whatever cost, that obedience is offered to God, and to look beyond the person commanding, however lovable or disagreeable he or she may be, and beyond the command itself, whether pleasant or unpleasant.

DISCUSSION XII

Holy Purity

1. What Holy Purity Is

When the first baby is born into the family the parents assume numerous serious obligations. But their divinely appointed tasks present no greater difficulty than the preservation of the purity of their home. From almost the time that the child is capable of understanding anything at all, the forces of evil are pitted against the efforts of the parents. Father and mother have powerful aids from heaven, and can and do win the struggle against all odds.

In an age when temptation lurks on every side, boys and girls are being brought to manhood and womanhood in glorious modesty and purity. This goal is being realized because parents have shown themselves deeply prayerful and reverent, constantly alert to danger, and willing to go to any lengths to protect their children. The least negligence on their part may mean disaster.

No greater blessing can descend upon the home than the purity learned from God-fearing parents. By comparison, material wealth, social advantages, even health and life itself are lesser gifts. Any truly Catholic mother would prefer to see her child buried than fall a victim to impure vices. To know that the modesty and purity of their boys and girls results, under God's grace, from their prayerful example and zealous instruction, is a cause for daily thanksgiving to father and mother.

The various terms used to describe holy purity give the readiest appreciation of it. It is frequently called "the angelic virtue," because it makes men like the angels, who are pure by nature. Some writers call it "the difficult virtue," because it can be preserved only by the constant struggle against the strong lower nature of man, particularly today when temptations abound on every side. It is always impressive to hear religious refer to their vow of chastity as "the holy virtue," holy in itself, and holy in its effects, making them like chosen souls, virgins, as like to Jesus and Mary as human frailty permits. In this connection it is noteworthy that in the Greek language only one word is used for "holiness" and "chastity," because really they are one and the same. "Continence," defined by Webster as self-restraint from yielding to desire, obviously refers to difficulty, as do many other terms employed.

No element in human character is more acceptable to God or pleasing to men than purity. It sets its possessor apart from his

fellows. It is that which makes little children so lovable, and men and women admirable. It brings them close to God, and this union with Him shines from their eyes, and shows itself in a thousand ways to captivate all who know them. "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew, 5: 8)

Without this moral purity, man's highest faculties are darkened and weakened, and miserably prone to failure. A whole universe, the world of true beauty, is shut off from those who are not pure. Beauty is a reflection of God. "In Thy light, O God, we shall see light." (Psalm 35, verse 10) And only the pure of heart see God (Matthew, 5: 8), or that part of His works which He makes known to us.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Purity can be preserved, as our Lord said, "only by prayer and fasting." (Matthew, 17: 20) What prayers do you find most helpful in this purpose? The Rosary? The Litany of the Blessed Virgin? The Our Father? Prayers to special patrons?
2. What expressions are used to describe holy purity?
3. What are the spiritual rewards of purity?

2. Purity Within the Home

If the home is what it should be, it offers the most perfect protection of purity for its every member. Father and mother find their moral safety within its sanctuary. An unbelieving age has accustomed itself to think and speak of negative and ugly things. Unfaithfulness means a definite break from the family tie. The positive and beautiful express a deeper truth. Fidelity is union with and protection by the family circle. As long as that union is preserved protection is guaranteed.

There is a constant flow of grace from the altar to the home. At their wedding bride and groom kneel close to the altar during the nuptial Mass, and (in this locality) on the very platform of the altar for the nuptial blessing, in the Eucharistic Presence of their Divine Witness, whom they earnestly beseech never to depart from their new home.

Some of the Church's choicest blessings descend upon the Christian family in answer to that petition. Homes are blessed, repeatedly. A special blessing is imparted to the bed chamber. The Church's ritual has beautiful blessings for the mother with child, and after childbirth, the latter called "churaching," both now regrettably neglected by most Catholic women.

Families are consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Holy water and other sacramentals sanctify their members. The family is never more intimately united than when at prayer.

Obedience, disinterested love, helpful guidance, the willing ear, self-sacrifice, utter trust and confidence in important matters are all found in the home, and rarely anywhere else.

The simple benefit of intimate association with those who desire our spiritual welfare is protection in itself. Father and mother have consecrated their lives to this purpose at the altar. The advice of older brothers and sisters, however unceremoniously administered, and however much resented at the moment, has often stood fortunate youngsters in good stead. Then there are the younger members of the family whom all feel a natural obligation to protect, not merely in a negative way, but by most positive and constructive measures.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Several of the Church's blessings which sanctify and protect the home are mentioned above. Can you add others, as when Holy Communion is brought to the sick in their homes?
2. Why are bride and groom permitted to kneel at the altar for the nuptial blessing?
3. Can you give examples of the natural desire to protect young children from everything impure?

3. The Neglect of Training and Education

If the parents enjoy the children's confidence and the children really love their parents, the day will come all too soon when boys and girls will ask questions of a most delicate and holy nature. No off-hand replies can be tolerated in this critical hour. Prudence and the perfectly right answer which will satisfy but not disturb, must be the products of much earnest prayer for guidance in this sacred moment.

Because parents are often not prayerfully prudent, because many of them have led lives that have poorly equipped them for this task of supreme delicacy, and because many of them feel an unwarranted shame in speaking of matters that are holy in themselves, thousands of children have got their information from "doubtful sources." Father Hennrich, an excellent authority on this matter, does not hesitate to say that:

"The discussion of the guiding principles in sex instruction indicates that it is a most difficult task. This, most probably, is the main reason why only few young people receive sex instruction from those who are called by God to impart it. An extensive investigation, if it were possible, might reveal that not five per cent received this information from their father or mother."¹

1. Hennrich, Kilian J., O.M.Cap., *Watchful Elders*, (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1929), p. 20. — This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Catholic couple with growing children, and should be read repeatedly. It cannot be recommended too heartily. It deals authoritatively with the most delicate problems in the most delicate manner, but it deals with them honestly, and in a manner to make the parent appreciate his obligation.

Sex instruction, although very important, is only a small part of sex education, which is a positive training from babyhood in the spirit of modesty and holy reserve. In the same manner sex education is only a minor portion of the whole program of home training in Catholic virtue, not to be exaggerated into a disproportionate importance. If the other virtues are properly understood, this matter is rendered much easier.

Well trained children's minds are easily impressed, their consciences troubled at the slightest fault. They should learn from their parents, and from no one else, of the things that under the most favorable circumstances will cause them temptation and anxiety. It is a gross neglect of parental duty to allow the child to learn by unclean jest from foul-lipped older and more experienced associates knowledge that in itself is honorable and deals with man's and woman's cooperation with God.

A ten minutes' talk with a young boy or girl is sufficient for the whole purpose of the instruction — for that particular development. But parents must not neglect to add maturer explanations when the time presents itself.

They must impress upon grown sons and daughters that the vocation to the wedded life and parenthood to which they look forward calls for the blessing of Almighty God, and that the blessing must be merited by self-denial. It certainly will be no exaggeration if they state that most of the pitiable misery of unhappy marriages is the result of not having merited this blessing of Almighty God before marriage, and from the gross abuses that result in the wedded state.

The ideal combination of qualities for this instruction is difficult. It requires candor born of a spiritual appreciation of man's cooperation with God and the desire to procure the child's best spiritual interests. It demands prayerful preparation. It calls for appropriateness of the time and place, and the hope of anticipating the dangers to which the boy or girl may be exposed. It is wary of the danger of saying too much or arousing curiosity.

But with the proper dispositions, and the help of Almighty God, there is no reason for the parents to worry unduly, and certainly no reason for them to shirk their responsibility.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What are the principal reasons why only an estimated five per cent of boys and girls receive this all-important instruction from their parents?
2. What are the principal causes of unhappy marriages?
3. What is the relationship between sex instruction, sex education, and training to virtue in general within the Catholic home?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Purity

1. The difficult and delicate virtue cannot be preserved on human strength alone. The home training must have fostered a child-like devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to one's guardian angel, and favorite saints.

Virgin most powerful, pray for us
Virgin most merciful, pray for us.

2. The confidence which will bring sons and daughters to speak with the utmost candor when the time for explanations comes must be built and protected by the parents over long years. The approach with personal problems is one of the highest compliments that can be paid to parents. Its denial is sad in the extreme, and normally a sign of the parents' failure. Fathers and mothers are sometimes quite honestly unable to impart the required instruction, as when they realize that they have never gained, or have lost, the confidence of the children. Some person in whom they have complete faith must then represent them: an older priest, a favorite relative, a very conscientious Catholic doctor with growing children of his own.

3. Parents may feel unequal to their task when they learn that neighbors have "read scientific books" on the problem of directing their children with regard to purity. They need not feel so. The desire to foster the spiritual welfare of the children, a solidly Catholic conscience, and good common sense, are a sufficiently accurate guide. No amount of reading can replace any one of them.

4. Father and mother must direct sons and daughters to face the difficult problem of preserving chastity with confidence and trust in God, and complete reliance on His help, if they do their part. God never allows anyone to be tempted beyond his strength. He commands us to do what lies within our power, and to pray earnestly for what exceeds our strength. If faith is firm, and purity has been preserved, there is no need for dread of temptations.

5. Prayer and upright living alone can convince parents that "advantages" given to children do not result from the violation of God's law, "restriction of families," material wealth, and the like. Sincere Catholics realize that the success of their sacrifices and efforts for their children depends principally on heaven's blessing, which can be won only by lives in which there is no abiding shame.

6. It is a serious obligation to know with whom the older children are keeping company, where they are, when they return home (always on the same day on which they set out), whether there is any of the show-off drinking of youth, and so on. A

definite time should be set as a matter of obedience for returning home. This is based on the realization that "as the small hours approach, temptations and dangers increase, and moral resistance is lowered."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. The preservation of purity on unaided human strength is impossible. What prayers and devotions would you recommend to a young man or woman? Must these devotions be fostered before the years of temptation?
2. What guarantee has one for instilling a spirit of confidence and trust in the face of temptation?
3. Can you recall other petitions in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin which asks her help in protecting purity?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do the following words present the necessity of constant early training, and the growing difficulty of teaching holy purity? "The modern home is not the high walled affair that it used to be, by any means, and the intensification of human association gives evil communications an opportunity never enjoyed before. So much of today's existence is lived in public that it is no longer possible to guard a girl; the one hope lies in forming her character in such fashion that she will guard herself."¹
2. Do you think that the same author is too severe, or merely alert and honest, in the following observation: "Not one of these mothers [who had written to her] had any doubt that thirteen or fourteen was too young for boys and the movies, and all hated to see their daughters running here and there without an elder eye upon them — 'but if I suggest going with her to a dance or show, she tells me that it makes her queer and conspicuous, and will kill her with the bunch.' All wanted their daughters to 'have friends' and to 'be happy,' ending with the pathetic query: 'That's only natural, isn't it?'"²
3. Do you think that the following is an accurate statement regarding amusements outside the home? "Modern amusements are the product of crooked minds. Their inventors and producers are like the rest of the world, bent on making money. They know that God endowed human nature with strong appetites, which serve, under the guidance of reason, for the preservation of the individual and the race. . . . They know that the more these beastly appetites are aroused the more money their possessors will pay for the satisfaction of them. The formula is a practical one: it works."³

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Never to permit a day to pass without a prayer for the purity of every member of the family, particularly of those who may be exposed to more serious temptations. To do all in one's power to make the home what it is intended to be by nature — the surest safeguard of holy purity.

1. Creel, Blanche Bates, *Job or Joy Ride*, (New York: The Paulist Press: pamphlet reprinted from *Century Magazine*, November 1927), p. 5.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 3. *What About the Modern Boy!* (Pamphlet reprinted from the 1930 Official Bulletin of the University of Notre Dame), (New York: Paulist Press, 1930), p. 13.

DISCUSSION XIII

Patience

1. What Patience Is

Some of the virtues are glamorous and heroic in their exercise. Stories of fortitude form the themes of some of the most interesting chapters of world literature. The history of faith and its defense thrills any Catholic. Supernatural love is the great appeal in the lives of the saints, God's heroes. But patience as it finds its place in the home life is a pretty humdrum, every-day affair, with little that is exciting to glorify it. But without a great deal of it, parents can never hope to fulfill their obligations, particularly in their role of teachers.

Very often the most valuable lessons come to us from ages long past. St. Benedict lived fourteen hundred years ago. Acting on the grace of God, he began the life of a hermit as a young man. When disciples later gathered about him, he drew up a rule for men living together as families in religious communities. Men applied to him from all classes of society of that day: nobles, slaves, foreigners. That was a big problem in itself. Benedict insisted in the words of St. Paul that they were all one in the Lord.

But that did not do away with practical problems. Family life and intimate association with those who get on our nerves call for much patience. Human nature has not changed in the fourteen centuries since Benedict's death. In his final appeal to the man who wishes to enter the religious life, Benedict gave the real and only motive for patience:

"So that never departing from God's guidance, but persevering in His teaching in the monastery until death, *we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ*, that we may deserve to be partakers in His kingdom."¹

That is the motive that parents must strive to acquire. All their troubles and worries are to be borne in patience as their share in the sufferings of our Lord. The victory of rearing a God-fearing family must be *won*. And patience is a large part of the price to be paid for the victory.

Moral theologians and bookmen describe patience as the virtue which so controls the feeling of sadness caused by the endurance of some present evil or affliction that it neither disturbs one excessively in the internal powers of the soul, nor produces anything unruly in one's external conduct.

In practice it is the virtue that enables us to accept older men and women more or less as God made them, and not as we

1. St. Benedict, *Rule*, Translation by Dom Justin McCann used in Abbot DeLatte's Commentary, (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1921), p. 23.

would make them over to suit ourselves. It brings out the best in us and in children in fashioning young characters. It willingly spends a half hour in teaching a point when our less worthy selves grudgingly would sacrifice ten minutes. It prevents anger, scolding, and bitter words. In financial difficulties it makes one content to cut down a bit, denying oneself the pleasant things that the neighbors across the street may have. It is cool headed, soft spoken, and smiling, however difficult it may be to achieve the smile.

There is nothing forbidding or grim about patience. Common sense tells us that there are difficulties to be faced and crosses that must be borne. Patience goes calmly about the job with the strength of Him who commanded us to take up our crosses and follow Him.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Who was St. Benedict? Why did he insist so pointedly on patience in his Rule?
2. What is patience? Reread the definition. Is the patience demanded in the religious life pretty much the same as that demanded in the home, but with a different setting?
3. Why is Job referred to as the model of patience? Was he a family man? See Job, chapters 1 and 2.

2. Patience in the Home

Most persons of reasonably good will agree on major issues. Law, convention, and common sense take care of the "big things." It is the small matters which make a home a pleasant place in which to live, or which, when disregarded, pile up so high that they become serious problems.

Courtesy toward one another in the home costs nothing but a little effort, but it is a rather sure barometer of happiness. Consideration for the feelings of others is usually a small matter, but its neglect has caused untold misunderstandings. Love of family is a beautiful gift, and like all deep emotions, it must be nourished. It is kept alive by kindness, thoughtfulness, and the willingness to look at other persons' problems through their eyes.

To have the courage to smile when things go wrong, to be ready with sincere and understanding affection, to consider all things good when shared with the family and evils lighter when borne together, are the food on which patience feeds.

No one is exempt from God's law of human weakness and defects. The most chosen souls have their imperfections and limitations. They would not be chosen souls if they were not humble: and they would not be humble if they were not humiliated by the

knowledge of their shortcomings. That is what makes truly holy people so tolerant.

The more serious and spiritual the problem, the greater the need of patience, and the more readily will it be found in the truly Catholic home. St. Paul places patience in such matters on a very high plane: "Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians, 6: 2) He even goes so far as to make it the bond of unity: "... with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians, 4: 2-3) His motive is the example of Christ: "Bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has a grievance against any other; even as the Lord has forgiven you. . . ." (Colossians, 3: 12)

Patience is one of the virtues that pay big dividends of a practical nature. Besides being a virtue most pleasing to God, it prepares for the days when bigger crosses come. The spirit of voluntary mortification about which Pope Pius XI speaks in describing the ideal family (see page x.) finds its fullest practice in the virtue of patience. In practicing it themselves, and in training their children to its spirit, parents are making present home life pleasant, and strengthening for future trials.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What do you think of the suggestion made by a bishop some decades ago that children be taught to treat their brothers and sisters with the same courtesy shown strangers?
2. What natural virtues foster patience? Do they make patience any less supernatural?
3. Do the motives offered by St. Paul place the virtue of patience on a much higher plane than we ordinarily think of it?

3. Impatience in the Home

The privacy of family life is the most accurate testing ground of character. Within the home the virtue of patience is perhaps the supreme ordinary test. A man's disposition in public life may be pleasing and gracious, and entirely the opposite with his wife and children. Grown brothers and sisters (and some who are not quite grown) often lead a sort of double existence, as different in the family and in the impressions they create to the outside world as the actor is on the stage and behind the scenes.

In business and social and school life, they are courteous and good natured, reserving their irritability, sullen disposition, and discontent for the family circle. As soon as such traits are manifest, boys and girls should be spoken to forcefully and plainly, but

patiently and charitably, by their father and mother. They should be made to understand that it is not the family that has changed, but themselves, and that the change is not welcome and will not be tolerated. If allowed to go unchecked, they soon become self-centered and intolerant of everything at home.

People do not usually exhibit their impatience in public for the same reason they do not permit themselves to be caught in anything else unflattering. It does not pay. The pity is that they cannot figure out for themselves that neither does it "pay" in the home.

Then there is the question of punishments. Father Byrne puts the problem humanly:

"Have you ever seen a mother correcting a child in anger? If so, you have witnessed a distressing sight. One scarcely knows which to pity more — mother or child. Parents who are impatient with their children, flying into a rage at the slightest provocation, frequently correcting them with harshness and severity, defeat the very end for which their correction is intended. They not only do not reform their children, but they give them a lesson in impatience to imitate throughout life."¹

Examination will reveal two outstanding causes of impatience. One is the naturally constant association with the same individuals. Since all of us have our failings, these will naturally irk in time, unless they are tolerated with the spiritual appreciation of the family. Forgetfulness in the effort to imitate the Divine Model of patience and His home in Nazareth will cause us to lose the finer appreciation of the virtue.

The other is brought in from the outside. It is the selfish desire to refashion the home to suit our tastes developed at school, or in associating with the Joneses. It is generally striving to measure the family up to an artificial standard found among those who do not know the full beauties of family life. It is a lack of forbearance, and a drawing of comparisons that upon examination are rarely found to be fair.

Fifteen minutes of sincere prayer, or quietly performing the Way of the Cross in the parish church are excellent cures for both — until we become forgetful again.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What are some of the principal causes of impatience you have observed a) of older brothers towards younger children of the family? b) of parents toward their children? c) of children toward their parents? d) of sisters toward the whole family?
2. What should the parent do when confronted with the necessity of punishing, and the knowledge that he cannot punish without anger?
3. Does a higher degree of education possessed by one member of the family usually make for impatience toward the others?

1. Byrne, William, "Sermon on Patience," in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 28: 209-210.

4. Suggestions for Fostering Patience

1. Many inclinations to impatience are successfully overcome by the deliberate effort of regaining a consciousness of dwelling in the presence of God. We dwell in His sight constantly, of course, but are distracted from a realization of this fact by many duties and too great an attention to the things about us. By training anyone can learn to give Jesus His rightful place in the home on a moment's notice, when awareness of His presence will mean much to the happiness of all. By our invitation Christ can become the Unseen Guest at every meal, the Unseen Listener to every conversation. In His presence there is little danger that impatience with others will manifest itself.

2. The prayer of the Mass in which the priest specially petitions the grace of patience for himself and others places the Divine Model of the virtue before us for imitation, and offers the necessary motives to help us:

"O God, who by the patience of Thine only-begotten Son hast crushed the pride of the enemy of old, grant us, we beseech Thee, devoutly to keep in mind all that He endured in His love for us, and thus by the help of His example bear our troubles with equanimity. Through the same Lord . . ."¹

3. The home should be decorated with pictures, statues, or other reminders of our spiritual ancestors, the saints. Families generally preserve in their homes paintings or photographs of their deceased relatives. One glance at these pictures recalls the kindness, generosity, cheerfulness, or other characteristic which endeared the departed one to all. Much the same thing is true of our spiritual forebears. If there is a quiet spot in the home where one can kneel for a few minutes before a Crucifix or a picture of a favorite saint in humble petition, the virtues and strength we need will readily be granted to us.

4. A sense of humor and balance is necessary in all walks of life, in all our dealings with our fellow men, but particularly in the home. Most of us are much inclined to take ourselves and the little affairs that go to make up home life entirely too seriously. Try to recall what was said or done one month ago to cause you to lose your patience. Look back over a year's time and view the comparative unimportance of the things that you allowed to get on your nerves, and compare them with the unpleasantness caused by your impatience.

5. The acceptance of distasteful and unpleasant matters as expiation of our own sins is always an excellent "bargain," for we can atone for our failings many times more easily now during Christ's mercy toward us than in the reign of His justice after

1. *St. Andrew's Daily Missal*, Occasional Collects, n. 26, p. 180.

our death. Uniting our sufferings with those of the Souls in Purgatory, in supplication for them, also serves to win us powerful friends before God's throne, because while we ordinarily pray for the Souls in Purgatory, they are God's friends, and there is nothing to prevent us from praying to them as well. To let this thought cross our minds: "I'll suffer this for the soul most neglected in Purgatory, or for the soul who is atoning for sins caused by my evil example," will help us to bear any unpleasantness with calmness. The dentist grinding on our teeth, the inclemency of the weather, the ingratitude of friends, headaches, noise, and the many other things that usually get on our nerves, are all necessary for us. When things go too well for us, we forget God and the things of God. Sorrows and difficulties can bring us to our senses — if we will but let them do so.

6. The knowledge that others who are just as sensitive as we, must put up with our shortcomings and failings is also an excellent help toward developing a spirit of humility and patience. Impatience is never very reasonable, and it kills the spirit of give and take, which is so necessary for pleasant living.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. When you enter the church of a Sunday morning for Mass, you immediately place yourself in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. How can you best do this in the home?
2. Are works and prayers for the Poor Souls very meritorious?
3. Does the realization that others have to put up with us, too, help to make us more patient?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. One author suggests that it is useless to be fond and sympathetic unless we can allow for the frailties in a friend. A human heart cannot be won by harshness or scolded into tenderness.¹ Do you think that we ordinarily fail to achieve our goal in instructing youth in virtue because of impatience?
2. Cardinal Mercier warns us: "Forget not that you are here upon earth only to leave it. Life for you is no more than a pathway, beset with thorns and brambles, to your abiding city, Paradise. If, as you trudge along it, anxiety and disappointment should bear heavily upon you, then raise your eyes to Him: for in heaven you have a Providence, fatherly, wise, and strong, to watch over you and keep your steps that they stumble not."²

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To make a conscientious effort at self-control in those matters, usually small, that have caused us to lose patience in the past, or which we know have caused others to lose their patience.

1. McSorely, Joseph, *On Being Cheerful*, (New York: Paulist Press), p. 8.
 2. Cardinal Mercier, *The Duties of Conjugal Life*, A Pastoral Letter (Lent, 1909), Printed and published by the Catholic Truth Society, London, 1911, p. 24.

DISCUSSION XIV

The Virtue of Religion

1. What It Is

As a virtue religion is a part of what has been considered under justice. Every act of worship that goes to make up the spiritual life of the Catholic must have this stamp on it: *it is something owed to God*. It is strictly demanded to establish man's proper relation to his God. We pay grocery and rent bills because justice demands we do so. Strict justice is possible in paying what we owe our fellow man. When we offer God what we owe Him, always remembering our inability to offer anything really worthy of God, we call it "religion." It is the relationship between the Creator and the creature. And it is established by the Creator Himself.

The purpose of all acts of religion is to give glory to God. In some way or other worship always has this end in view. Taken in the order of their pleasing character before God, they are adoration, thanksgiving, penance, and petition.

Adoration proclaims God's glory to the best of man's imperfect ability. The virtue of religion takes all our acts of faith, hope, love, our prudence and justice, and all our other virtuous acts, and presents them to God. And the Creator, who knows His creatures and their limitations, accepts these offerings with pleasure. By his part in the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass, in receiving the sacraments worthily, by his share in public prayer and in his private devotions, by the virtues that manifest themselves in his daily life as an expression of his full relationship to God, man is constantly endeavoring to praise his Maker.

The spirit of prayerful *thanksgiving* is a humble attempt on man's part to profess God's infinite power and generosity. As he progresses through life the virtuous man gradually realizes that every good thing that he possesses has come from God's bountiful hand. More and more he is inclined to lift his mind and heart to say his thanks. The spirit of religious gratitude makes him careful never to abuse the gifts of so generous and good a Father.

Through *penance* and the acknowledgment of sin, man offers sacrifices and prayers and receives the sacraments in the hope of obtaining pardon for the faults that he has committed, and strength to avoid them in future. And every prayerful act proclaims the holiness of the God who has been offended, His absolute His justice, mercy which is infinite.

Petition, or prayer as we more commonly know it, is man's humble statement that he depends upon God for all he needs. The prayers for the virtues by which his life becomes pleasing in God's sight, prayers for his family, for his country, for health, work, material goods — all of them acknowledge God's supreme power and man's utter dependence.

All these acts are built on faith. Taken together they form the virtue of religion — paying God what is His due. And all of them have a very important part in family life.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Do you remember the six commandments of the Church? Can you recite them? How many contain references to worship as something owed to God?
2. What four purposes does our worship of God express? Does the Mass express all of them?
3. Can you think of any act of worship that does not come under one of these four purposes?

2. Religion and the Home

The same spirit that will reunite families within their homes will bring them together as families in the parish church. By their nature most acts of the virtue of religion have a direct bearing on the family.

Where possible the Sacrifice of the Mass should be attended by the entire family as a group. All the good effects that are produced by any prayer recited by an individual will be multiplied many times when prayed for and by the family as a unit. Parents and children will never be more united than when sharing in the offering of the Sacrifice.

Presupposing their own good example, and due allowances being made for the age and understanding of the child, parents should be careful to watch their children to see that they genuflect devoutly, and pay attention to what is going on at the altar. They must satisfy themselves that their children present their gifts and receive Holy Communion in a becoming manner. They must see to it that they kneel, stand, sit, and generally behave reverently.

This certainly cannot be realized if the mother occupies one of the front pews in the church, the father has attended one of the earlier Masses in the hope of avoiding a sermon, and the children are scattered in various places about the church. It should never be necessary, for example, for the pastor or his assistant to reprimand boys of high school age who have "stepped out for a smoke" during the sermon: they belong in the family pew with their parents. Church committeemen and parents who give bad example in such matters have forgotten their duties seriously.

Thanksgiving to God for favors received is a natural family act when the favor received is beneficial to the family. Few things are more impressive than to see a father bow his head and thank God at the end of the meal for the food which, under God's blessing, his own labor has procured. But thanksgiving after meals is only a small part of gratitude for God's goodness that binds the family together. Health, shelter, clothing, the blessedness of a happy home — they are all from God. And just as they all serve to unite the family, all of them should be acknowledged in family prayer.

Confession of guilt and unworthiness is one of the frequently recurring parts of the Mass. A deeper meaning than just good order lies behind the recommendation for families to go together to confession of a Saturday evening. The knowledge that Christ's Precious Blood is regularly applied to all the souls of the family is of the greatest consolation. Only when this deep spiritual comfort is lost and some member "no longer goes to the sacraments" do the parents realize how great a blessing has been forfeited. Children who have been trained to a family acknowledgment of sin do not, as a rule, abandon their faith or grow cool in its practice.

The prayer of petition also unites the family. Health, employment, happiness in the home, prayer for the welfare of those away from home, all center about the family, and should be offered to God by the family. The united effort will be far more pleasing to God than individual "prayers."

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Do you think that parents can check on the reverent behavior of their children in church when they are with other children? Do you consider this an essential part of *home* training?

2. Why should the prayer of thanksgiving be offered by the family in common? Most Catholic families say grace *before* meals together. Why do they fail with prayers *after* meals?

3. What considerations make the united approach to the sacrament of penance by the family desirable?

3. What is Lacking in Family Religion

The bishops of the United States, assembled in solemn session in Washington in the year 1919, made the following recommendation in a pastoral letter to all American Catholics:

"We heartily commend the beautiful practice of family prayer. . . . The presence of Jesus will surely be a source of blessing to the home where parents and children unite to offer up prayer in common. The spirit of piety which this custom develops will sanctify the bonds of family love and ward off the dangers which often bring sorrow and shame. We appeal in this matter with special earnestness to young fathers and mothers, who have it in their power to mould the hearts

of their children and train them betimes in the habit of prayer."¹

The children born that year are now young men and young women. Had they been trained from early childhood to a family spirit of prayer, many of the moral problems "which often bring sorrow and shame" would have been avoided. And God would have been glorified in a manner that would have brought far greater blessings upon the country.

In his encyclical letter on the Sacred Priesthood, written fifteen years later, Pope Pius XI painted a word picture of the ideal home² in which common prayer, with the "parents gathering round them the entire family" plays an important part.

But the Holy Father's plea has been disregarded, and today most dioceses and religious orders are making appeals for the vocations that have not been fostered in the home. Pope Pius made it quite clear in his encyclical letter that vocations come from homes of common prayer. Not only have vocations been lacking: other blessings have disappeared as well. Homes in parishes where no first Mass has been offered in a decade need to examine their collective consciences.

It is usually argued that common prayer is "an impossibility in the city home." Families usually eat together at breakfast and at dinner in the evening. It is certainly not an impossibility to think of two or three minutes before each meal spent in God's adoration, thanksgiving, petition. Five minutes in the day would be *about one half of one per cent of the average day's waking hours*. The difference that this practice would make in the home can best be appreciated by rereading carefully the above appeal of the American bishops.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Why was the bishops' plea for common prayer in the home addressed in a special manner to parents of *young families*?
2. The recitation aloud of the acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition before *both* breakfast and the evening meal would take less than *three minutes a day*. Does the word "impossibility" make much sense when it is stated that family prayer is impossible in city homes? There must be some other reason. . . .
3. About how long has it been since there was a first Mass celebration in your parish? Reread Pope Pius XI's statement on page x.

4. Suggestions for Fostering Religion in the Home

1. A detailed Catholic calendar should hold a place of prominence in the home. Marking Fridays with little red fish does not

1. *Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States . . .* September, 1919, (Washington: N.C.W.C., 1920), p. 16.
2. See page x.

make a calendar Catholic.¹ The spirit of the Church year, with its sacred seasons, feasts, and fasts, cannot be divorced from Catholic home life without serious loss to the family. The calendar should be freely pencil-marked with reminders of spiritual anniversaries, birthdays, special intentions, and the like.

2. A recommendation that is steadily growing in favor is that of devoting a quarter of an hour on Saturday evening and on the vigils of the more important feasts in preparing the missal for the following day's Mass. Few laymen are sufficiently well acquainted with the composition of the missal to keep apace with the priest at the altar unless they prepare in advance to do so. And no one can understand the prayers of the Mass by reading them as rapidly as they are read at Mass. Preparing the missal need not be a task: if it is done in the right spirit and by the whole family together, it can be a pleasure.

3. Sharing in the parish worship and in such religious works of the parish as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, discussion clubs, the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, makes demands on time and effort. It is not pleasant to forfeit or postpone a Sunday evening's outing for devotions or Compline in the parish church. Many fail to appear at the communion table on Sunday morning because their Saturday evening was too crowded — with attractions outside the home. The virtue of religion calls for sacrifice, and it will bless the home in the proportion that the sacrifice is willingly made.

4. Parents should strive to instill a spirit of naturalness into the religious observance in the home. The idea is difficult enough to express: its teaching will require years of example and carefully timed instruction. Every religious act should be spontaneous, and performed with the fullest liberty. There should be no hesitancy or doubt as to the family's reaction. The spiritual lives of all the members of the family should be perfectly natural.

If one of the boys forms the habit of blessing himself as he leaves the house, that is his business, and no adverse comments are to be tolerated. If one of the girls gives up candy during Lent, the same rule applies. The same independence of acting should manifest itself before the whole congregation. Perhaps this will express the idea: It is interesting to observe boys recently graduated from the parish school. Some return to their pews after having received holy Communion with their eyes cast down and hands as devoutly folded as during their grammar school days when they were under the watchful eyes of their teachers and superiors. Self-consciousness and human respect may force their hands apart and lift their eyes. All the boys of the parish

1. The calendar published annually by the E. M. Lohmann Co., St. Paul, Minn., is artistic, serves the purpose well, and costs little.

had the same training in school, but there is a subtle difference in home training, and that makes the difference.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Sharing in the various forms of the religious worship of the parish and home requires time and sacrifice. About how much time do you think this totals in the course of a week for the average parishioner? One hour? Two hours? Compare that with the 168 hours in the week.
2. How can children be trained to practice their religion "naturally"?
3. Do you know a good Catholic calendar other than the one mentioned that could be recommended for the group?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Does not the following statement explain much of the so-called "impossibility" of prayer within the home? "From the first evening of wedded life husband and wife should kneel in united prayer, and should establish this night prayer together as their daily family worship. Of course, an initial objection must be overcome. We are so unaccustomed to pray aloud and together! Our modern prayer-life has become so individualized, so subjective, that we hesitate to pray aloud and in the presence of others, even with those who are nearest to us. The seclusion of one's room or the orderly silence of a congregation in church seem the most suitable background for the style of private prayer to which we are so accustomed, the prayer that is concerned chiefly with God and one's own individual self."¹

2. "He [the father] should see that everyone is present and attentive and reverently disposed, and should lead them in prayer. The presence of a guest at table should not cause any alteration in the family custom. The head of the family should be thoroughly conscious of the dignity and importance of his office in the Christian family which is his by the sacrament of matrimony, and should not fail to exercise his function as leader in family worship."² How does this line up with the common practice of having one of the youngest children of the family say the prayers before meals?

3. "It has often been observed that, in our modern city life, we no longer understand how to celebrate our Sundays and feast days, and we have recourse to the poor substitutes of the movies and parties and futile week-end entertainments. . . . We need these outward practices, which like Sunday dress, automatically lift us to a higher sphere above the ordinary days of the week. It may be that in the "American way of life" Sunday dress has been abandoned along with Sunday cake and Sunday roast. If so, the unfortunate consequence must be that the Lord's day may not receive the honor that is due its superior rank."³

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To take off a little time and think through this whole question of family worship of God honestly, resolving not to be influenced by what other families about you are doing, but to worship God as you know He wants to be worshipped.

1. Mueller, Mrs. Franz, "The Christian Family and the Liturgy," *Proceedings of the II National Liturgical Week* held at St. Paul, Minn., Oct. 6-10. 1941, p. 165.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

DISCUSSION XV

Truthfulness

1. What the Virtue Is

If on returning home a half hour before evening meal a school boy makes the excuse that he was "down at the gym practicing basketball," when he has spent the past two hours with forbidden companions, he is guilty of a lie. He has told a deliberate untruth. He has probably lost the habit of truthfulness, because if he finds that it serves his purpose to lie in such trivial matters, the habit is easily acquired, and may already have been formed.

Truth is the relation that exists between what is in the speaker's mind and what exists outside his mind. If a man says he paid five dollars for his fountain pen, and he did so, his statement is true, and is based on true knowledge. If his memory is faulty, and he paid four or six dollars for the pen, instead of five, he has not told a lie, because what he is stating agrees with what is in his mind.

Truthfulness is the moral virtue which prompts a man to state honestly what is in his mind. It is more a question of sincerity than of accuracy or correctness. It is the habit of those who love honesty. They seek it in all their dealings with their fellow men, in speaking, in writing, in their whole conduct, in their gestures, and by all the means they employ for communicating thought to others. *Sincerity*, which is being in reality what one appears to be, without any pretenses, and *faithfulness* to one's word or promises, are closely associated with truthfulness.

All society depends on mutual trust and confidence in its relationships. St. Thomas explains why this is so: Since man is a social being, each man owes his neighbor that without which society could not go on. Therefore, truthfulness hinges in a way on justice, or what is owed to others.

The known liar is rightfully shunned. The eighth commandment of God bans lying, duplicity, and in general all the sins committed by word of mouth to deceive one's neighbor. St. Paul offers the basic reason for the virtue of the commandment: "Wherefore put away lying and speak truth, each one with his neighbor, because we are members of one another." (Ephesians, 4: 25)

Just as lying is an offense to all right-minded men, dependable truthfulness is high-minded regard for our neighbor. Each true statement is a mark of mutual reliance in him: we tell him the truth, however unpleasant it may be, simply because it is the

honorable thing toward him and toward ourselves. This thought cannot be dwelt on at too great length, or elevated to too high a plane, for on it depends all pleasant and trustful living.

When an inventor obtains his patent rights, the world recognizes the product of his mind, and each article produced pays him some small tribute in acknowledgment of his genius and industry. Every reader of a copyrighted book pays a small royalty to the author, and justice demands that if another writer wishes to quote him, he obtain permission and give credit to the author.

In a similar manner, the truthful man is also giving something of himself. He gives, in more or less serious matters, what is of his mind. His honesty and sincerity ask only friendship and equal truthfulness in return. Failure in this means the breakdown of mutual dependence built on faith, without which men can have little of worth in common.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Is it wrong to say: "I have had a lovely time at your party, and enjoyed your dinner very much" when you really do not care whether you ever see your hosts again, and are intent only on hurrying home to the medicine cabinet to prevent indigestion?

2. What does St. Thomas offer as the basis of social relationships? Does it differ from the statement of St. Paul?

3. What is meant by saying that dependable truthfulness is a "high-minded regard for our neighbor"?

2. Truthfulness in the Home

Social life depends almost entirely on giving and receiving confidence — or on truthfulness in a broader sense. A person wins another's confidence or esteem through his trustworthiness. Friendship rests on mutual trust. So do most of the dealings with professional men, priests, doctors, lawyers, men to whom people in trouble confide their most secret difficulties. One deals readily only with those businessmen whom one trusts. But although of daily occurrence, most of this is on a plane that normally does not touch the deeper part of our lives. It is all elevated to a much higher level in family life.

The word "fidelity" is wisely used to describe the most sacred trust regarding the primary purpose and basic rights and privileges of the marriage union. Once that implicit assurance is broken, marriage would become an intolerable burden. Even the State recognizes this truth, and infidelity becomes a crime against the State as well as a sin against God and a sin of injustice against the individual.

The education of children likewise calls for complete mutual confidence. As the prime obligation of their marriage vows, the

education to be imparted by the parents is to bring the children up in the true faith and in the intelligent service of their God, as well as their complete intellectual, social, and physical well-being. Parents have assumed that duty as a matter of responsibility before God. Nothing can free them from their charge, and its neglect is a grave sin.

Cooperation born of a deep spiritual faith in each other is absolutely necessary to accomplish this difficult purpose. If the love which springs from trustworthiness is forfeited, the sacred work of educating children has lost one of its most powerful means — united effort in the work of God.

The secondary purpose of marriage, the mutual help of the partners to the contract, which is largely spiritual in character, also rests on trust and confidence. This secondary purpose directly affects the *individual* husband and wife and differs from the primary purposes of the union, which are directed rather to the welfare of *society* itself. It is easy to see that even a greater degree of complete dependence on each other is imperative. Mutual aid toward a common vocation in life, mutual help in bearing hardships more readily, common sharing of sacrifices and facing together the difficulties of their state in life — all this calls for implicit confidence, if the ideal is to be realized.

The children's regard for their parents is built on the same trust in the home. Once that trust is lost, by whatever unfortunate means, it is almost hopeless for the parents to fulfill their duties as educators. This thought is developed tellingly by Father Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., in the following statements:

"Another point that parents do well to bear in mind, particularly in this day of a rapidly disappearing patriarchal family system, is the importance of winning the loyalty of their children and of playing the role of sympathetic confidants to them. If a father and mother are trusted friends and confidential advisers to their children in their early years, it is reasonable to hope that they will continue to serve in this highly important capacity during the difficult period of adolescence and afterward. Certainly it is worthy of the highest commendation when children bring all their problems, troubles, and doubts to father and mother for solution. Such, however, will only be the case if parents are truly companions, friends, and confidants to their little ones."¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. In the light of the above, is the ability to "sit and talk matters over candidly" of great importance to the family welfare?
2. Why is it stated above that mutual help, which is a spiritual relationship between two persons, depends so much on mutual trust?
3. Do you think that the ideal penned by Father Schmiedeler is sufficiently realized in most Catholic homes? With no references to individuals, state your reasons. Do you think that the ideal will be more easily obtained in rural sections than in cities? Why?

1. Schmiedeler, Edgar, O.S.B., "Some Guides for Parents," in *The Parent-Educator*, St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N.J., vol. 3, p. 58.

3. Difficulties in the Home

The duties confronting the parents in instilling a love for truthfulness is a complicated and serious problem. Many elements based on disregard of the truth surround the home, and enter its sacred sanctuary. Editorial "policy" and the general ethics of the press shape and foster public opinion as the paper's directors want. Such policy rarely cares for the sacredness of good name, or the observance of discreet secrecy. Commercialized recreation, particularly the movies, are in the hands of those who have little concern for truthfulness, and who portray life as a caricature, with constantly repeated disregard for fidelity. Cheap magazines grossly misrepresent the holiest institutions of society. Greed, pleasure-seeking, and various forms of dishonesty that mar commercial dealings, necessarily brand many men liars. Public officials, and men in positions of trust often show themselves willing to betray their honor for money.

Suspicious, misunderstandings, resentments flow from all these practices. Lawmakers spend much of their time protecting citizens from the harm that such practices cause. But the real harm is found in the demoralizing influence, the moral cowardice, and other undesirable effects produced. With those problems lawmakers do not bother themselves. That is the duty of parents.

Within the home itself all such lack of truthfulness only augments the entire difficulty, and must be opposed severely. Unless harmony exists between the parents, and complete trustworthiness is shown by the children, it is impossible to teach this virtue, — or any form of virtue. The foundations of character are laid in the home. If the parents lie, the children will probably do the same. If parents show themselves to lack a fine sense of honor and loyalty within the home, children will imitate them and their practices.

Children must be put on their honor — although excessive trust by the parents may do as much harm as too little trust. The scales that balance this problem are the most delicate imaginable. The children must be led to a love for truth and honesty. They must be given high ideals of loyalty and fidelity, and made to understand that it is a high honor to live up to any confidence that has been reposed in them. They must be made aware that truthfulness is often going to demand sacrifices and unpleasantness, but their training must bring them to forego willingly any advantages rather than offend God and their neighbor, and dishonor themselves with a lie.

Parents must use their own discretion regarding the time and means for drawing the line on young children's natural tendency

to fanciful make-believe, their humorous exaggerations, and living in their world of unreality.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. How would you appeal to a child of high school age to dissuade him from reading "drug store literature"?
2. Can you give some examples of putting children on their honor, and show how they develop a spirit of truthfulness?
3. Of the movies that you can remember, do any portray life as you have learned to know it from your own personal experience, or that which you have observed?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Truthfulness

1. Parents must be absolutely honest with their children. Much depends on example in teaching truthfulness. When asked a question, they must answer it straightforwardly. If they do not know the explanation, they must have the courage to admit their lack of knowledge, and then set about immediately to acquire it, if possible. Two principles must guide all teachers of youth: to answer every question candidly, that is to say, to teach every problem with the fullest meaning the child can grasp, and never to tell the children untruths, because sooner or later they discover the dishonesty, and loss of confidence outweighs every other consideration.

2. A lie is something that is evil in itself, and can never be told in order that a good can come from it. Children, and grown-ups for that matter, often err in this matter. They readily understand that it is permissible to conceal bad news from mother when she has a headache. But they must be made to understand that that it is *not* all right to invent good news (the so-called charitable lie) to cheer her up. This is all the more true in the case of the "useful lie," by which one endeavors to prevent punishments or reprimands from befalling himself or his friends. The joking lie is also wrong, unless from all the circumstances surrounding it, the manner of speaking, the words employed, and the nature of the matter in question it is clear that it is intended as a joke, and nothing more serious. The pernicious lie, which is intended to do injury to another, is the lowest form of lying and always to be avoided.

3. When children have freely and unhesitatingly told the truth in difficult matters, or have of their own accord undone the harm they have committed in telling a lie, parents must not fail to show their pleasure and praise the stand they have taken.

4. This thought cannot serve as the principal appeal of parents to the children's best nature, but it is impressive to make clear to them that once a person has been discovered in a deliberate

lie, he can seldom erase the impression completely. Regardless of repentance, remorse, or attempts to make good the confidence forfeited, faith has been, to some degree, permanently shaken.

5. Although it is never allowed to tell a lie, it may be permissible and necessary to conceal the truth. The very reasons that demand truthfulness in society (the confidence and trust between men) also demand discreet observance of secrecy. Professional men, and all who are honored with the confidence of their fellows must observe secrecy, or conceal the truth. If questioners cannot take the hint, it is perfectly lawful to deny all knowledge of the facts in possession, if that is the only manner of concealing the trust.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Would it be correct for a parent, in recognition of truthfulness, to omit punishment altogether in case the boy or girl has admitted the fault committed? Even in graver matters? Please explain your view.

2. Is the teacher justified in giving the pupil a zero if he catches him copying during an examination?

3. Is it all right to send a child to the door with the message: Mother is not at home?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Truth is one of the distinctive marks of the Catholic Church. Her oneness, which is one of the marks by which she is recognized and known, rests on her possession and defense of truth. She has never betrayed her trust of protecting the deposit of faith, even under unworthy prelates. Catholicism must be that, for it is the Church of which Christ is the Head.— Does this thought place a special obligation on those who train to solidly Catholic character in the home?

2. Is not much untruthfulness the result of an unreasoning attitude on the part of the person who has a right to the truth? This is not a suggestion to attempt to justify lying, for that is an impossibility, but a consideration of the other side of the matter. Two persons may be at fault where only one lie is told.

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

To humble oneself deliberately by acknowledging the lie whenever one has told an untruth, or been guilty of exaggeration. If parents "catch" the children in a lie, to bring them to admit the same. Much of the evil of untruthfulness is to be overcome only by humility.

DISCUSSION XVI

The Choice of a State of Life

1. What a Vocation Is

A choice of great responsibility faces young men and women when they reach maturity. Paths branch out in many directions before them, chosen ways of life, each with its many graces and possibilities for doing good, each presenting its distinctive hardships and dangers. For the young man there is the possibility of a call to the priesthood, the desire to become a religious, or to marry, all vocations in God's service. Girls may become Sisters or marry. Either men or women may elect the single life in the world. And any of the chosen lives offers an unlimited number of possible professions, or secondary vocations — missionaries, doctors, lawyers, farmers, teachers, mechanics, and so on.

Such are the general lines along which lives will be patterned. But there is a special will of God for each individual. The child learns in catechism: "God created *me* to know Him, love Him, serve Him in this life, and be happy with Him forever in heaven."

The call to the priesthood is rare enough — too rare. In the 1941 Catholic Directory there are listed 22,293,101 Catholics and 35,839 priests in the country, or roughly about one priest to every 620 Catholics. A bigger picture of the priests' duties which "commends all non-Catholics to them in the Lord"¹ will raise the average proportion to one priest for about every 4,000 souls — an almost impossible task. Many factors keep the ratio so low: the generous willingness to serve God, the long school preparation, the practice of virtue in the home which would create priestly vocations, the sacrifices involved, the difficulties of the studies, health, absence of inclination.

Greater numbers, proportionately, are found in religion. The religious life is an attempt to strive for perfection in God's service by the observance of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in any order or congregation recognized by the authority of the Church. A distinctive type of character must be developed for community life in religion, and no better training can be found than the large, well-disciplined Catholic home.

Marriage is a state of life elevated by Jesus to the dignity of a sacrament, the normal vocation of men and women in carrying on the race, although never personally binding on the individual. For sufficient spiritual reasons, any person may conclude that marriage is not God's holy Will in his regard.

1. Code of Canon Law, canon 1350.

Secondary vocations, or professions, can freely be chosen, but always in some definite manner in harmony with the main purpose of the choice of life — the serving of God by service of one's fellow men.

The problem of the choice of life is never easy to solve. Serious mistakes are made. Life holds many misfits. Intense and frequent prayer, the advice of persons of experience in matters of vocation, confidence in the wisdom of older persons and their desire to help in making the choice — both born of humility — are necessary to avoid mistakes. To insist on deciding alone the tremendously important matter of a life's career is unpardonable pride and obstinacy. And one's best advisers should be found in the home.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What is the difference between the primary and secondary vocations?
2. Why is enlisting the advice of older and experienced persons necessary with regard to determining one's vocation?
3. Is there a special vocation, or determination of God's will, for each individual?

2. The Home's Influence on Vocation

The ideal conditions for fostering vocations follow a rather definite pattern, not only with regard to the priesthood and the religious life, but also with regard to all the manners of serving God in life. Exceptions sometimes prove the rule.

In his encyclical letter on the Catholic Priesthood, which he personally considered the best of his encyclical letters, Pope Pius XI states that:

"The first and most natural place where the flowers of the sanctuary should most spontaneously grow and bloom, remains always the truly and deeply Christian family. Most of the saintly bishops and priests whose 'praise the Church declares,' owe the beginning of their vocation and their holiness to the example and teaching of a father strong in faith and manly virtues, and a pure and devoted mother, and of a family in which the love of God and neighbor, joined with the simplicity of life, has reigned supreme. To this ordinary rule of Divine Providence exceptions are rare and only serve to prove the rule."¹

The spiritual unity of the family that has helped foster a vocation to the priesthood is never greater than on the morning of the young priest's first Mass. Then father and mother, brothers and sisters, realize that all sacrifices are amply repaid, because with their son and brother a priest at the altar, they are closer than ever to the imitation of the Holy Family, the true model of all Catholic families.

1. Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter "On the Catholic Priesthood," December 20, 1935, *Catholic Mind*, February 8, 1936, p. 74.

The same is true in a lesser degree of other vocations by which the children consecrate themselves to the service of God. But these hours of the family's intense happiness are necessarily the rewards of the whole family's efforts.

The Pope also shows how submission to parents in the matter of vocation to the married state is necessary for God's blessing.

"Lastly, let them not omit to ask the prudent advice of their parents with regard to the partner, and let them regard this advice in no light manner, in order that by their mature knowledge and experience of human affairs, they may guard against a disastrous choice, and, on the threshold of matrimony, may receive more abundantly the divine blessing of the fourth commandment: 'Honor thy father and thy mother (which is the first commandment with a promise) that it may be well with thee and thou mayest be long-lived upon the earth.'"¹

Beautiful examples of self-sacrifice and deep family love abound in the study of vocations. Many a priest stands at the altar today because of a brother's or a sister's sacrifice. Doctors and lawyers often complete their studies at the expense of brothers who learned humbler trades and helped at home during the long years of professional training.

Father's counsel and sacrifice to give his son the best possible opportunities, mother's secret prayers, a sister's encouragement in the hours of trial, a brother's concern in all that might dim the hopes cherished by the family: such are often the human elements little known to outsiders that stand behind what the world recognizes as a successful career. Cooperation and mutual help of this kind within the family are often even more noticeable in humbler homes where even one boy is "given a better chance." Family pride in such cases is justifiable. Parents in these homes should bow their heads in gratitude to God, for His grace has seconded their efforts and made them realize their hopes for their children.

All this is understandable and follows logically from the best nature of the family. Possessing all things else in common, the ideal home cherishes its goods of a higher order as from God. St. Gregory explains that "He that hath a talent, let him see that he hideth it not; he that hath abundance, let him arouse himself to mercy and generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and utility thereof with his neighbor."² But all this is possible, as a general rule, only with disinterested love of others — which is one of the virtues taught by God-fearing parents.

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1. Pope Pius XI, "On Christian Marriage," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 112.
 2. Quoted by Pope Leo XIII in the Encyclical Letter "On the Condition of Labor," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940) p. 11.

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. What virtues in the home make for priestly and religious vocations? Is the training to these virtues also necessary for other walks of life? Marriage? The professions?

2. *When* should "the prudent advice of their parents" be sought with regard to the choice of a partner in marriage? Is there any of the divine blessing of the fourth commandment if they wait until a definite engagement is made before "speaking to" their parents — which amounts practically to a simple notification.

3. Does the fact that the members of a family aided a son to study and prepare for a lucrative profession entitle them to a share in the good works that he performs, and to material help when needed?

3. Faults with Regards to Vocations in the Home

Parents sometimes seem to think that because a choice of life is God's will, it is not their place to "interfere" in determining vocations. This "hands off" policy is seriously wrong. It would not be more unreasonable to say that since there can be no harvest without God's Providence, farmers should not cultivate the soil and plant seed. The nation's bread depends on God's Providence and man's industry. Thanksgiving Day necessarily includes gratitude to God for having permitted men to work with the things He has provided. If either God's Providence or man's industry is lacking, there can be no bread. Man's industry does not destroy God's blessing on the harvest, but is a condition to it. The same principle is true with regard to vocations. God acts through the conscientious efforts and teaching of parents to fix certain noble ideas in their children's minds which lead to the desire to follow a certain walk in life.

Then, parents are, too often, simply not equipped to prepare their children in this matter. Educators — and by the law of God and nature that includes all parents — are persons of training. Their inability is seriously felt and their children are handicapped if parents fail in this matter. The Father of Fathers finds serious faults with parents in these terms:

"Nevertheless, Venerable Brethren and beloved children, We wish to call your attention in a special manner to the present-day lamentable decline in family education. The offices and professions of a transitory and earthly life, which are certainly of far less importance, are prepared for by long and careful study; whereas for the fundamental duty and obligation of educating their children, many parents have little or no preparation, immersed as they are in temporal cares."¹

Right after the Civil War (1866) America's bishops met in solemn session in the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore to discuss and provide for the needs of the Church. Half of the country

1. Pope Pius XI, "On the Christian Education of Youth," in *Five Great Encyclicals*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1940), p. 58.

was waste and desolate after years of civil strife. But the bishops on that solemn occasion felt the need to remind parents of numerous serious obligations, and as we read their words today, we see how prophetic and solid their advice really was:

"Prepare your children for the duties of the state or condition of life they are likely to be engaged in; do not exhaust your means in bestowing on them an education that may unfit them for these duties. This would be a sure source of disappointment and dissatisfaction, both for yourselves and for them. Accustom them from their earliest years to habits of obedience, industry, and thrift; and deeply impress on their minds the great principle that happiness and success in life, as well as acceptance with God, do not so much depend on the station we fill as on the fidelity with which we discharge its duties."¹

Speaking a little further on, this document, signed by all the bishops of the United States, deals with a problem that likewise finds its repetition in present-day America — the refusal to foster vocations to the priesthood:

"We fear that the fault lies, in great part, with many parents who, instead of fostering the desire, so natural to the youthful heart, of dedicating itself to the service of God's sanctuary, but too often impart to their children their own worldly-mindedness, and seek to influence their choice of a state of life by unduly exaggerating the difficulties and dangers of the priestly calling, and painting in too glowing colors the advantages of a secular life."²

Homes can be seriously at fault. False standards are set up. Remarks can be made against the vocation to the priesthood or the life of a religious. Vocations are deferred, then lost. Parties are given which distract the mind: human ingenuity finds countless means of thwarting the purpose of God. How different Andrew who called Peter, and John who went in search of his brother!

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. Are parents to "sow the seed" of vocations? To what extent? Where does the parents' effort cease, and God's inspiration begin? Can one continue the analogy of the farmer and his planting also here?
2. Do you think that many parents today "exhaust their means" in giving their children educations which fit them poorly for their state in life?
3. The above citation of the bishops states what parents should *not* do to interfere with a vocation to the priesthood. What *should* they do?

4. Suggestions for Fostering Vocations

1. The parents' instructions bearing on a choice of life must naturally be spread over an extended period of time. Longer talks may be few in number, in the youth's maturer years, shortly before the actual election of the state of life. These instruc-

1. Baltimore, Plenary Council 2d., 1866, *Acta et Decreta*. Baltimore, Murphy, 1863, pp. cxvii-cxviii.

2. *Ibid.*, p. cxix.

tions should include detailed explanations of the elements taught more briefly during childhood. Emphasis should be placed on the following considerations: a) That vocation is the better which offers the greater possibility of praising God for a lifetime. b) Secondly, the better vocation is that which offers the better means of sanctification of self. The promise of happiness and contentment born of a conscience at peace with God and moral security outweigh any other hopes that may reasonably be entertained. c) An excellent yardstick for determining the choice of a life's work is the spiritual value for oneself in the service of others. d) As far as possible the youth should be induced to view the problem as he will view it on his deathbed, that is, as a life's work to please God and serve his fellow men: no vocation is of value unless it points to eternity. e) Vocation ceases to be a practical question only when man ceases to breathe. The problem is not settled when one has *chosen* a walk in life. The person is *permanently* called to God's service, and must daily examine himself with regard to faithfulness to his choice. f) Any life is short in which to prove one's love of God. Even the longest and fullest span of life is but a brief introduction into eternity, and it is the height of folly to be dazzled by fleeting pleasure, the recognition of men, money, or social position.

2. Older children should be taught to say some prayer daily for guidance in the choice of a state of life. *Before* one's final selection, prayer for light should be directed to the Holy Ghost. *After* the choice has been made, the spirit of the Church recommends adding prayer for the intercession of the heavenly patron of the particular profession or vocation chosen.

3. Vocation prayers must include the special petition that God will not only never permit one to do anything that would cause the loss of vocation, but that one may so conduct himself that he will daily grow in intellectual appreciation and thanksgiving for his call from God.

4. Before one actually enters upon one's vocation, a spiritual retreat is highly advisable. The Church wisely demands an eight-day retreat before entrance into the novitiate as well as before religious profession, and a six-day retreat before the reception of each of the major orders. If a retreat is impossible for the layman, at least an hour's quiet visit before the Blessed Sacrament every day for a week is not. God's rewards for such sacrifices are entirely out of proportion to the efforts expended—and any reward in matters of vocation is lifelong: in fact, its effects are eternal.

5. In the choice of a life's work, children are free by the natural law and are not obliged to obey their parents. The reason is that in those things which regard the conservation of the in-

dividual and of the race, all men are equal, and it is a great injustice to force anyone to a state of life on which both his earthly and heavenly welfare depends. Parents sin if they force a child to embrace a particular state of life, or if they prevent them from the vocation of their election. As above explained, however, parents are to be consulted in this most grave matter.— Even with regard to the selection of a profession, or secondary vocation, (doctor, lawyer, farmer, mechanic) the obedience to parents is qualified and conditioned by many circumstances. Parents would be guilty of serious sin if they forced their child, without sufficient reason or motive, to some particular employment for which he is poorly equipped, or for which he has no desire.¹

DISCUSSION AIDS

1. A fifteen-year-old boy answers his father's question about the study of high school biology by stating that he hopes to become a doctor. In what should the father's encouragement consist on this occasion?

2. Would you take the points mentioned under n. 1. above in the order in which they are listed, or does another order suggest itself to your mind?

3. Why are children to be left perfectly free to make their own choice of a vocation?

ADDED SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. A famous author writes: "There is unquestionably for every son, as for every child, a state of life which is most suitable for him, which is the best for him and most conducive to his welfare, considering his corporal and mental qualities, the circumstances in which he is placed, and the means he possesses. This state of life then is that which is most in harmony with God's will. It is his vocation."² Do you think that a father must take more than these points into consideration?

2. Can you enumerate some of the good works prevented by those who in any way interfere with a priestly or religious vocation? The offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass, which is infinitely pleasing to God; the words of absolution that might have been pronounced; the works of charity that were left unperformed. . . . Can you continue the list?

3. Would the same be true, in a lesser degree, of a boy who wanted to become a doctor, a girl who desired to become a nun in the strict enclosure, where she could never again see her relatives?

SUGGESTION FOR PRACTICAL RESOLUTION

Before making one's final choice of a state of life, to pray daily for the grace to know what God wants one to be, and for the courage to follow His desires unquestioningly. After having selected a vocation, to ask God earnestly each day for the grace to prove worthy of the choice until death.

1. Pruemmer, Dominic, O.P., *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, (Freiburg in B.: Herder, 1922), II, §585, p. 450.

2. Cramer, Rt. Rev. W., D.D., *The Christian Father*, (New York: Benziger Bros., 1883), p. 181.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

An abundant literature, much of it in pamphlet form, and hence reasonable in price, is available on almost every question dealt with in this discussion club outline. It is not necessary to read much to know virtue in the Catholic home, but it is most helpful to read wisely and well. The following books and pamphlets are suggested because they stress the ideas brought out in these discussions. If each member of the club orders one or two pamphlets and passes them about to the other members, great good can be realized at little expense and effort.

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- Tanquerey, Adolphe, *The Spiritual Life*, (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Co., 1930), pp. 750, \$3.50.

The Dignity of the Parishioner

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