

Reflections for Each School Day
of the Year 1950-1951.

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Reflections

For Each School Day
Of the Year

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EDITED BY
BROTHER U. ALFRED, F.S.C.

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR
MONT LA SALLE
NAPA, CALIFORNIA

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Dedication

This volume is dedicated to St. John Baptist De La Salle, declared Patron of Christian Teachers on May 15, 1950, who fostered the daily reflection as a potent means of spiritual formation of the young.

Cover Design

Our cover design symbolizes the dynamism of the reflection. The light of divine truth comes from God (symbolized by the eye) and impinges on the mind of the teacher (large convex mirror) who passes it on to his students (small concave mirrors) where it is brought into focus. The teacher is represented by a convex mirror because the function of the teacher is to spread the truth, while students are concave mirrors since as students they are to accept the truth and confirm it in their minds.

This might be summarized in a prayer for the teacher: "O God, send forth Thy light and Thy truth. May we teachers be perfect and expansive reflectors of Thy wisdom. Through our zealous words, may it be brought to a brilliant focus in the souls of youth."

Nihil obstat: Benedict Blank, O.P. and John M. Byrne
Censores Deputati

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INDEX OF SUBJECT MATTER

- Apostolate: Sept. 6, Oct. 26, Jan. 19, Feb. 28.
- Baptismal vows: Feb. 14.
- Blessed Virgin: Sept. 8, 12, 15, 27, Oct. 6, 12, 19, Dec. 7, Feb. 2, 11, Mar 1, May 1, 4.
- Charity for neighbor: Sept. 22, Oct. 5, 24, Nov. 21, Jan. 30.
- Cheating: June 4.
- Christ in our lives: Sept. 11, Nov. 3, 6, Feb. 20, Apr. 19, 26, May 31.
- Christmas: Dec. 12, 15.
- Confession: Oct. 10, Nov. 30, Apr. 27.
- Consequences of actions: Sept. 25, Nov. 7.
- Contrition: Jan. 11, Mar. 15.
- Counsel: Sept. 7.
- Cross: Sept. 14.
- Death: Feb. 7, 27, Mar. 29, Apr. 12, 30, May 16.
- Divine indwelling: Jan. 4, Feb. 1.
- Eighth commandment: Sept. 13, May 25.
- Enemies, love of: Jan 30.
- Eternity: Mar. 9, 13, 19.
- Examination of conscience: Oct. 11.
- Faith: Sept. 6, Nov. 6, Jan. 15, 22, Feb. 16, Apr. 2.
- Fortitude: Dec. 11, Jan. 17, Apr. 4.
- Fourth Commandment: Sept. 7, Oct. 9, Jan. 8.
- God, relations with: Feb. 26, Apr. 20, June 1.
- Good reading: Apr. 23.
- Gospel maxims: Sept. 5, 14, Oct. 16, Nov. 13, Mar. 19, Apr. 5, 18.
- Grace: Mar. 14.
- Gratitude: Nov. 22.
- Guardian angel: Oct. 2.
- Habits of sin: Apr. 19, June 6.
- Happiness: Feb. 5.

Heaven: Jan. 3, 10.
Hell: Nov. 28, Jan. 3.
Holiness: Oct. 13, Nov. 29, Jan. 31, Mar. 1.
Holy Communion: Mar. 5, Apr. 4, May 2, 21, 24, June 5.
Holy Ghost: May 11.
Holy Water: Feb. 15.
Holy Week: Mar. 21.
Jesus Christ: Oct. 27, Apr. 9.
Joseph, Saint: Mar. 6, 29, Apr. 11.
Living for God: Sept. 22, Oct. 16, 17, Nov. 13, 17.
Mass: Nov. 16, Jan. 2, Jan. 23.
Mortal sin: Sept. 11, Oct. 20, Dec. 13, Feb. 6, Mar. 20, Apr. 17, May 9, 22.
Occasions of sin: Jan. 12, 29, Mar. 2.
Persecution: Jan. 25.
Poverty: Oct. 4, Nov. 14, Feb. 13.
Prayer: Sept. 18, Oct. 17, Nov. 20, Apr. 10, 13, May 14, 28.
Presence of God: Jan. 24, Apr. 10.
Priest: Sept. 29, Oct. 10.
Purity: Oct. 30, Dec. 7, Jan. 5, Mar. 30.
Race prejudice: Nov. 8.
Resurrection: Mar. 28, Apr. 2.
Rosary: Oct. 6, 12, 19.
Saints: Sept. 19, 26, 28, Oct. 4, 20, 31, Nov. 16, Dec. 6, 11, Jan. 25, 31,
Feb. 1, Mar. 7, Apr. 2, 18, 26, May 8, 15, 16.
Savior, Blessed Dominic: Oct. 13, 30, Dec. 13, Mar. 1.
Scandal: Nov. 7.
Scapular: Sept. 27.
Self-Denial: Sept. 20, 26, Apr. 24.
Self-Improvement: Dec. 1, 5, 14, Feb. 12, Apr. 11, May 7, 10, 17.
Sign of the Cross: Oct. 18, Mar. 12.
Soul: Oct. 3.
Souls in Purgatory: Nov. 2, 10.

Speech: Jan. 18, May 18.

Spiritual Communion: Feb. 8.

Spiritual life: Jan. 16, Apr. 5, 6, 16, May 8, 23, June 8.

State of grace: Jan. 9.

Temptation: Feb. 20, Mar. 8.

Time: Nov. 27.

Trust in God: Jan. 26, Apr. 9, May 29.

Virtue: June 7.

Visits: Sept 28, Nov. 15.

Vocation: Sept. 21, Oct. 25, Dec. 4, Feb. 23, Mar. 16, Apr. 3, 25, May 15.

Will: Nov. 9, Feb. 19.

Word of God: Feb. 21.

Work: Mar. 6.

INDEX OF POSTERS

- Be a crusader for Christ: Feb. 28.
- Be a star for all eternity: Mar. 16, Apr. 25.
- Be careful. Death is so permanent: Apr. 30.
- Beware of the dog!: Jan. 12.
- Anti-Semitic? Christ was a Jew: Nov. 8.
- Are you a walking corpse?: Feb. 6, May 9.
- Are you missing the boat?: Dec. 4.
- Cheating hurts you: June 4.
- Christ — temptation: Feb. 20.
- Christ wants your heart: Nov. 3.
- Clean the board: Mar. 15.
- Come, follow me: Sept. 21.
- Come, Holy Ghost: May 11.
- Doesn't add us: Apr. 17.
- Don't!: Mar. 20.
- Don't you know me?: Oct. 2.
- Don't you know that you are the temple of the Holy Chost?: Jan. 4, Feb. 1.
- Down . . . and out: May 22.
- For cowards only: Sept. 13.
- From the heart the mouth speaks: Jan. 18.
- Get off to a good start: Sept. 4.
- Have you a split personality?: Jan. 16.
- He's thankful. Are you?: Nov. 22.
- Is Christ calling you?: Apr. 3.
- Is this Christianity?: Sept. 20.
- Let Christ free you: Apr. 19.
- Make it count. Touch all bases: Oct. 18, Mar. 12.
- Mary promises peace—: Oct. 6, May 1.
- My yoke is sweet: Sept. 27.

O Mary Immaculate make us holy and pure: Dec. 7.
Oh, he read spiritual books: Apr. 23.
Pray for vocations: Feb. 23.
Pray the Mass: Jan. 2.
Presenting the Light of the World: Feb. 2.
Pull the cord!: Nov. 30.
Remember it's His birthday: Dec. 15.
Ring the bell: Feb. 12.
Rise and shine with Christ: Mar. 28.
Stay on the beam: Jan. 9.
Sure I'm a drip!: Apr. 11.
Take the plunge: Oct. 25.
The greatest victory—overcome yourself: June 7.
The priest is Christ: Oct. 10.
They deserve our prayers: Nov. 10.
This year have a real white Christmas: Dec. 12.
Throw in the switch: May 28.
Time is flying: Nov. 27.
Use holy water: Feb. 15.
Why this difference?: Jan. 23.
Work can be holy: Mar. 6.
Worried? See God about it: Jan. 26.
You choose your eternity: Jan. 3, Mar. 13.
You! in 2049 A.D.: Feb. 7, May 16.
You poor fish!: Mar. 8.
Your friend is waiting for you: Nov. 15.

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 4. A GOOD START

The man over the loudspeaker is shouting: "They're off! 'Washout' is leading the pack by a nose, the rest of the field is well bunched with the exception of 'Dainty Maid' who got off to a bad start." And that in horse racing might be the margin of defeat.

So also in a foot race, the runners practise over and over the technique of starting. Especially in the dashes is it most important that they rocket out in the initial ten yards and attain their maximum speed as quickly as possible. For this purpose, the runners use blocks to provide a firm support for their feet during the initial impulse; they take a crouching position at the start so that their first bit of running is really like the action of a compressed spring. If a sprinter loses a few yards in the first second, he may lose the race. At best he has a bad handicap which will tax all his energy in the ensuing contest.

Similarly, it is important to begin anything we do with energy and enthusiasm. "Well begun is half done." We might apply this to life, to our work, our studies, to a particular assignment. The person who makes an easy going, listless beginning of the school term, will probably wake up after a month to find himself trailing in his studies. The rest of the year he has that terrible feeling of being behind and even if he succeeds in getting under the wire for a passing grade he will definitely not be satisfied.

GET OFF TO A GOOD START and your chances for success will be greatly increased.

VISUAL AID: The **RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR** poster **GET OFF TO A GOOD START.**

SEPTEMBER 5. FAUST AND A GOSPEL MAXIM

There is an interesting story that has formed the theme of writers and musicians many times over—the tale of Faust. As told by Goethe, Faust was a great scholar who had become dissatisfied with human learning because it could not answer the questionings of his mind. Accordingly he began to study magic arts to see whether with the aid of the spirits he might be able to go beyond the secrets revealed by reason. The devil came to him as a well dressed young man and promised him great happiness and joy in life if he would but make a contract with him. Satan agreed to become Faust's servant to the end of his days provided he in turn would take the role of servant thereafter. Not believing very strongly in a life after death, Faust entered into the contract, signing it with his own blood. Then, under the devil's guidance and with his assistance, he entered on a life of pleasure and sin, bringing sorrow and unhappiness to others and ending up miserably himself. In the end the devil drags him off to Hell.

Though but a story, this is a true picture of the life of many a man. The future life seems so remote and unreal, that he is willing to risk eternal damnation. He has a few years of unsatisfactory pleasures which

SEPTEMBER

always leave a bad taste and give no real satisfaction of soul. He brings sorrow and misery, it may be, to others. In the end, death comes and he has no heart for prayer or repentance, not even in his last hour, for he has become hardened in evil. Perhaps the idea of sorrow does not even enter his mind. For the short and meager pleasures of life, he has sold his soul to the devil. For all eternity, he will have to endure inconceivable suffering and the terrible pain of separation from God.

“WHAT DOTHT IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND SUFFER THE LOSS OF HIS OWN SOUL?” (St. Matt. XVI. 26)

SEPTEMBER 6. FAITH MAKES CONVERTS

Dr. A. J. Cronin, author of such best sellers as *Keys of the Kingdom*, *The Citadel*, and *The Green Years*, was originally a rank unbeliever. But he was converted to the Catholic faith by the simple faith of others.

His first deep realization of the importance of faith came to him as a doctor in a mining community in South Wales. There he witnessed a miracle of faith as entombed miners were rescued from the bowels of the earth. The men were discovered singing a hymn, which they continued to sing as they were brought forth into the stark daylight. That moment left a mark on the doctor's makeup.

Later, when working with a district nurse, whose salary he considered grossly inadequate, he told her: “You ought to get an extra pound a week. God knows you're worth it.” Her reply startled him: “If God knows I'm worth it, that's all that matters to me.”

How strong is your faith? Are you held back by a false shame in manifesting it to the world? Our Lord says: “So let your light shine among men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.” (St. Matt. V. 16)

SEPTEMBER 7. ACCEPT GOOD COUNSEL

Commands of our parents or of teachers may not always seem sensible to us at the time. We think they make laws just to express their superiority over us. Many such laws they lay down have purposes which they think we understand perfectly well, and so don't bother to point them out to us. Some of the laws train us to good habits which if kept up will make us lead a happier life later on. There was the young soldier who was taught in his training for desert warfare never to light a match at night time. After crawling for two or three hundred yards through sagebrush, he often craved a cigarette to ease his exasperated feelings. Sometimes he gave in to this desire, and, in every case was able to light up without being detected by the observation corps on the platform some distance away. A year later in action against Rommel in Libya a similar circumstance presented itself. But this time he didn't have sagebrush as a shield against prying officers' eyes. As he lay flat against the earth to hide his struck match, an enemy machine gun patrol caught a momentary

SEPTEMBER

glimpse of his light. In a second his patrol and himself were cut down. He had not learned to give absolute obedience in practice; it was now too late to understand why it had been demanded.

SEPTEMBER 8. NATIVITY OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN

Every year we celebrate the birthdays of such national heroes as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. We do this because they have helped in great measure to make the United States the country that it is today. These birthdays call for national holidays, parades, banquets and celebrations. Even our own birthdays are celebrated with some kind of unusual display.

Many years ago, an apparently insignificant child was born to aged parents. Her importance is incomparably superior to that of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln or ourselves; yet her birthday is almost insignificant as far as men are concerned. On this day, which is the anniversary of her birth, let us strive to realize that next to her Divine Son, the Most Blessed Virgin is the most important person in history. It is not necessary to have a parade or a banquet in her honor. No, we can honor her far more by some small sacrifice, some small extra prayer, some interior celebration that she deserves as a birthday gift.

SEPTEMBER 11. YOUNG MAN, ARISE!

The death of the aged or even of those in middle age we take rather as a matter of course, as something not unexpected. But when a child or youth passes away, there is a great sense of tragedy. We feel that here was one who did not have the opportunity to complete the normal span of human existence. It is like cutting off a branch that is just beginning to show buds before it has time to flower and bear fruit.

But there is a still greater tragedy that sometimes takes place in the soul of youth, whereby the beautiful life of grace received in baptism is blighted by mortal sin. This death of the soul often requires an act of divine mercy similar to that worked by our Lord in the case of the son of the widow of Naim. He has to pass as it were and touch the dead soul saying: "Young man, arise!"

If we find ourselves in mortal sin or if we experience a certain lethargy in our spiritual lives, let us contact our Lord by prayer and the Sacraments. His touch and His words of command will revivify our dead or dying soul.

SEPTEMBER 12. THE HOLY NAME OF MARY

In the movie "Yankee Doodle Dandy" starring James Cagney, one of the theme songs of the picture was entitled "Mary." Now this song is just about as familiar as many of the songs of the immortal Stephen Foster. The people of the world really meant the words: "It's a grand old name," and sang them with much feeling.

For some reason, the name Mary has always been one that has been loved and revered. Today being the feast of the Holy Name of

SEPTEMBER

Mary, we can realize in some small way why people all over the world love this name: precisely because it is the name of the Mother of God! She is the cause of the name's great renown. If the spirit of the world in regard to this name is one of respect and reverence, we as Catholics should realize that it is the name of the Mother of Jesus and give it the honor which is its due. Let us pronounce it today as often as possible with the greatest love and reverence.

SEPTEMBER 13. BACKBITING

The term backbiting comes from the two words back and bite. Of course it doesn't mean that we literally sink our teeth into our neighbor's back, but it is an expression that indicates the damage we do his reputation by talking unfavorably about him in secret to others. All the while we may pose as a friend or at least as a well-wisher.

Such conduct is extremely detestable. We attack our neighbor in his reputation and by our secret maneuvers give him no chance to defend himself. All of a sudden he realizes that people are talking about him unfavorably, but he is at a loss concerning the source of these reports or the means of stopping them. If we have something against another and we feel he should know it for his own good or the good of others, we should be manly enough to tell him to his face and not go about in a stealthy and cowardly manner stabbing him in the back, as it were.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster FOR COWARDS ONLY.

SEPTEMBER 14. EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

In the year 320, the Cross on which our Lord died was discovered by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, beneath a pile of debris near Jerusalem. Several centuries later, Chosroes, King of Persia, carried away this precious treasure. But Heraclitus, becoming King of Judea, waged war against him successfully and recovered the true Cross. He brought it back to Jerusalem, intending to carry it on his own shoulders to the church from which it had been stolen. On arriving at the gate of the city, he found himself unable to proceed, until he had taken off his shoes, his crown and his royal robes.

The feast of today indicates an astonishing reversal of standards. There was a time when the cross was an instrument of shame and disgrace. To be crucified was the most humiliating and painful of executions. But God became man and for love of us died on the cross like a criminal. Today, as a result, the cross is given the place of honor. We find it on top of our churches, above the altar. We pay it marks of respect and veneration. We sign ourselves with it to show that we belong to Christ.

What does the cross mean to us? Does it remind us of the death of our Lord and the great love He had for us? Do we carry a crucifix, at least on our rosary, and kiss the wounds of our Lord with affection? When

SEPTEMBER

we make the sign of the cross, do we think that this sacred symbol means that we have been bought with the Precious Blood of Christ?

"AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL THINGS TO MYSELF." (St. John XII. 32)

SEPTEMBER 15. SEVEN SORROWS OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN

If a criminal were being put to death at San Quentin, would we expect to find his mother there to watch the execution? If she were, then we would say here is great maternal love and heroic courage.

The Most Blessed Virgin Mary did just that. Her Son was being put to death on Calvary like a common criminal. He was the object of ridicule and scorn. Yet she stood heroically at the foot of the cross suffering by compassion to such an extent that the Church calls her "Queen of Martyrs."

The sufferings of our Lord were caused by our sins. And therefore likewise were the sufferings of Mary. If we wish to show a real love for Jesus and Mary, we should make every effort to avoid sin and the occasions of sin.

"AND THY OWN SOUL A SWORD SHALL PIERCE THAT OUT OF MANY HEARTS THOUGHTS MAY BE REVEALED." (St. Luke II. 35)

SEPTEMBER 18. HABITUAL PRAYER

Besides going to Church on Sunday, is our only other prayer to God just a prayer of asking for things and opportunities we need? Do we pray only when we are desperate? There was the fearless and expert sea captain who finally met up with a storm that had him really doubting he would ever see port again. Finally, after trying all the tricks that years of experience had taught him, he fell on his knees and groaned: "God, I haven't bothered you for thirty years; see me through this storm and I won't bother you for thirty more."

Quentin Reynolds, a famous correspondent and author, while accompanying a wave of infantry in a landing on the German held French coast, suddenly realized he might be dead in a very few minutes. He fell to the bottom of the landing barge and immediately began to beg God to spare his life. Afterwards, he realized what a wonderful opportunity it is to be able to pray to God at any time of the day or night while one is alive. Many of us, he said, in reflecting on his experience, look upon prayer only as a lifeboat. We think of it only when we are in danger.

SEPTEMBER 19. ST. JANUARIUS

St. Januarius, Bishop of Beneventum, was beheaded in 305 during the persecution of Diocletian. His head and two vials of blood are preserved in the Cathedral of Naples. Each year on his feast day, when the vials containing his blood are brought near the martyr's head, the dark

SEPTEMBER

brown hard substance turns red, becomes liquid, and has the appearance of freshly shed blood. Many thousands witness this miracle each year. Scientists have been able to advance no adequate explanation. People of Naples look upon this liquefaction as a good omen for the year. God allows this miracle to show that saints are not only his friends in this life, but that forever after their deaths they are close to Him and can help us to obtain any gifts and favors that are for our good.

SEPTEMBER 20. IS THIS CHRISTIANITY?

Joe is a Catholic who has worked out a highly satisfactory system of living. He is a good Catholic, so he believes, as he attends Mass regularly every Sunday, goes to confession and Communion monthly, abstains from flesh meat on the appointed days. But along with the necessary religious observances, he wants to get the most out of life. Work, in his opinion, is a necessary evil. Without it, you can't have the things that make life worth living. His idea is to have as much pleasure and enjoyment as possible: a continual round of night clubs, dances, dinner parties, excursions, etc. IS THIS CHRISTIANITY?

Endeavoring to harmonize a life of pleasure and self-gratification with the teaching of Christ is comparable to sleeping on a cross well cushioned by mattresses and pillows. Our Lord tells us: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (St. Luke IX. 23) "He that will save his life shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." (St. Matt. XVI. 25) "You cannot serve God and mammon." (St. Matt. VI. 24)

A Christian is another Christ. Like him, he must take up his daily cross. Life is given to us for something more serious than simply to please ourselves.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster IS THIS CHRISTIANITY?

SEPTEMBER 21. COME, FOLLOW ME

One of the things that bothers people nowadays is paying their taxes. Conditions were very similar when our Lord was upon earth, with this added annoyance that the Romans had conquered most of the world and used their position to gather riches for themselves. They sent tax gatherers to their various subject provinces and these men had a name for getting all they could out of the people. They were not regarded as being very honest, because they usually demanded more than was right and kept what was over and above for themselves.

In Judea, where our Lord lived, they were hated by everybody. Yet, there must have been some good men in the making among them for our Lord chose one of them to be an Apostle. One day as he passed by Matthew, the tax gatherer, our Lord said: "Follow me." Matthew,

SEPTEMBER

leaving his tax business, went with Jesus and became one of His Apostles.

Today Jesus Christ calls young men and women to His service, not by word of mouth, but in the secret of their hearts. He invites them as He did Matthew: "Follow me." He wishes them to be His apostles in the world by becoming priests, or Brothers, or Sisters. If you hear the call of Christ, will you follow as promptly as Matthew, the tax gatherer?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster COME, FOLLOW ME.

SEPTEMBER 22. ALL FOR GOD

After the war a prominent general who was visiting his wife in a large Eastern hospital was asked if he would like to tour the institution after he had seen his wife. He agreed. When the Sisters who were conducting him came to the separate building that housed patients afflicted with cancer told him that he would not like to visit such a place, the general insisted he would not mind any disagreeable circumstances. Under the guidance of one of the Sisters of the cancer house the general visited several of the rooms and one of the wards.

After leaving the first ward the general turned to the Sister and said: "Sister I wouldn't do that (take care of these patients) for all the money in the world."

"Neither would I," the Sister replied.

When we see Christ in others, we won't find it so hard to love them and help them no matter how much they repel us naturally. "As long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me." (St. Matt. XXV. 40)

SEPTEMBER 25. FACE THE CONSEQUENCES

If our actions or our words ever encourage another to commit a sin, we never know when the evil will cease to exist; for that matter, it may never cease until the end of time. A farmer in the Midwest argued with his pastor over the selection of a cemetery plot. Feeling angry with the priest for crossing him, he determined to "show" the priest he was not the type to take dictation from anyone. He would stop going to church. And so he never went to Mass again, never received the Sacraments again. But neither did the eight sons he raised in the years that followed. And neither did their sons nor daughters. We can imagine what the loss of the benefits of Christ's Church means to their chances of salvation and how this evil will continue to spread as the ages pass—all because of one man's single resolve.

If Martin Luther and Henry VIII had not begun their respective movements, it is still possible that millions of Europeans and Americans would be Catholics today. Many others would still believe in God and still be living moral lives. Even millions who faced Hell in centuries gone by might never have met this terrible fate. Martin Luther, a Catholic

SEPTEMBER

priest, and Henry VIII, once called the Defender of the Faith by the Pope, founded organizations that forced people away from the Catholic faith, and thereby deprived their followers of the graces that God bestows through the participation in the Mass and the Sacraments. As a result we have a hundred million practical atheists in America today—because two men chose to do what they ultimately realized was wrong.

SEPTEMBER 26. ST. ISAAC JOGUES AND HIS FELLOW MARTYRS

Exactly one hundred fifty years after America had been discovered by Columbus and less than twenty-five years after the Pilgrims set foot on Plymouth Rock, America had its first martyr in 1642. Father Isaac Jogues, a Jesuit who had worked and suffered long for the conversion of the Huron tribes of Indians, was the first to be martyred. In the seven years following, six other missionaries were put to death for the faith. They were tortured as only the savage Indian could torture. Among their torments, not the least was to see among their murderers some whom they had converted and taught and who now made a mockery of Christianity.

For example, a kettle of boiling water was poured over them to ridicule baptism. And as they tortured the priests, the Indians said, "You taught us that by suffering we gain a high place in Heaven. We love you and are only trying to give you a great reward." The Indians spoke more truly than they believed, for in return for a few hours of torment they gained an everlasting crown of glory.

After Father Brebauf died, the Indians drank his blood and the chief ate his heart as a token of respect for his courage. These priests suffered much for their faith, but how little we are willing to do Perhaps we are not even willing to kneel up on two knees during Mass, but fall back into a half-sitting position. How about it?

SEPTEMBER 27. MY YOKE IS SWEET

When the devil tempted Eve in the Garden of Paradise he told her that if she would eat of the forbidden fruit, she would become like God knowing good and evil. He appealed to her pride and her desire for independence. But as a result of the fall, the human race passed from the blessed service of God to the slavery of the devil.

We were redeemed from this terrible bondage by our Saviour Jesus Christ. In place of it we have the pleasant service of God for our Lord tells us: "My yoke is sweet and my burden light."

We might apply these words to the Most Blessed Virgin and her scapular. Be wearing this abbreviated form of the Carmelite habit we signify that we belong to her, that we are her property and possession. In return for this small act of homage, Mary watches over us, helps us to be pure, guards us in danger, preserves us from eternal damnation and speeds our departure from Purgatory. Surely her yoke is sweet when for

SEPTEMBER

such a small practice of devotion we obtain such wonderful and manifold graces.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: MY YOKE IS SWEET.

SEPTEMBER 28. ST. WENCESLAUS

St. Wenceslaus was Duke of Bohemia and ruled in that country during the period of its conversion to Christianity. He had such a love for Christ in the Blessed Sacrament that he would himself now and then sow and reap wheat from which the hosts were made. Even in the coldest weather he would rise in the night to visit the Most Blessed Sacrament.

How much different is his attitude from ours. How often do we pass the very door of the Church without visiting our Lord. While we cannot imitate him completely, we can resolve to visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament whenever we pass a church or chapel, or at least turn our thoughts to our Redeemer and our God. After all, He is there for us and for no other reason. How do you expect He will receive you in Heaven if you pay so little attention to Him here on earth?

SEPTEMBER 29. PRIESTLY CARE FOR SOULS

We ought always to honor priests. They take God's place for us. By their prayers and good works they draw down blessings upon us. They help us in times of sorrow and need, as well as in our daily grind. We ought frequently to pray for God's priests that they may always be faithful to their duties, and that God will give us many more good ones.

The following story illustrates the care that a priest exercises to accomplish his mission of bringing souls to God:

"Some time after the French Revolution, a man who had been noted for killing priests was lying very sick. He had sworn that no priest should enter his house. When a certain missionary was told of the man's condition and the oath he had taken, he immediately went to see him. At sight of the priest the dying man shouted: 'A priest in my house! Bring me my pistol.' 'What for?' asked the priest. 'My only weapon is the love of you which is in my heart.' When he could not get his pistol the man threatened the priest with his fists, exclaiming, 'I tell you, this hand has already choked twelve of you priests.' The priest smiled gently. 'You are mistaken as to the number,' he said. 'It is one less than you say. I am one of those twelve. At Foulon, you failed to kill me. See my scarred neck. Do you remember where you struck me? God saved me to save you.' He then embraced the sick man and helped him to prepare for and die a happy death."

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 2. DON'T YOU KNOW ME?

St. Frances of Rome had the privilege of seeing her guardian angel in visible form. When she did well, he seemed happy and pleased, but when she deviated ever so little from the path of virtue, he would withdraw from her and show marked signs of displeasure.

We do not see our guardian angel, but we know by faith that he is present with us to watch over us and protect us in soul and body. If he were to appear to us, perhaps he might say: "Don't you know me? I am with you all the time and yet you do not even think of me. I protect you and you show no signs of gratitude."

The least we can do is to remember our guardian once a day in our morning or evening prayers. Better, we should try to recall his presence frequently and ask his assistance in our difficulties whether of soul or body.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster DON'T YOU KNOW ME?

OCTOBER 3. VALUE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

What tongue can tell the value of a human soul! The soul of man in dignity surpasses all the creatures of earth and is but little less than the angels of Heaven. God delights to remain in the human soul. He dwells there as in a temple. The soul has in itself His likeness by His gift of supernatural grace. God breathed into it His own beauty and glory.

By Baptism the soul was robed in grace, elevated to a supernatural participation of divine life, made a child of God, and heir of Heaven, a prince of the royal family of the King of kings. In order to rescue souls from Satan's dominion, God sent His own beloved Son into the world to suffer and die.

The soul will endure. It will never pass away. It is immortal! Truly, man's soul is a precious, glorious creation. Let us try always to keep our souls in the state of grace, that God may dwell in them contentedly, finding therein a place of rest and love.

OCT. 4. ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The son of a rich merchant, the gayest of the gay youths of his native town of Siena, Francis of Assisi out of love for the poor gave up his wealth and chose poverty for his lot. At a time when money was worshipped and the poor treated as outcasts, he despised wealth to found an order of beggar friars who lived simply by the alms of the faithful. In all of this, he followed in the footsteps of the Son of God Who came down from the magnificence of Heaven and chose for Himself a life of poverty. He might have been born in a palace; but He chose a stable. He could have been rich; but He preferred to be poor. He had not where to lay His Divine head during His preaching. His disciples depended on the gifts of the people for their livelihood.

OCTOBER

Today, we need this lesson of poverty. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Too many people nowadays are making money the great objective of their lives. Yet our Lord tells us not to desire earthly things, to be poor in spirit. Are we true followers of Christ?

OCTOBER 5. LOVE ONE ANOTHER

St. Jerome tells of St. John the Evangelist, that in his last years when no longer able to walk on account of his age, he would be carried to Church in the arms of his disciples. All his preaching consisted in the repetition of this exhortation: "Little children, love one another." Finally, tired of hearing always the same thing they asked him: "Father, why do you always repeat the same words?" And he answered: "Because this is the precept of the Lord, and everything is contained in its fulfillment." No wonder the pagans used to say of the early Christians: "See how they love one another!"

OCTOBER 6. MARY PROMISES PEACE IF—

It is a remarkable fact that in her recent apparitions such as Lourdes and Fatima, the Most Blessed Virgin has appeared with a rosary and urged the recitation of this most beautiful prayer. She has likewise made extraordinary promises on condition that we individually and in our families recite the rosary daily.

Many people are worrying about the possibility of a future war. We in this country have only a faint idea of its terrible ravages. But we need only to think of the people of Europe, many of whom were bombed to death or crippled for life; many others had their homes completely destroyed; others were left destitute; food became scarce so that large numbers died of starvation and disease. The effects of the last war still go on.

The probability is that a third world war would bring heavy damages on this country and thus war would be brought home to us in a very personal way. We should be willing to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to prevent such a terrible catastrophe.

But what can we do? The answer is very simple. **MARY HAS PROMISED PEACE AND THE CONVERSION OF RUSSIA ON CONDITION THAT WE SAY THE ROSARY AS INDIVIDUALS AND IN OUR FAMILIES.**

Let us then respond to her urgent wishes by saying our rosary daily for these intentions.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: **MARY PROMISES PEACE IF—**

TEACHING AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR vinylite prayer card: **THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY**, the fifteen mysteries with one sentence explanations. (Write for sample.)

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 9. WHO'S OBEYING WHOM?

Are we really being obedient when we argue with our parents after they have commanded us to do something we do not like and therefore literally force them to change their minds?

The story is told of the young suitor who finally asks his girl friend to marry him. She replied, "I'll have to ask my father first; I always do what he tells me to." He, rising from his knees, asked: "Do you think he'll say O.K.?" "Oh yes," she said, "He always does what I tell him to."

Is this the sort of obedience you practise?

OCTOBER 10. THE PRIEST IS CHRIST

Are you sometimes afraid of going to confession because of the priest? Are you keeping away from this sacrament of reconciliation because you dread the ordeal? If so, you should revive your faith and try to realize that in confession as at the altar, the **PRIEST IS CHRIST**. When he lifts his hand in blessing and says the words: "I absolve thee from thy sins. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." it is really Christ who is freeing you from guilt.

Would you be afraid of our Lord? He came into the world to save sinners. So notorious was His love for them that he was blamed for being the friend of publicans and sinners. He it was who forgave the woman taken in adultery when others would have wanted her stoned to death. He it was Who gave us the beautiful parables of the lost sheep and the prodigal son. You cannot doubt His desire to forgive you without doing an injustice to His Sacred Heart.

So don't let a bogey keep you away from the great happiness of being at peace with God. Simply remember that the **PRIEST IS CHRIST**.

VISUAL AID: The **RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR** poster: **THE PRIEST IS CHRIST**.

OCTOBER 11. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Periodically big business concerns call in certified public accountants to check all their financial books to make certain that they are operating efficiently and not spending more than they are making.

We have to make a similar checkup in our lives. We can do this daily by a short examination of conscience before retiring to rest. We look back upon the day to see wherein we may have been foolish and may have offended God. We ask His pardon and resolve to correct ourselves on the morrow. By so doing we will always be ready for God's final examination of us at death. We also make an examination of conscience before confession. The daily examen will help us prepare for our weekly confession. Take time tonight to examine yourself. Do this every night and watch the results. (Give a brief method of examination.)

OCTOBER 12. THE POWER OF THE ROSARY

In 1571, the Spanish and Papal fleets under Don Juan of Austria met the Turks off the Island of Lepanto in the Adriatic. At the time the

OCTOBER

Moslems were invading Europe from the south by way of the Danube and also by sea. Pope St. Pius V could not get the rebellious Protestant princes of Germany to help the cause of Christendom and thus the future of Europe looked dark.

Unlike some of us, however, Pope Pius V knew the power of the Holy Rosary and urged the people of Rome to pray continuously while the Catholic fleet went out to meet the infidel. The crowds in the squares and churches prayed and waited for the results of the battle which was taking place over two hundred miles away. Despite this distance (and the absence of radio or telegraph), the Holy Father through divine inspiration was able to assure them of the victory at the very hour the furious onslaught of the Turks was resisted and crushed by the combined navies of the nations that remained faithful to their Christian heritage.

The rosary is most pleasing to Mary. It is a wreath of roses offered up to her. Thus, she is grateful and will intercede with God for us as she did for the great Dominican Pope. Therefore, let us increase our confidence in the power of the rosary and say it with ever greater fervor.

OCTOBER 13. ON WILLING TO BE A SAINT

In 1854, a young lad of the age of twelve entered the Salesian Oratory at Turin. He had been there only six months when he heard a sermon on sanctity by the holy priest who had founded this institution for the care of boys. The preacher dwelt chiefly on three things: (1) It is the Will of God that we should be saints ("This is the will of God, your sanctification"—I Thess. IV, 3); (2) It is very easy to become one; (3) Great rewards are promised to saints in Heaven.

About the third point, there can be no doubt. The first is rather obvious too if we are familiar with the teaching of our Lord ("Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." St. Matt. V. 48) and St. Paul. But we might reasonably entertain some doubt regarding the second point, especially when we think of the heroic penances of the Saints.

Dominic, however, took these words to heart and resolved to become a saint. His confessor, St. John Bosco, would let him do no great penances in spite of his desires in this respect. He simply directed him on a way of love for Jesus and Mary and fidelity in the service of God.

Dominic died in 1856 at the age of fourteen. He was declared Venerable in 1933 and was beatified in 1950. He has been given us by the Church as a model of teen-age holiness. Pray to him that his intercession may obtain for you the grace to determine to live a holy life.

OCTOBER 16. NO COMPROMISE

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. FOR EITHER HE WILL HATE THE ONE, AND LOVE THE OTHER: OR HE WILL SUSTAIN THE ONE, AND DESPISE THE OTHER. YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON.

OCTOBER

One of the most hateful figures to come out of the recent war was the quisling or the collaborator—the type of person who threw in his lot with the conqueror for his own private gain and advantage. He might protest that, at heart, he was just as patriotic as the next fellow, but his countrymen would scarcely believe such a tale. Rightly, they would judge that no man can serve two countries at war with each other or in a state of opposition.

Neither can we go through life serving God and the devil. We must make up our minds whether we want God and eternal happiness or the devil and eternal misery. Riding the fence is the sure road to disaster. Trying to keep in good with God so as to save our souls, but allowing ourselves to break His commandments for our own advantage and satisfaction is the broad highway to Hell.

God asks us point blank: ARE YOU FOR ME OR AGAINST ME? THERE IS NO MIDDLE WAY, NO COMPROMISE WITH HIM.

OCTOBER 17. TREASURE IN HEAVEN

There's an old proverb that tells us "He prays little who prays only on his knees." At first that may sound a bit strange. We sometimes tend to think of kneeling at Mass on Sunday or by our bedside at morning and evening as the proper times—or at least the main times—for prayer. But that proverb is based on a solid foundation. It is just another way of saying what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do *all* for the glory of God." That means just this: we should do all our actions in a prayerful spirit—play, work, study, all should be for God. That's why we have prayers before each class—so we can offer our day's work to God. By taking advantage of the prayers before class, you can form the habit of doing all your actions for God and thus "lay up treasure in Heaven."

OCTOBER 18. MAKE IT COUNT

In the game of baseball a runner has to be careful to touch all bases, otherwise he can be called out and have his effort nullified. A player intent on helping his side to win considers this a point of capital importance.

When we make the Sign of the Cross, we have been instructed to touch the forehead, the breast, the left and right shoulders. This is the proper way if we want to make it count. But all too often people get into careless habits. Could it be that they are not serious enough about doing this action well?

In the life of St. Bernadette, it is related that she made the Sign of the Cross in a way that left a definite impression on those who beheld her. In other words, she knew what she was doing and she did it with a full intention.

Let us follow her example. By this sign and the accompanying words we proclaim ourselves the followers of the crucified Christ and invoke

OCTOBER

the Most Holy Trinity in what we are about to do. Surely for such an exalted action we should be just as careful as the baseball player who wishes to make a run.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: MAKE IT COUNT. TOUCH ALL BASES.

OCTOBER 19. THE ROSARY

The modern slogan tells us: "Say it with flowers." And so we do, on a birthday, anniversary or Mother's day. In the same spirit, we put flowers before the statue of the Most Blessed Virgin and the saints or on the main altar to signify our esteem and love.

But more pleasing to our Mother in Heaven than material flowers is a spiritual wreath of roses—the Rosary. Each Our Father, each Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, is a rose more or less beautiful depending on our dispositions, which we form into the wreath of the Rosary and present to Mary our Mother.

Let us by the care, attention and love with which we recite these prayers present to our Queen and Mother the most beautiful flowers possible.

OCTOBER 20. ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

St. Edward the Confessor lived in the eleventh century. He is accounted one of the best rulers England ever had and people looked back to his reign as being a model of what should be.

It is related that when he was to be sent to Europe to pursue his studies, his mother told him before leaving for the university at Paris: "My son, I would rather see you dead at my feet than have you commit a mortal sin."

In the mind of this truly Christian woman, no earthly evil, not even death was to be compared with mortal sin which takes away the divine life within us and makes us enemies of God. It was in this spirit that the martyrs died. They could have saved themselves by putting a few grains of incense on the fire before the altar of some pagan deity. But they preferred death rather than mortal sin. Are we determined to avoid mortal sin at any cost? Our Lord tells us: "AND IF THY RIGHT EYE SCANDALIZE THEE, PLUCK IT OUT AND CAST IT FROM THEE. FOR IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR THEE THAT ONE OF THY MEMBERS SHOULD PERISH, RATHER THAN THAT THY WHOLE BODY BE CAST INTO HELL." By this, of course, our Lord does not mean that we should tear our eyes out if they are leading us to sin. But He is teaching us that we should avoid the occasions of sin even though it be as hard to do as it would be for us to pluck our eyes out. Are WE this serious about avoiding mortal sin?

OCTOBER 24. SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS

Last Sunday's Gospel affords us an excellent instruction on the manner in which we must exercise charity towards our fellowmen. The

OCTOBER

incident Christ told us was about a man whose servant owed him ten thousand talents. When, however, the servant pleaded for mercy, the man forgave the debt. The servant, however, went out to a fellow-worker who owed him the trifling sum of one hundred pence and had him beaten until the debt was paid. Christ then told us that the master, upon hearing this, had the unjust servant imprisoned until the debt was paid.

This story is a striking example of our relations to God and to our fellowmen. We have often offended God by our sins; since God is infinite in dignity and majesty, our offense is necessarily serious in nature. Yet, upon our repentance, God forgives us. On the other hand, we sometimes are offended in some way by one of our neighbors. This offense, of course, is definitely millions of times more trifling in comparison to our offense against God. Yet, how difficult we find it to forgive this small injury. Christ tells us, however, that if we expect to be forgiven by God, we must show the spirit of forgiveness to our neighbor.

OCTOBER 25. TAKE THE PLUNGE

One of the common experiences of life is the aversion we feel to entering the water or making the first dive. We can see others enjoying the experience, but our imagination conjures up all sorts of bogies that paralyze our will. Perhaps we try testing the temperature of the water with our toe. If the day is warm, the water probably feels cold and so we are further discouraged. We make ourselves look silly standing endlessly on the diving board. Finally, in a sort of desperation we make the plunge and lo! we are in the swim and enjoying it.

Something similar occurs when we approach any new experience in life. Imagination works overtime and we are paralyzed with fear. But once we make the dreaded step we find as a rule that most of our apprehensions were unjustified.

This applies in particular to the matter of our vocation. We can see for ourselves that seminarians and novices are obviously happy in their new life, but still we feel it will be difficult or impossible for us. Once, however, we have gathered enough courage and made the plunge, so to speak, we usually find that it is just what we want.

If you feel you have a vocation and are held back by such imaginary difficulties, why not use a little psychology on yourself?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: TAKE THE PLUNGE. THE WATER'S FINE.

TEACHING AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR vinylite card: COMMUNION—VOCATION with prayer after Communion and prayer to know one's vocation. (Write for sample.)

OCTOBER 26. LIVE YOUR CONVICTIONS

In the first week of the operation of the United Nation's Organization in New York, a lady seated in the spectators' gallery noticed that when delegates from almost fifty nations entered the General Assembly there

OCTOBER

was no public recognition given until Gromyko of the U.S.S.R. arrived. When his delegation entered the assembly a great number of the 750 members of the gallery stood on their feet and thundered applause. After this had happened the third time, this lady started clapping when a group of the minor nations representatives entered. A few of the non-partisan spectators joined with her; soon others joined. The delegates who had hitherto been ignored, turned to look at the galleries with broad smiles on their faces. They were being recognized, they were appreciated. They entered their task of upholding the rights of mankind against the Russian clique with new courage. One woman had the courage to be different. Let us lead in the cause of what is right even though no one else does. Other well intentioned people, less courageous than ourselves, will follow.

OCTOBER 27. CHRIST THE KING

It was a matter of common observation when totalitarian states were on the rise that their dictatorial rulers were all opposed to the Church. That was true in Russia, Germany and Italy, where ruthless men desired to have complete control of the lives of their subjects and to strangle any breath of independence from the body politic.

This is not at all surprising when we realize that no man or government can do what it wants and still observe the law of God. Keeping the commandments means restrictions and limitations which the dictators would not brook.

There are many private individuals today who adopt much the same attitude. They want "to live their own life," as they phrase it. Thereby, they mean that they want no interference from the laws of God or the Church. Naturally, then, they rebel against religion.

Thus, both states and individuals have thrown off the yoke of Christ the King and for the very same reason: they want their own way. The result has been similar in both cases: a loss of peace with all the accompanying miseries and heartaches. The nations certainly have not re-established peace; and individuals are torn apart by the violence of their passions.

The remedy is given us by the Church in the feast of Christ the King. To reestablish peace in the world at large and in human souls, all must submit to Him. Otherwise, there is no hope. Let us pray earnestly for this intention: "THY KINGDOM COME."

OCTOBER 30. THE MARTYRDOM OF PURITY

After his death, Dominic Savio (beatified 1950) appeared to his confessor, St. John Bosco, together with a large band of boys among whom were many pupils of the Oratory. At the head of the group walked Dominic Savio. He wore a tunic whiter than snow and starred with diamonds. A broad scarlet girdle ornamented with pearls was around his waist. From his neck hung a garland of flowers and he was crowned with roses.

OCTOBER

The clothes of his companions were different but splendid. All wore scarlet girdles. The scarlet girdle was symbolical of the sacrifices made to preserve the virtue of purity, sacrifices so great that they might be compared to martyrdom.

Each of us then can be a martyr of purity for the love of Christ. By avoiding the occasions of sin and those alluring pleasures which lead to sin, we make many sacrifices. We must persist in prayer and the use of the Sacraments. Only by a truly holy life replete with the spirit of self-denial can we obtain a complete victory.

OCTOBER 31. OUR PATRON SAINT

Tomorrow the Church recalls to us the memory of all who have reached Heaven. There are doubtless many individuals in Heaven whose names are not on the official roll of honor set up by the Church. To remind us of this and to recall the fact that we should be preparing to become one of them, the Church has instituted the Feast of All Saints.

On our part, we should learn something of how these saints attained their happiness and then imitate them. In all fields of endeavor, people imitate those who have attained success before them. Many boys, for example, have developed into baseball players by learning about and imitating Joe Dimaggio. In the spiritual order we shall find it highly profitable to study and imitate some person who has become a hero of sanctity. How many of us know the life of the Saint whose name we bear? We should learn about his life and try to follow in his footsteps.

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 2. ALL SOULS DAY

Yesterday the Church honored all of God's heroes, His Saints, who have entered the happiness of Heaven. Today the Church prays in a special manner for the suffering souls in Purgatory. At no other time during the year does the Church bring into clearer focus her doctrine of the Communion of Saints than on these two days. The Church Militant on earth, the Church Suffering in Purgatory and the Church Triumphant in Heaven are all united in offering prayers to God.

Those in Purgatory can pray for us but they cannot help themselves. Some of these souls may be our close friends or relatives who are being cleansed of their sins by the terrible torments of fire so as to be able to join their brothers in Christ in Heaven. The Church is so anxious to change the names of All Souls to All Saints that she allows each priest to say three Masses today to help them arrive at Heaven more speedily. We can also help them by our prayers through this month of November which is dedicated to the suffering souls. We pray best when we have an intention. Let the intention of our prayers during this month be for the suffering souls. Our charity for them will be rewarded by their prayers for us when they enter Heaven and speak to Christ for us.

NOVEMBER 3. CHRIST KNOCKS

In the chapel of Keble College, Oxford, there hangs the famous masterpiece, *The Light of the World*, by Holman Hunt. It depicts the Master standing and knocking at a door upon which vines are growing. The hinges are rusty from long disuse. In His hand He holds a lantern. "Behold!" He is saying, "I stand at the door and knock." When Hunt had finished his painting, he invited his fellow artists to inspect it. They viewed it carefully from this angle and from that. Loud were they in their praise.

"It is a masterpiece of all time," they said.

"But," said one of them, "you have forgotten one thing."

"What is that?" asked Hunt.

"You have forgotten to place a knob on the door."

"No," said Hunt, "I have not forgotten it. I have omitted it purposely. For that is the door of the human heart and it opens only from within."

Christ may knock. Christ may plead. But it is only we who can admit Him. Christ is standing today before the door of every human heart, pleading for admittance in the Sacrament of His love. Will you not open it each day and let Him in?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: CHRIST WANTS YOUR HEART.

NOVEMBER 6. TOUCHING CHRIST WITH FAITH

In the Gospel of yesterday's Mass, the Apostles were astonished at the question of our Lord: "Who has touched me?" for the crowd was

NOVEMBER

millling about Him and pressing Him on all sides. But there was one woman who touched Christ not merely with her body but also with her soul. She had faith in our Lord and said to herself: "If I shall but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be healed."

Has it never occurred to us that when we receive Christ in Holy Communion we are much closer to Him and come into more personal contact with Him than did this woman? Yet, possibly, the effects produced in us are not very remarkable. The reason is that we are like the great majority of the crowd who touched Christ but with no great faith.

When our Lord next comes to us, let us try to have some of the faith of this woman. Is not our Lord all powerful? If we are weak and easily fall into sin, will He not give us grace to avoid this danger? If we have strong passions to overcome, will He not enable us to conquer them? What is there that is impossible to Him? But we must have FAITH in Him and ardently desire to be cured regardless of what it costs us.

NOVEMBER 7. EFFECTS OF SCANDAL

Some Catholics with little pride do not find it difficult to go to confession and make amends for their sins. Sometimes they judge others by themselves and believe that everybody finds it as easy as they do. This belief makes them careless about the scandal they give others.

A boy encouraged a girl to commit a sin. He told himself that she could go to confession as he would and the sin would no longer exist. Unfortunately, the girl felt too ashamed to mention the sin. She never went to confession again and adding sin to sin, despairingly gave up her Faith. The boy amended his life, made reparation for his sin, began living a very deep spiritual existence until finally he entered the seminary.

Years later when he learned the girl no longer was a Catholic, he reflected simply that she must have always been a bad person. Little did he realize that he was the one responsible for her tragic position.

NOVEMBER 8. CHRIST WAS A JEW

Have we ever engaged in conversation wherein we took the Jews apart, so to speak (and considered that we were doing a service to God, that somehow because of our attitude we were better Christians.

Wouldn't it be embarrassing if in the midst of our little djatribe, Christ were to walk into our spellbound audience and then His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph together with the Twelve Apostles? Very embarrassing indeed, for they were all Jews.

We sometimes forget that apart from the general charity we owe to all men as children of God in the broad sense and potential children of God by the life of grace, we really are bound by special ties to the Jews. For centuries by the will of God, they preserved the idea of the Messiah and prepared the way for Him. Our Lord's personal mission was almost entirely to the Jewish race and in the normal course of events according to the designs of God they were to be the first to receive Christianity.

NOVEMBER

The Christian religion, then, is the development of the Jewish religion. Therefore, we are bound to them by strong spiritual ties and there is much in our liturgy and dogma and morals that comes directly from them.

These truths, it would seem, should outweigh the petty, materialistic considerations often brought up when discussing the Jewish people. Let us pray for them that they too may become brothers of Christ by grace as they are His brothers by race.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: ANTI-SEMITIC? CHRIST WAS A JEW.

NOVEMBER 9. CHANGE YOUR WILL — NOW!

Many of us sing with the poet in our own simple words and aspirations the sentiments in the song, "I WISH THERE WERE SOME WONDERFUL PLACE, THE LAND OF BEGINNING ANEW." We feel that if only our environment were different, if only we were in a different school with different teachers with a different program, if only we had different parents or a different job, everything would be fine. Actually, the major problems of life are not around us but within us. No matter how much we change our circumstances, we still have ourselves and if the trouble lies there no amount of external alteration will help us a great deal.

Let us be realists, then, and instead of trying to escape the PLACE or the CIRCUMSTANCES, if we could, remember that if we change the word to TIME, we *will* be able to begin anew. For the present moment is always the time to make a fresh start.

NOVEMBER 10. HEROES ARE HUMAN

In the fitful fever that is war, there is a tendency to glorify those who have fallen in battle to such an extent as to forget that they are still human. Some have gone so far as to imagine that the soldier who dies in battle is automatically saved. But this is a pure delusion. Much depends on the spirit in which he lives and dies. If he sincerely believes that he is fighting for justice and the right, for the defense of his fellow countrymen, and that out of love for them he is sacrificing himself, then this charity, if animated by a sincere love of God, will surely win him a high reward in Heaven.

But do all have such high ideals? The army is not always a school of virtue. Soldiers may be guilty of hatred, murder, lust. If they should die in mortal sin, they would go to Hell just as surely as anybody else. Hence, while we glorify them as heroes, we must not forget that they were very human individuals, subject to sin, and exposed to it by the circumstances into which they are thrown. Therefore, we should show our charity towards our departed members of the armed forces by praying for them so that God Who in His mercy has seen fit to deliver them

NOVEMBER

from the horrors of the battlefield, may free them from the still more terrible sufferings of of Purgatory.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: THEY DESERVE OUR PRAYERS.

NOVEMBER 13. LITTLE ACTIONS

We have all heard the saying, "From little acorns mighty oak trees grow." Many grains of sand can make a beautiful seashore; from scraps of foul and dirty rags immaculately white paper is fashioned; and from only twenty-six simple letters of the alphabet the most inspiring of epics can be created. If we but stop to consider this is true of most things in life. From apparently insignificant things great facts take their source. Our lives are made up of many such small actions: obedience and silence in school, punctuality, the daily prayers in the classroom. God asks that we perform these small daily actions through love for Him. If we wait to accomplish great deeds, we shall never do anything worth while. To become a saint put fervor into small daily actions. Do them as well as you know for God.

NOVEMBER 14. "YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!"

"You can't take it with you" was the title of a humorous play a few years back. And in truth, those who collect large sums of money during life only to have it squandered by shiftless heirs after they die are not far from being crazy.

But there are two ways of applying this idea. People who think in terms of this life say: "Don't hoard money. Spend it. Enjoy yourself. That's what life is for." But those who think in terms of the next life say: "Don't hoard money. Spend it. Use it for your needs and when these have been reasonably satisfied, employ what remains to help the Church, to succor the poor, to do good." In this way, earthly treasures will be transformed into eternal riches. As our Lord counsels us: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal." (St. Matt. vi. 19, 20)

NOVEMBER 15. YOUR FRIEND IS WAITING FOR YOU

Did you ever have somebody pass you on the street and fail to show any sign of recognition even though he was well acquainted with you? Of course, the impression was left that he didn't see you. Or perhaps a group of boys or girls from your school are approaching on your side of the street, but suddenly they veer to the other side. Just an accident and nothing more.

Such behaviour is hardly to be considered warm friendship. A true friend would come from the other side of the street or at least give some sign of recognition.

NOVEMBER

Now, we have in the Most Blessed Sacrament the best friend of all. He is waiting there for us day and night and yet, perhaps, though it would entail very little inconvenience, we never step in to say "Hello." We pass by the church and coldly refuse to take the few steps to go inside. Or we may have been told that every time we go by a church we should try to enter and make a visit. So we avoid the church and proceed by another route.

Our Lord sees our hearts. And what does he think of our cold attitude toward Him?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: YOUR FRIEND IS WAITING FOR YOU.

NOVEMBER 16. ST. ISIDORE AND THE MASS

While in the employ of a Spanish farmer Saint Isidore had much to suffer in order to attend daily Mass. His employer and many people taunted him for his piety. One morning while St. Isidore was at Mass, his master going into the fields saw two oxen drawing the plow guided by an angel from heaven. From this time on his employer never prevented him in the least from attending Mass, and he thanked God for having given him a man who blessed his farm so.

Although we cannot expect miracles as a reward for the sacrifices we make to attend daily Mass, yet we can be sure that God rewards us with an increase of grace and merit. Make some effort to attend Mass more frequently, and even daily if possible.

NOVEMBER 17. A NEW MODEL

Every year in the automobile industry, manufacturers vie with each other in the gentle art of wooing the public to their brand of equipment. Large billboards shout the many virtues of next year's model long before the new year arrives, radios blare their none-too-soothing messages of superlatives to unsuspecting victims, salesmen point out with much display of technical jargon the innumerable improvements over last year's model. There is this type of shift and that sort of drive, a new brake lining and an improved windshield wiper and so on ad nauseam.

The author of the Imitation, a great spiritual book, wrote several centuries ago something to the effect that if men were as intent on rooting out vices and planting virtues as they were in mooted questions, the world would be a much better place to live in.

If he were alive today when men as a class are not even concerned with discussing points in theology, he would probably write: "Oh, if men were as eager in making new models of themselves after the example of Christ as they are in discussing and seeking the best type of car, the world would soon be filled with saints and exemplars of holiness."

And why not? Is it more in order to be driving around in the most de luxe of cars with an ugly and deformed soul than to be riding about in a very ordinary vehicle with a soul that gives joy to the angels of God?

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 20. EJACULATIONS

Christ in the Gospel tells us "pray always." At first consideration this might appear to be impossible as far as you are concerned. You have your work to do in and out of school and besides you must have some recreation. Surely, we can't be praying during all these times. Not formally, true; but there are hundreds of ejaculatory prayers we can say that take only a fraction of a second: "My Lord and my God," "My Jesus Mercy!", "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph." Think of the hundreds or even thousands of seconds that go to waste daily when we could so easily be throwing (as the word itself means) thoughts to God, while riding to school, changing classes, etc. During the first World War, Father Doyle, an army chaplain in France, while undergoing all the dangers, sufferings, and fatigue of battle, wrote that he said several thousand ejaculations daily. How many ejaculations we could say! What a spirit of prayer we could have if we would only try and think of this!

TEACHING AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR vinylite prayer card: SHORT INDULGENCED PRAYERS, twenty-one ejaculations with indulgences listed. (Write for sample.)

NOVEMBER 21. LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

We know from our catechism that we are bound to love our neighbor. This does not mean that we must feel a natural attraction for him, however. Often we confuse the two ideas of *like* and *love*. They are entirely distinct. Christ did not tell us, "*Like* thy neighbor as thyself," but "*Love* thy neighbor as thyself." There is all the difference in the world in this distinction. It is impossible to *like* everybody because by nature most people are frankly unlikeable. God did not and could not command us to like everyone unless He gave everyone a likeable nature. But He does command us to love everyone despite his unlikeable nature. So we can love another supernaturally despite his unlikeable nature. But supernatural love will always help us conquer the natural repugnance we may feel towards another. Let us then say our prayers this morning for one whom we particularly dislike on the natural plane that we may overcome this repugnance and love him supernaturally.

NOVEMBER 22. THANKSGIVING

Tomorrow, we can take some satisfaction as American citizens in the fact that our country publicly acknowledges the Creator and returns Him thanks for all His benefits. We would indeed be most ungrateful if we were to act otherwise. From many points of view, we seem to be the most favored nation in the world at the present time. We are blessed with abundant natural resources; we have not been injured by the havoc of war; our people, as a whole, are getting enough to eat and sometimes even a goodly share of extras in this world's goods. We are blessed with relative freedom; we are allowed to practise our religion and follow our conscience without interference from the state; we have comparative

NOVEMBER

peace. For all these and ever so many other blessings bestowed on us by God, let us as grateful citizens of this great nation show sincere gratitude. (Mass could be suggested as being preeminently the sacrifice of thanksgiving.)

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: HE'S THANKFUL. ARE YOU?

NOVEMBER 27. THE VALUE OF TIME

Much has been written and spoken about the nature of time, its passing character, its uncertainty. For time is very mysterious being constituted actually by a living present which leaves behind a dead past and enters an uncertain future. The past is gone: it can never be brought back. The future lies ahead: but we don't know how much of it there is for us. All we have actually is the important NOW. We must live in the present moment. There is little use wasting our time brooding over the mistakes we have made. There is not much value either in dreaming fantastic dreams for the future.

Life can be made worth while by living with vigor in the HERE-AND-NOW making each moment count for eternity, storing up for ourselves an eternal weight of glory. The remedy for past mistakes is not useless regrets but repentance and amendment NOW. Dreams will come true in the future if in the PRESENT we do the things that will make them a reality.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: TIME IS FLYING. BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH IT?

NOVEMBER 28. HELL

What a chill of horror and fear contemplation of this word and its reality can cause in a thoughtful person. What utter hopelessness to find oneself buried in the fires of hell; to be tortured by mighty, intelligent beings who rage and rave with a deep fierceness of hatred too vast and full and bitter for the human mind to conceive! How woeful it must be to feel the fiery breath of those disgusting demons as they clutch the soul in their torturing embrace! Such pain to be clothed in unquenchable flames, to be penetrated to the very depths of one's being with fire. Other ills, too, afflict the damned—nauseating stenches, abominable sights, the taste of sickening filth, the sounds of frightful screams of pain, the curses of hatred, and the blasphemous cries of agonized souls. What despair afflicts the unfortunate souls that find themselves in such a pitiful state of eternal damnation. Fitting for certain are the words Dante places at the entrance of Hell: "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here!"

NOVEMBER 29. WHAT IS A SAINT?

A child was asked to explain what a saint is. The child, whose only experience with saints had come to him when his large, roving eyes had

NOVEMBER

admired the sun-filled stained glass windows of his parish church on Sunday mornings, answered, "A saint is a person that the light shines through."

Without realizing it, this child stated a profound truth. "God is light," says St. John, "and in Him there is no darkness." Those who are saints are the true children of God, the children of light. Their souls are clean and pure; their thoughts and desires are holy. The sinner is like a crystal vase covered with mud and filth; the light cannot get through it. The saint is the same vase exceedingly clean: the light plays on it and sparkles through it.

Let us cleanse our souls from sin, from evil thoughts, from wicked desires and we too may see the light of God shining in our souls.

NOVEMBER 30. THE SAFETY CORD

Imagine an airman falling, falling, falling from ten thousand feet. Why doesn't he pull the cord that releases the parachute? Has he become unconscious? That is his only chance for safety.

Our ring for pulling the safety cord of the soul that releases the saving parachute of grace is confession. If we refuse to use it, we run a risk of landing in Hell.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: PULL THE CORD!

(Note. This poster is apt to present a problem to the mind of the air-age student. He will argue that even after the parachute is out, the airman will have to land in the flames anyhow in the course of time. The air-age teacher will instruct the air-age student to the effect that by pulling on the strings on one side of the parachute he can let air slip out and give himself a directional motion thus avoiding the flames. Anyhow, it's just a symbolical representation.)

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 1. DO YOUR BEST

A famous man once said, "If you can't get first prize, at least run your hardest and make the winner break the record!" Not everyone can be a top-flight athlete or a straight-A student. There must be followers as well as leaders in the world. But just because we aren't always on the very top or even close to it is no reason to give up. If we try our hardest in everything we do, we'll not only make those on top work to get there, but we'll also keep improving ourselves. Remember—the man in the Gospel who got five silver talents had to make the most of them just as much as the man who got ten! And he who received one but neglected to use it was severely punished for his negligence.

DECEMBER 4. ARE YOU MISSING THE BOAT?

Ranking high in the list of human frustrations is the experience called "missing the boat." For weeks or even months, you have been thinking of the day and hour of departure, anticipating the fond farewells and the pleasures of the voyage. And then it happens! A miscalculation in packing, the late arrival of the taxi, an accident along the way (flat tire, e.g.) and you reach the dock just in time to see the boat leaving.

Some people get so discouraged and downhearted in an experience of this sort as to give up completely.

The same idea might be applied to human life. As Shakespeare says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." But very often failure to take advantage of this golden opportunity leads to lifelong disappointment.

To many, for example, God gives the tremendous grace of a vocation to the higher life. But as our Lord says, "Many are called, but few are chosen." A great number allow themselves to be deterred by vain imaginations and fears. They come close to making the decision and then they step back. The longer they wait, the harder very often it becomes to make the transition. What they need is a little more courage, determination and trust in God. Then they won't have that most unsatisfying of human experiences "missing the boat."

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: ARE YOU MISSING THE BOAT?

TEACHING AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR vinylite prayer card: COMMUNION—VOCATION, with prayer after communion and prayer to know one's vocation. (Write for sample.)

DECEMBER 5. CHECK ON YOURSELF

A small colored boy in New Orleans, La., entered a grocery store and asked permission of the manager to use his phone.

"Sure," the manager said, "Go ahead and use it. There it is hanging on the wall."

DECEMBER

The small boy went over, called a number and began talking to the manager of another grocery store.

"Does yo all employ a small boy in your store to help with odd jobs?"

"Yes."

"You wouldn't have an opening for a small boy at the present time?"

"No."

"Is the boy you have giving satisfaction?" "Yes." "You wouldn't be considering somebody else for the job?"

"No."

"Thank you, sir."

The grocer who had been listening to the conversation said sympathetically:

"I'm sorry you didn't get that job."

"Oh, that's all right, suh, I was checking on myself."

When is the last time we made a serious check on ourselves? Or are we leaving all this heavy work to our parents, teachers, priests, and companions?

DECEMBER 6. ST. NICHOLAS

Good St. Nicholas with his rosy cheeks and jolly round form is a character loved by all the world. To most people he is identical with Santa Claus, who represents the spirit of Christmas, the spirit of generosity. But few know or remember St. Nicholas as a flesh and blood Saint, the Bishop of Myra, who lived in Asia Minor in the fourth century and left the world a great lesson by his gifts to the poor. Few also recognize the real meaning of Christmas, when God in His infinite generosity gave to mankind His only begotten Son to be our Redeemer. We celebrate the natural joys of Christmas, but often neglect the supernatural joy and generosity of the season. Material gifts will give much happiness and consolation; but at best those gifts will not last long. On the other hand, our supernatural gifts, acts of generosity offered to the Christ Child, our payers for others, will have effects lasting into eternity. In our Christmas shopping, then, let us include a supernatural gift list. The Divine Infant will appreciate that kind of generosity and in our giving we will find a new love for Him.

DECEMER 7. IMMACULATE

If you are a photography enthusiast, imagine that you have a very beautiful picture. You put it up in your room; you rave over it; you bother all your friends by showing it to them and crowing: "Isn't it wonderful?" Then, something tragic happens. One drop of ink falls upon it. **IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE!** Every time you see it, you experience a pang of disappointment. No longer do you display it in your room or annoy your friends by pointing out its fine features. One little spot of ink made all the difference.

DECEMBER

In like manner, one spot, one sin, wrecked all the glory of the human souls of our first parents, Adam and Eve. From their creation, the light of God's grace shone in them with a splendor surpassing all imagination. One sin disfigured this wonder of God's handiwork. And all their descendants had the misfortune of coming into this world in the same tarnished condition—all except the Most Blessed Virgin Mary who was destined to be the Mother of God's own Son. She was conceived immaculate (without spot) from the first moment of her existence. Her soul reflected all the beauty of God as it had never been reflected before.

Today as we rejoice in her singular privilege, let us pray for a share in the spotless purity of our Mother in Heaven, who is so anxious to help us become like herself a beautiful mirror reflecting the holiness of God.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: O MARY IMMACULATE MAKE US HOLY AND PURE.

TEACHING AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR vinylite prayer card: THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY, the fifteen mysteries with one sentence explanations. (Write for sample.)

DECEMBER 11. A REAL MAN

When the head coach takes time out to lavish praise on a player or when Grantland Rice indulges in superlatives about a recent find of the gridiron, everybody takes notice. But what is this compared to the action of our Lord recounted in the Gospel of Sunday?

Speaking of John the Baptist He asks: "What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee." (St. Matt. XI)

St. John the Baptist was certainly no weakling, no reed shaken by the wind. He was rather a sturdy oak defying every blast of adversity. He was no self-indulgent character shrinking from the least inconvenience. Rather, he exposed himself to the elements and lived a hard life.

We can learn from him the lesson of manliness and fortitude. By being willing when young to endure difficulties and hardships, by disciplining our bodies, minds and wills, we can grow up into strong men able to meet the vicissitudes of life with the help of God's grace.

DECEMBER 12. RECEIVING THE CHRIST CHILD

We envy the shepherds and the wise men their wonderful privilege of actually seeing the Christ Child. Maybe those first visitors to the stable were allowed by Mary to hold Him. How they must have felt the warmth and smallness of Him with wonder and gazed with reverence into His eyes!

DECEMBER

But we can enjoy the very same privilege. In fact, our joy can be greater and more lasting. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Christ into our inmost hearts; the very same body, the same Divine Nature . . . all that the visitors to the stable saw and believed in. Both Sunday and Christmas day should find us at the Communion rail with lively faith receiving into our hearts the Christ Child and promising Him loyalty and service just as we should have done if we had stood before Him in the stable.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: THIS YEAR HAVE A REAL WHITE CHRISTMAS.

DECEMBER 13. "DEATH RATHER THAN SIN."

Dominic Savio, declared Blessed in 1950, was allowed to make his first Communion at the age of seven, an extraordinary privilege in the year 1849. His resolutions on that occasion were these: Jesus and Mary shall be my Friends. Death rather than sin.

The two things go together. We cannot really love our Lord and His Blessed Mother unless we are determined to avoid mortal sin, especially, regardless of the cost.

This was not a meaningless resolution, a form of words. Dominic kept it ever in his mind. On one occasion, St. John Bosco found him in ecstasy after Mass. Distinctly he heard the words: "If You ever see that I am in danger of offending You, take me to Yourself. Yes, I mean it, DEATH RATHER THAN SIN!"

Such has been the spirit of the martyrs of all ages. In particular, we might single out St. Maria Goretti, canonized by the Church on June 25, 1950 who was a martyr in defense of her chastity in 1902 at the age of twelve.

When we go to Holy Communion, let us make a like resolution and ask our Lord for the grace to keep it.

DECEMBER 14. SOWING ONE'S WILD OATS

Some older people who ought to know better will say of a young man who is leading a wild life: "Oh, well, he's only sowing his wild oats." The implication is that later on when he gets married and assumes the responsibilities of an adult, he will straighten out. But is this true?

Our Lord once told a story of a man who had a field in which he had planted wheat. Then an enemy came in the night and spread the seed of the cockle plant among the wheat with disastrous results for the farmer's crop. Following the normal course of human events in the natural and supernatural order, we must conclude with St. Paul: "For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap." (Gal. vi. 8)

Youth is the precious seed time of life. What sort of crop are we going to reap later on? The answer is: We shall reap as we are sowing

DECEMBER

now. If we are sowing good habits, we are preparing ourselves for a good and fruitful life. But if we are sowing bad habits, we are storing up misery and grief, possibly even an eternity of woe.

DECEMBER 15. REMEMBER! IT'S HIS BIRTHDAY

After the dread Christmas rush, calculating people sit back and estimate how much they have gained or lost. "So-and-so received a blanket from me and he sent only a tie. Next year I shall be more sparing. Jones came through in great style with a box of cigars. I forgot him altogether. Good business! I'll put him on my list next year." Or we muse: "I sent out twenty-five cards and received only fifteen."

This calculating attitude is not the spirit of Christmas. Christmas celebrates the greatest Gift of God to the world, His own Divine Son, Jesus. He taught us to give freely, cheerfully, with no thought of a return. That is the way God gave to us and He expects us to show our appreciation by helping our fellowman for love of Him. A real Christmas present would be giving to somebody (the poor, for example) who can make us no return whatever. Inasmuch as our Lord regards as done to Himself whatever we do to others for love of Him, this would be a very fine way of giving Him a Christmas present. After all, IT IS HIS BIRTHDAY!

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: REMEMBER! IT'S HIS BIRTHDAY.

JANUARY

JANUARY 2. OUR SHARE IN THE MASS

When the priest prepares the chalice for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, he pours into it a liberal supply of wine and then adds a few drops of water. At the same time, he says the following prayer: "O God Who in creating human nature didst marvelously ennoble it and hast still more mavelously renewed it, grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His divinity Who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord"

In other words, the wine signifies the richness of our Lord's divinity and the water our poor humanity which He joined thereto in His Sacred Person.

We can also consider that the wine signifies Christ and the water ourselves. We too, the members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, are being sacrificed with Him on the altar. This we do by offering God all that we are and all that we have in the Mass making ourselves a complete sacrifice in union with our Lord.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: PRAY THE MASS.

JANUARY 3. HEAVEN—HELL

It is related that during the time of kings and princes in Europe, a certain well known man about one of the courts became disgusted with the uselessness of life there. He left the frivolities and luxuries and became a monk. One day while begging alms he met one of his former companions, who laughed at him and said mockingly, "Say, old fellow, won't you be greatly disappointed if there is no heaven?" "Yes," replied the monk, "I certainly will. But, my friend, won't you be eternally disappointed if there is a Hell?"

Both Heaven and Hell exist. Christ leaves no doubt of this. Our lot will be in one or the other place for eternity. Let us not be disappointed! Live and work now in such a manner, that Heaven will be your abode forever. Always prefer the things of eternity to the things of time!

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: YOU CHOOSE YOUR ETERNITY.

JANUARY 4. THE DIVINE INDWELLING

Before the coming of Christ, the Jews were the chosen people of God. From their race was to come the Redeemer Who was to liberate the human race from the slavery of sin. They were unfaithful, however, to God and to punish them, He allowed them frequently in the course of their history to be conquered by neighboring nations and sometimes to be taken into captivity. One of these periods of exile they spent in Babylonia.

JANUARY

On one occasion, the Babylonian King, Baltasar, made a great feast for a thousand nobles. And as Holy Scripture says: "Everyone drank according to his age." In his drunken condition, the king commanded that the sacred vessels which had been taken from the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem should be brought forth, and used for drinking purposes. While they were thus carousing, a hand appeared and wrote three words on the wall. This put everybody into mortal terror. None of the sages of the land could explain the meaning of the words. But Daniel, a Jewish sage, was brought in and told the king that the writing on the wall meant that God had delivered him to his enemies, the Medes and Persians. That same night, Baltasar, the King, was slain and was succeeded by Darius, the Mede. Thus did God punish those who profaned the sacred vessels.

What would we think likewise of those who would use a chalice of ciborium for evil purposes?

And yet, as St. Paul tells us: "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." (I Cor. III, 16-17) We are more sacred in God's eyes than the sacred vessels, being consecrated to Him by baptism and the other sacraments, and in particular, because we have received Jesus in Holy Communion. When we commit sin, we are violating the temple of God; when we admit impure thoughts or desires into our souls, we are defiling a sanctuary in which God dwells. God will not allow the profanation of His temple to go unpunished.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: DON'T YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST?

JANUARY 5. GOOD THOUGHTS

"Where your treasure is there is your heart also." (St. Matt. VI. 21) What you love most you think about most. If you like sports a great deal your thoughts will often be about these sports. Or, if there is a certain person or place you like more than others it is that person or place that will occupy your thoughts most of the time.

If your love is for impure desires or acts then your thoughts will often be impure. Impure thoughts are dangerous; not only are they sins in themselves, if we want them, but they also lead to sins of impurity. All sins of impurity are bad because they are unnatural and because they are unnatural they take away our love for God. God has given us a free will to control our thoughts if we wish to be pure like Himself. As soon as an impure thought enters your mind kill it at the very start by quickly thinking of something else. An idle mind is still the devil's workshop.

*Good thoughts lead to good acts,
Good acts lead to good habits,
Good habits lead to good character,
A good character leads to Heaven.*

JANUARY

JANUARY 8. THE HOLY FAMILY

Let us consider the Holy Family in their humble home at Nazareth. St. Luke says of the boy Christ, "He was subject to them." "Who was subject to whom?" asks St. Bernard. A God was subject to men. Jesus was subject to Mary and Joseph. Jesus took orders from them and obeyed them perfectly. This is surely a sublime example for us.

After considering this example, should we find it difficult to obey our parents, public officials and teachers? These are the superiors whom we are supposed to obey. We profess to be followers of Christ. Hence we should imitate Him in His obedience and then we shall advance in wisdom and grace with Christ.

Let us also repeat often "Jesus, Mary and Joseph" out of love for them and thus gain the indulgence of seven years attached to each recitation of this ejaculation.

JANUARY 9. STAY ON THE BEAM

The radio beam is one of the most useful methods developed to help aeroplanes find their objective. Radio signals of the letters A (dot, dash) and N (dash, dot) are sent out in such a way that while one is approaching one's destination, the A signal is on the right of the course and the N signal is on the left. On the course itself, there is a continuous tone in the radio receiver due to the combination of the A and N signals.

Now it would be a foolish pilot who, instead of staying on the course would try greater or lesser excursions to right or left of the beam. Apart from the obvious loss of time, there is a possibility he would not reach his destination.

There is a similar situation in life. Our radio beam is the STATE OF GRACE leading us infallibly to our destination HEAVEN. As long as we keep on this beam we are sure of arriving at our objective in life. But if we deviate by going to right or left we may never attain the purpose of our existence.

The safest, the easiest, the most certain way of attaining Heaven is to stay on the beam.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: STAY ON THE BEAM.

JANUARY 10. HEAVEN

In a hall at West Point every American general has a memorial tablet inscribed in his honor. Among the number there is a blank one. This was intended for Benedict Arnold.

In Heaven, there is a place for us. Let us by a good life make sure that our name is written in the Book of Life and that we enter the mansion God has prepared for us in our eternal home.

JANUARY 11. ON BEING SORRY

"A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."
(Psalms)

JANUARY

One of the noteworthy characteristics of the lives of the saints is their sorrow for their sins and faults. St. Aloysius, who led a life of angelic innocence from his youth, never ceased sorrowing for some trivial faults he had committed, and did much severe penance. St. Gertrude, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Theresa—souls of exceptional purity and holiness—never ceased sorrowing for their sins. St. Francis of Assisi called himself and sincerely believed himself the greatest of sinners.

How are we to account for this? Simply by the fact that the saints understood better the malice of sin on the one hand and the holiness of God on the other. The nearer they got to God, the more they realized the true evil of sin and its hideousness in His sight, and hence the more they sought to do penance for it. This continual compunction of heart, this grieving over their sins, helped to keep them from further evil.

Practice: Often think with sorrow of our sins, implore the divine mercy, do penance for them.

JANUARY 12. KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

St. Peter tells us that the devil like a roaring lion goes about the world seeking whom he may devour. However, we have this assurance that the devil can tempt us no more than God allows him. This is brought out by the story of Job in the Old Testament where Satan is represented as going to God to ask permission to try His faithful servant Job.

Very often, however, we blame things on the devil which are the result of our own foolishness. We might compare him in many instances to a dog on a chain. He moves about menacingly in the circle of his influence; he barks and snaps viciously; he tugs furiously. But as long as we remain outside his reach we need not fear his bite.

Now this is a picture of what we call the occasions of sin. When we foolishly expose ourselves to some person, place or thing which normal experience or common sense tells us is apt to lead us to do wrong, we are like the person who gets inside the circle patrolled by the vicious dog. If we don't get bit, we're lucky!

Moreover, we must remember that anybody who needlessly exposes himself to a proximate occasion of sin is thereby guilty of a sin by that very fact.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster BEWARE OF THE DOG!

JANUARY 15. LOSES BET, WINS FAITH

As he was leaving the studio after a broadcast a few years ago, Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen was stopped by a stranger.

"I'm an atheist," she said. "Now, what are you going to do about that?"

"Bet you 10 cents," said the priest.

Bet me what?"

"That you can't give me three good reasons for atheism."

JANUARY

He won the bet. "There aren't three good reasons for atheism," he will tell you. But he also won a soul. Within a year the defiant young woman had entered the Church.

There is a lesson here for us. If an atheist challenged us to give three good reasons for being Catholics, what would we say? It isn't that there aren't many, many more reasons than that. But do we know them?

JANUARY 16. SPLIT PERSONALITY

Modern psychology has familiarized us with a phenomenon called schizophrenia or split personality. A person subject to this mental disorder has two distinct approaches to life and reality. Thus he has a tremendous conflict within him.

Now all of us in a way have the beginnings of this split personality within us. On one hand, we long for what is ideal and good; on the other, we feel inclined to evil in its various forms. The person who seeks the good wholeheartedly has unity in his soul. So likewise, he who abandons himself to evil has a certain disordered unity within him. But whoever tries to satisfy both these tendencies at the same time is leading a double life.

On the one hand, he may be trying to save his soul. He gets into periods of religious fervor. But then a reaction sets in and he falls into a period of unrestrained sinning. Or he may be doing the necessary things to save his soul, but simultaneously be living for money or pleasure or the good things of this world.

This effort to lead a double life stretches man as it were between the cross and the dollar.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: HAVE YOU A SPLIT PERSONALITY?

JANUARY 17. THERE IS MORE IN YOU

The Lords of Bruges were warriors in times when men fought for their very existence. The record of their wars is still to be seen in their castle in the lovely town of Bruges. Over the portal is a knight carved in relief, and underneath run the words: "PLUS EST EN VOUS," i.e., "THERE IS MORE IN YOU."

You can sense at once how such words would be a war cry and rallying shout in the midst of a battle. A chieftain telling his men there was MORE in them would be sure to rouse that extra something which wins battles.

Let us take this attitude towards life. We have been trying hard? We have been working earnestly? WE CAN DO STILL MORE! And in the consciousness of doing "still more," we have the thrill of really living to the full and with fruit.

JANUARY 18. FROM THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKS

If you were to open the valve allowing water to flow from a reservoir of dirty water, you would be surprised to find clear spring water emerg-

JANUARY

ing. And vice versa, if the water in the reservoir were clear, you wouldn't expect dirty water to be coming out of it.

Our Lord condemned the Pharisees because they were so careful to maintain the external observances of religion while within their souls were rotten with vice. "O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things whereas you are evil? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

True, a person may with hypocritical circumspection guard his speech for a certain period of time. But get him in an unguarded moment and the flow of conversation will show the sort of soul he has.

What sort of speech do we engage in? Are we given to impure conversation? Is our choice of words unfitting a Christian? Do we abuse God's Holy Name and that of Jesus?

We must correct our speech, but let us go deeper and see what it is in our hearts that is leading to this speech. This it is that must be remedied. Otherwise, we are simply trying to establish a sort of filter for a dirty reservoir.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: FROM THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKS.

JANUARY 19. ZEAL FOR GOD'S GLORY

Nathan Hale, an American patriot, captured by the British, was condemned to death. His last words were: "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

A British naval officer whose ship was sinking in mid-ocean marshalled his men at military order and at attention until the ship sank beneath the waves, lest by unmanly conduct they might disgrace their nation and its flag.

We should spend our lives in the service of God, and everything we do should be done for His honor. Yet, how often we regret any little sacrifice that we have to make for Him. Perhaps we won't be called upon to die for Christ, but we should be willing to live for Him. A single deliberate venial sin is an evil that should be avoided at all costs. Let us labor then to diminish sin in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Let us by work and prayer give an example that will never lead another to sin, but may lead others to honor and live for God.

JANUARY 22. LOSS OF FAITH

A boy who attended a Catholic high school told the story of a former companion of his who had finished the eighth grade with him in a Catholic school but who had then turned to the public high school for subsequent education.

It was about six months after graduation that the boy in the Catholic high school met his friend and in a spirit of zeal tried to persuade him to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion on the First Friday. "Oh," replied the boy to his suggestion, "I don't believe in that any more." Six months! and he had already lost his faith.

JANUARY

This is a striking lesson for all of us. If we go about with those who ridicule or belittle our faith, if we don't study our religion and say our prayers, we too can lose the great gift of faith given us by God at baptism. And once we have lost that, we are well along on the way to Hell.

Let us pray very often that God may increase our faith and above all, let us avoid all persons, books, performances, etc., that could in any way damage this singular blessing of God.

JANUARY 23. WHY THIS DIFFERENCE?

At the football game, Harry was wild with enthusiasm. He seemed to possess boundless energy as he yelled, stamped and cheered the team on to victory. But at Mass for the student body, he was listless, drowsy, bored. Could this be the same person?

The attitude we take in the various events of life indicates the spirit by which we are animated. If we value something that fact is reflected in the way we act regarding it. If we place little value on it, we manifest this indifference in our outward behavior.

Now, nobody would venture to compare the Mass to a football game or to argue which is the more important. But perhaps our conduct shows that actually we think more of the game than of the Mass. This would be an obvious tragedy in our lives.

What we need to do is to remember the stupendous event taking place on the altar. Christ becomes truly present and really sacrifices Himself as He did on the Cross. When we go to Mass let us arouse our faith and strive to assist at it with all the energy of which we are capable.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: WHY THIS DIFFERENCE?

JANUARY 24. GOD SEES ME

One day, a young man, who was often tormented with bad thoughts went to a holy priest and said to him: "Father, I am constantly tormented with bad thoughts, and I am most anxious to banish them from my mind; tell me the best means of getting rid of them."

"My son," said the priest, "if your head were made of glass, so that everyone could see these thoughts, how long would you keep them in your mind?"

"Oh! I would put them away instantly, for I would be filled with shame if anyone knew that I was thinking about them."

"God sees every one of your thoughts as clearly as if they were covered by thin transparent glass," said the priest; "therefore, when these wicked thoughts come to your mind, say to yourself, 'God sees me,' and immediately they will fly from you."

JANUARY 25. CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

Saul, later to become the great Apostle St. Paul, had been brought up in the strict Jewish sect of the Pharisees. When Christianity began to spread, he was among the most zealous in persecuting it, hunting down

the Christians and dragging them before the magistrates. In his hatred of them, he received permission to go to Damascus to bring any of this persuasion bound in chains to Jerusalem. When he came near the city, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. Falling on the ground he heard a voice saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He answered: "Who art thou, Lord?" And the voice replied: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul asked what he must do. Our Lord told him to go into the city and remain there until he should be told. Saul arose blind, went to the city, received his orders through one named Ananias, and later became the great apostle.

From the words of Christ, we see that He identifies Himself with the Church, that is, with us Christians. Those who persecute the Church, persecute Christ. Let us pray for our fellow Catholics in Poland, Germany and elsewhere who are suffering persecution so that they may be strong with the strength of Christ as they are suffering for Him.

JANUARY 26. TRUST IN GOD: DON'T WORRY

There are some people of a naturally happy disposition who never seem to be bothered by anything. Others apparently are destined to carry about with them all the troubles of the world. They are forever worrying themselves (and others) sick.

Naturally, for such a prevalent disease, many panaceas have been proposed. Popular songs have given us not a few: singing is recommended ("When trouble troubles you, sing, baby, sing"); smiling is supposed to be helpful ("Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile"). Now it is true that the body can react on the soul and that by lifting the drooping corners of the mouth, we feel better.

But these external remedies do not get at the heart of the disease. Fundamentally, worry is a form of fear. We worry about examinations because we are afraid we won't pass them; we worry about our health, because we fear it will break down; we worry about our livelihood, because we are not sure of a job.

Our Lord gave us the answer to all these problems when He said: "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. They labor not, neither do they spin And if the grass of the field, which is to day, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith?" (St. Matt. VI. 28, 30) "Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?" (St. Matt. VI. 31) "For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." (St. Matt. VI. 32)

When we are worried about anything, let us go to God and cast all our care upon Him for He has care of us. Like children, we can rest securely in His eternal Arms.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: WORRIED? SEE GOD ABOUT IT.

JANUARY

JANUARY 29. OUR ENVIRONMENT

Abbe Cardipn, the founder of the Jocist movement, told the story of how, when he was a young lad of thirteen or fourteen he went to the seminary. He was not the best boy, nor the most religious, nor the brightest in his group. But still he was chosen by God for the priestly vocation. That, however, is not the point.

When he returned for vacation a year later, he found that a great transformation had taken place. Many of his former schoolmates who apparently were very good Catholics had turned Communist and were immersed in immorality. This made him think. What was the difference between them and him? Would he have been any better if he had stayed behind? The answer was NO! They had been subjected to a bad environment and had succumbed to it.

Now, obviously, all of us are not called to the priesthood or the religious life where we have added safeguards for the salvation of our souls. But we must remember that in life as it is today, we are surrounded by many spiritual dangers. If we go with the wrong crowd, we may not only lose our virtue or our faith, but we may even end up in juvenile court. If we frequent improper shows, read filthy magazines, see suggestive spectacles, we may rapidly go from bad to worse. The important thing is to realize that there are serious dangers to your salvation—and with all earnestness and care to avoid them.

JANUARY 30. LOVE OF ENEMIES

A group of elgian children were praying at a wayside shrine, shortly after foreign soldiers had passed through, devastating the land. The children hesitated at the words: "as we forgive those who trespass against us." A man behind them noticed the hesitation and completed the "Our Father" for them. It was King Albert of Belgium.

JANUARY 31. ST. JOHN BOSCO

Are saints human? To look at their pictures in stained glass windows, or to read about them in certain books, one would get the idea that they were not made of common human clay. But the fact is, they are just like us in many respects; with the same passions, the same temptations, the same longing for human friendship, with the same fear of death, and all the rest.

But some saints appeal to us more than others, because they seem more like us in externals. Less than a hundred years ago, there lived in Italy a wonderful priest named John Bosco. Among other things, he was a very good juggler and a fine athlete. In his school for boys, he used to join in their games. He it was who led them on many a wild frolic of follow the leader. And yet, through it all, he was living a life of prayer, sacrifice and wonderful charity towards others. We don't have to be peculiar to be saints, but we do have to be different. It all comes down to this: To give ourselves entirely to God and to live only for love of Him.

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 1. GOD-BEARERS

When St. Ignatius, a disciple of St. John the Apostle, was brought before the Emperor Trajan, the latter said:

"Who are you, spirit of evil, who dare to disobey my orders and who goad others on to their destruction?"

"No one calls Theophorus spirit of evil," the saint is said to have replied.

"Who is Theophorus?"

"He who bears Christ within him."

"And do we not bear within ourselves those gods who help us against our enemies?" asked the Emperor.

"You are mistaken when you call gods those who are no better than devils," retorted Ignatius. "For there is only one God who made heaven and earth and all that is in them: and one Jesus Christ into whose Kingdom I earnestly desire to be admitted."

Trajan inquired: "Do you mean Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?"

"Yes, the same who by His death has crucified both sin and its author, and has proclaimed that every malice of the devil should be trodden under foot by those who bear Him in their hearts."

"Do you then carry about Christ within you?" said the Emperor. Ignatius answered: "Yes, for it is written, 'I will dwell in them and will walk with them'."

Like St. Ignatius, we too bear Christ within us when we are in the state of grace. For our Lord has said: "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live my Me." Do we show by our lives that Christ is living in us? Or have we prevented Him from manifesting Himself in us by our sinful or worldly conduct?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: DON'T YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST?

FEBRUARY 2. PRESENTING THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

On Candlemas Day, otherwise known as the feast of the Purification, the Church blesses the candles of the year. The candle has been from the earliest ages of the Church a symbol of our Lord Who is the Light of the world. Just as one little candle dispels the gloom and darkness around it, so our Lord came into the world and shed His light to every soul. But there are unfortunately many who hide away and prevent His blessed rays from entering their souls.

In the feast of this day, the Most Blessed Virgin took Jesus to the Temple and gave Him to the priest to be offered to God the Father. As we see her walking along with the Divine Child in her arms we may think of her as a heavenly lighthouse, for she holds within her arms the Light that is to enlighten every man coming into this world.

FEBRUARY

If we look to Mary, she will show us Jesus Who is the light of our souls. We may then expect a favorable answer to our prayer (from the Hail Holy Queen): “. . . and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb,, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.”

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: PRESENTING THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

FEBRUARY 5. HAPPINESS HERE AND HEREAFTER

Some of you have probably read the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp. By rubbing the lamp he could obtain whatever he wished for. It is singularly strange that neither Aladdin nor anyone else who used the lamp ever wished for heaven. There was another strange thing—no one was ever satisfied when his wishes had been granted. He always wanted something more!

That is the way with all things here on earth. They cannot satisfy for long. They cannot make us truly happy. There is only one thing that will make us happy. That is to do God's will by keeping His Commandments. If we break even one we are sad and unhappy, because our conscience tells us that we have displeased God, our best friend. Obey the commandments and you will enjoy eternal happiness with God in heaven, as well as happiness here on earth.

FEBRUARY 6. PARTNER TO A CORPSE

In some parts of China, a murderer is punished by manacling him to the corpse of the man he has killed. He is then transported out into the wilderness to die.

It is too bad that the nauseating putrefaction of the soul killed by mortal sin cannot be experienced so that a revulsion for the deed might be similar to that of the Chinese killer when his victim reaches the last stages of decomposition. Unfortunately, a person can carry about with him a fetid soul steeped in the corruption of sin and yet be all but oblivious of the fact due to his lack of spiritual perception.

But if we knew how terrible this state of spiritual death is we would not remain in it for a moment, but would hasten to free ourselves from this living death by an act of perfect contrition or the sacrament of penance.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: ARE YOU A WALKING CORPSE?

FEBRUARY 7. ASH WEDNESDAY

Today the Church puts ashes on our foreheads with the words: “Remember man that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return.” Think of the bodies of soldiers rotting on the battlefield or corpses decomposing in graves. That is what happens to our bodies. How foolish it is then to

FEBRUARY

pamper them to the detriment of our souls. So many people nowadays are interested in keeping their bodies well fed, well clothed, comfortable, filled with pleasant sensations. They even become so engrossed in their bodies as to forget the good of their souls. In the end comes death and with death corruption of the body. Where is then the wisdom of neglecting our immortal soul for the sake of a body that will be the food of worms? It is much wiser to deny our bodies pleasures and enjoyments in order to free our souls and enable them to love God perfectly. That is what the Church asks us to do during the season of Lent.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: YOU! IN 2049 A. D.

FEBRUARY 8. SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Even though we cannot receive Jesus bodily more than once a day into our own bodies, yet we can receive Him spiritually many times a day. Jesus Himself appeared to a holy nun, Sister Paula, and showed her two precious vessels, one of gold and another of silver, saying to her, that in the former He preserved her sacramental Communion, and in the latter, her spiritual communions. We can see by this that Jesus wishes us to think frequently of Him, and to ask Him to make His abode in our hearts just as He does in the tabernacle. We can make several spiritual communions during the day. Let us now take a minute in which to speak lovingly to Jesus and invite Him to come into our hearts and souls to be with us throughout the day.

FEBRUARY 9. THE APPARITION AT LOURDES

Anybody who says that miracles are definitely passe or medieval is either woefully ignorant or blind to facts. Today, miracles are occurring in many parts of the world, but the most famous spot for them is Lourdes in France. There a medical bureau examines the patients before they go to the shrine and after they have been cured. Any doctor may be present, if he so chooses, to see what takes place. This bureau is very strict in its examinations and only those cures which cannot possibly be explained in any other way are admitted to the record.

It all started on Feb. 11, 1858, when the Most Blessed Virgin appeared for the first time to a poor, ignorant peasant girl. After many such visions in which our Lady urged Bernadette to do penance, to have a church built there in her honor, and in which she indicated to the child where the spring of miraculous water was to be found, she revealed her name in the words: "I am the Immaculate Conception." Shortly after, cures began to take place and they have continued till this day. Thus does God honor her who proclaimed herself the "handmaid of the Lord."

FEBRUARY 12. RING THE BELL

There are ever so many people in this world who are convinced that success depends on fate, chance, pull or any number of things—but not

FEBRUARY

on themselves. So-and-so made a million dollars: he was lucky. Another became a prominent professor or scientist: he had the right connections. They too would succeed if only they would get the breaks.

These are the people who are forever hoping that their ship will come in via the death of some rich relative or through the medium of the horse races.

What they fail to realize is that the great majority of successes in life come from personal effort and hard work. By adopting their particular attitude, they are trying to excuse themselves for their laziness and ineptitude.

Let us not be of this race of fools. Let us convince ourselves that both in the matter of worldly achievement and our eternal salvation, success depends on personal effort. The grace of God will be there to help us, but without our cooperation even that grace will be ineffective.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: RING THE BELL.

FEBRUARY 13. FOOLISH RICH MAN

Our Lord once said: "Take heed and guard yourselves from all covetousness. For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (St. Luke xii.15)

To drive this lesson home, Jesus told the parable of the foolish rich man. A certain well-to-do man raised exceptionally abundant crops on his lands. Contemplating his wealth with satisfaction and pride, he planned to build bigger and better barns. Then, in a spirit of self-satisfaction and vainglory, he said to himself: "Soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years; take thy ease, eat, drink, be merry."

He did not think of the poor, the widows, the orphans, the many charitable deeds that he could do with his wealth. He did not even make a last will and testament that remembered charitable causes. He hoarded selfishly and was thinking selfishly about his material interests and the good cheer they could afford him. "But God said to him: 'Thou fool, this night do they demand thy soul of thee; and the things that thou hast provided, whose will they be?'" (St. Luke xii:16-21)

FEBRUARY 14. OUR BAPTISMAL VOWS

In the early ages of the Church, those who had been studying to become Christians during Lent were baptized on Easter Sunday. At that time they were clothed with white garments as a symbol of the purity and holiness which came to them with baptism. Those garments were worn during the ensuing week and removed on the following Sunday, commonly called Low Sunday.

When we were baptized a similar ceremony took place. The priest laid a white cloth upon us and said: "Receive this white garment and bear it without spot before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you may win everlasting life. Amen."

FEBRUARY

How have we kept our baptismal garment of sanctifying grace? Do we have it at the present time?

We might also recall that at our baptism, our sponsors in our name promised to renounce the devil and all his works and pomps. These promises are called our baptismal vows: they are a solemn engagement by which we consecrated ourselves to the service of God. We should often renew these promises, taking Jesus for our Divine Master and showing this fact in our daily lives.

FEBRUARY 15. ON GETTING RICH QUICK

The source of many a human foible is the fond hope and desire of getting rich quick. Oh, if I only had a million dollars, I would buy a launch, journey around the world, etc., etc., and live just as I wanted. How to get that first million quickly is the preoccupation of many people. That is why so many of them lose all their money at the horse races or why they so readily buy bogus oil stock or the gold bricks of itinerant peddlers. This is the motive power of such nightmares as pyramid clubs. This is why a bargain sale with its opportunity to save a few pennies here and a few dimes there can lead to a near riot.

But our Lord tells us: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal." (St. Matt. VI. 19-20)

People are very solicitous for acquiring material goods. But they allow opportunities for acquiring spiritual treasures to pass by without a thought. How many take advantage of daily Mass or Communion; the indulgences offered by the Church; the graces of each moment that God would give in return for short ejaculatory prayers? How many profit by the sacramentals of the Church such as holy water? If we are not trying to acquire spiritual riches, we show that we have a very poor understanding of the reason God had in putting us into this world.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: USE HOLY WATER AND GET RICK QUICK.

FEBRUARY 16. FAITH IN GOD

On the first Friday of April, 1927, Anacleto Gonzales, a zealous, active young Mexican Catholic, who had tirelessly striven to strengthen his countrymen against the attacks of the enemies of religion, was shot for his faith in Christ. He had been cruelly tortured—hung up by his thumbs, scourged, slashed with bayonets. All this he endured patiently, and before dying exhorted some fellow sufferers to persevere to the end. His last words were: "Let both Americas hear this holy cry: I die, but God never dies, Long Live Christ the King."

The day may come when we will be forced to suffer for our faith. Let us pray daily for the grace to persevere when our courage is tried. Let us make an act of faith in God, NOW.

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 19. YOUR WILL IS MASTER

A poet has said in a spirit of bravado: "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." If this would eliminate the place of God in our lives, obviously the statements are false. But there is a sense in which they are eminently true.

A strong man might succeed in forcing water down your throat, but he cannot make you want to drink; your finger might, by force, be pressed against a button that will electrocute a man, but you cannot be forced to want to kill. Violence may make you smell, or hear, or see, or feel; you may be forced to run, or to walk or to dance. But nothing in the whole universe **CAN MAKE YOU WILL**.

That is why when a person goes to Hell, he cannot blame anybody else. Similarly, we attain Heaven, because we willed to do what is good. In other words, because of our power of will, we are responsible beings. It is important, then, that we acquire the habit of acting with decision and fullness of will, not simply doing what is right as it were by force of circumstances, but because we intend it with our whole heart. Today, do with fullness of will some of your actions, such as fulfilling your duty of prayer, study, work at home, etc.

FEBRUARY 20. CHRIST AND TEMPTATION

On one occasion when our Lord appeared to the Apostles walking on the water, Peter with his customary impulsiveness asked that our Lord bid him to walk upon the waves. Jesus told him to come and for a while all went well. But seeing the water about him and forgetting our Lord Who had called him, he began to lose faith and immediately started to sink. He cried out: "Lord, save me." (St. Matt. XIV. 30) Jesus stretched forth His hand and took hold of him saying: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?"

We too are often assaulted by the storm of temptation. Very often we think we are alone and become frightened or even despair. Or we appeal to our Lord for help but we don't have sufficient faith in Him and so we begin to sink.

Do we believe that our Lord is present in our hearts when we are in the state of grace? Do we believe that God is everywhere? Do we believe that Jesus is all-powerful and that He wills to help us? Then let us place our entire confidence in Him and we may be sure that our trust will not be disappointed.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: CHRIST—TEMPTATION.

FEBRUARY 21. THE WORD OF GOD—OUR TREASURE

The newspaper mentioned the names of five teen-agers who had received inheritances from a wealthy retired businessman. On the following day the deceased man's lawyer contacted each and told him to be ready the following morning at ten o'clock to hear the will read in his

FEBRUARY

office. During those two days each of the youngsters dreamed of the good fortune that would be his in a very short time. There was dead silence as the lawyer took the will from his portfolio, and when the names with their specific bequeathals were about to be read, hardly a breath could be heard. To each it seemed that his good fortune would come with the words of the will as the lawyer pronounced them. Is that the way we listen to the priest in his talk on Sunday? May not that be the golden opportunity at which we learn how we may become inheritors of the Sonship of God? That is the time when God tells us through his lawyer, the priest, what limitless riches are in store for us, and of the simple means we must use to take possession of them. Do we strain to let no advice pass by unlistened to as the priest talks, or do we simply long to have him finish with telling us what Christ has left for us?

FEBRUARY 23. PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

The Church today is in dire need of workers—priests, Brothers and Sisters, to say nothing of an active laity—who will help carry on the work of Christ in the world. Without even considering the tremendous and untilled missionary fields, it is easy to note in our own country that the words of Christ are fulfilled: "The harvest indeed is great but the laborers are few." What can we do to remedy this situation?

Our Lord gives us the answer in the words: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest." (St. Matt. IX.38). At first this might seem like a too simple solution. But after all, there is no one more interested in the salvation of the world than God our Father. Vocation, moreover, is a great grace from Him. Therefore, logically, the best way to promote vocations is by means of prayer which draws down the grace of God.

This is borne out by experience. A group of Sisters in California was not receiving many vocations until the Novices decided to spend one night each month in prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for this intention. Thereafter, there was a remarkable increase. In the life of Brother Miguel, a Christian Brother whose cause for holiness is being promoted, we read that when he was appointed Director of Novices, there were very few in the Novitiate. He had prayers offered to the Divine Infant Jesus. Very soon, to the surprise of the Novices, there were many more candidates. When they remarked how extraordinary this was, he calmly replied that prayers to the Divine Infant are always answered.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: PRAY FOR VOCATIONS.

FEBRUARY 26. GOD'S PROPERTY

Perhaps you've all seen the lettering on the backs of our team's practice jerseys: "Property of—(Name of your school)." These words tell people that our school alone has a right to the jerseys, and that they belong neither to the players nor to anyone else who may wear them.

FEBRUARY

We might say that God has likewise stamped our souls with a similar mark of ownership: "Property of the Most Blessed Trinity." For, first of all, we were created by God the Father, and certainly no one else has a greater right to our soul. Next, at Baptism, we became brothers of Christ and co-heirs with Him of Heaven; we were stamped with an indelible mark to this effect. And finally, we became temples of the Holy Ghost. This "property" of the Blessed Trinity is worth eternity, so let's not sell or give it away to the devil by even one deliberate sin, mortal or venial.

FEBRUARY 27. DEATH AND THE DEVIL

What an awful moment is the moment of death! It is in that last dreadful moment, that the cowardly fiend makes his most brutal assault on the soul. It is his last chance to drive God from the soul and to get into his clutches another soul that was meant for heaven. The deathbed is the choice time and place for the devils to work their evil deeds. The demons dare not to be absent as long as there is a chance to drag another soul into the pit of eternal suffering.

What a harvesting time for Satan are the numberless sudden and unexpected deaths. Accidents, murders, heart attacks, etc., are every instant bringing souls to judgment. All depends on the state of soul in its last instant of life. Death is the last tremendous struggle between the forces of Satan and those of Christ. He who conquers in this battle is victor for all eternity. With such knowledge in mind let us always be prepared for death. Say today, NOW, a prayer that you may die a happy death, and that souls dying today may have the victory over Satan.

FEBRUARY 28. A CRUSADER FOR CHRIST

The events of today in the Holy Land remind us of what happened centuries ago. The problem of internationalizing the shrines sacred to Christian people is one of current interest. But in the Middle Ages, the Turks had conquered Palestine and refused admittance to Europeans. This gave rise to the Crusades wherein knights took up the cross and led their forces against the Turks in order to win the Holy Places back to Christendom.

Now many of these men were animated by nothing more than love of adventure, the desire of gain or even less worthy motives. But numbers of them risked their lives with a true love of Christ and His Church. They felt that if they were to die in so noble a cause, they could do nothing greater in this world.

Today, when the forces of evil are well organized and are doing everything in their power to destroy the Church, it is important that every Christian enlist under the banner of Christ. No longer is it sufficient to take as our ideal the salvation of our own soul. We must be willing to fight with spiritual weapons for Christ regardless of the sacrifices this entails for ourselves. Actually, what are we doing?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: BE A CRUSADER FOR CHRIST.

MARCH

MARCH 1. TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY

When Dominic Savio, the recently beatified teen-ager (1950) was in the Oratory of St. John Bosco in Turin, he was instrumental in founding the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin. The object of this Sodality was to obtain the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin through life but especially at the hour of death. The means proposed were (a) to practice and promote acts of devotion in honour of the Mother of God; (b) the adoption and practice of frequent Communion by all members.

Here are some of the rules drawn up by these young boys of twelve or thirteen:

I. To observe exactly all the Rules of the House.

II. To do good to our schoolfellows by our words when possible, but chiefly by good example.

III. To make an exact use of our time.

XVI. We shall accept all kinds of food without grumbling at the way in which it is served.

This was practical, down-to-earth piety which realized that the first thing God and His Blessed Mother want us to do is our daily duties. How about being practical in your love for God?

MARCH 2. ARE ACCIDENTS ACCIDENTAL?

Last year the U. S. had 10,000,000 injuries resulting from accidents. Motor-vehicle accidents numbered 1,100,000; public non-motor vehicle accidents were 2,300,000, while home accidents numbered 5,000,000.

Yes, it can be dangerous, very dangerous around the home. And one of the main reasons is that people act on the philosophy that "Accidents will happen!"

But when we look the facts in the eye, we find that most such accidents could have been avoided by a little forethought: keeping stairs well lighted, picking things off the floor, seeing that rugs weren't loose and slippery, having ladders in repair, etc.

In the spiritual order, there are many similar "accidents". We fall into sin. We could hardly help it. We were in a difficult situation and therefore we did something wrong.

But what about the ounce of prevention? What about keeping away from the show where we knew we would get bad thoughts and temptations? What about avoiding the fellow who leads us into evil? What about keeping away from the dance that we were pretty sure would not end happily for our soul?

To avoid these spiritual accidents, let us use our common sense and keep out of the OCCASIONS OF SIN.

MARCH 5. THE TRUE BREAD

One of the miracles of our Lord that made the most impression on the people was that of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Now,

MARCH

if He would just keep on doing that day after day, most of their problems would be solved. They wouldn't have to work and could take it easy for the remaining period of life.

But our Lord had other ideas. He was trying to interest the people in the true Bread that came down from Heaven—His own Body and Blood in the Most Blessed Sacrament. As Jesus pointed out to them, they may eat all they want of ordinary bread and yet in the end they will die. But the Bread that He offered would give them everlasting life.

If our Lord came on earth today and promised material abundance, no doubt He could win many followers and the Communists would not have a chance. But then, He would only be winning them to the love of earthly goods and not to the love of His heavenly Father. So Christ continues simply to work the miracle of the multiplication of His Body in the Holy Eucharist. Do we show any greater love for this unspeakable Gift than the material-minded Jews?

MARCH 6. SNOBBISH?

My daddy was a laborer,
And, good Lord, so were you,
But now that I have my degree,
Must I get dirty too?

Very often young people decide that they are going to have a white-collar job simply because they look down on manual work. What sort of snobbery is this? Perhaps their own parents have kept them alive and given them an education by this very sort of honest toil. And what do they think of Christ and St. Joseph?

The important thing to remember is that any worthy job is noble if we do it in a noble manner. By performing our work for God, whether it be building skyscrapers, curing bodies, teaching others, fixing automobiles, or diggin ditches, we can make of our actions stepping stones to eternal glory. **WORK CAN BE HOLY.**

VISUAL AID: The **RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR** poster: **WORK CAN BE HOLY.**

MARCH 7. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Among the many great men who once attended the famous monastery of Monte Cassino (destroyed in World War II and now being rebuilt) was St. Thomas Aquinas whom the Church declares the patron of all schools and of students.

While in attendance there the young Thomas Aquinas oftentimes would interrupt his teacher to ask him: "What is God?" So frequently did he seek an answer to this one question that it was evident that the chief interest of this fourteen-year-old boy was nothing less than God. God remained his chief interest throughout his youth and manhood, as we can see from reading the volumes about God written by this great man. Thomas Aquinas became one of the most outstanding scholars the

MARCH

world has ever known. When pressed to tell the secret of his success in learning, St. Thomas replied that he learned more by his prayers said at the foot of the crucifix than from any other source.

MARCH 8. YOU POOR FISH!

If somebody came up to you and said: "You poor fish!" you wouldn't feel complimented. Fish have a record for being duped by their more intelligent fellow-creature, man, though at times it is a matter of suspicion that they are laughing quietly to themselves in the depths of their pools while anglers are spending weary hours on the bank holding lines, changing bait and bedeviling their minds to find a way to catch the wary members of the finny tribe.

But fish are fooled: a worm, a crayfish, a bit of dough, a make-believe fly or a spinner simulating a minnow, and snap! following its impulse it grabs the lure and finds itself stuck on a hook. Poor fish!

Now, the devil is a very clever angler. Only he fishes for men and women. He knows what they like and so he sets out his bait. Material goods, money, appeal to them; so he suggests stealing another boy's fountain pen or his wallet, or he gets him into a shady type of business. Pleasure is one of his favorite lures by which he ensnares souls and enslaves them. He needles their pride and self-love, making them envious, disobedient, independent in their attitude toward God and His worship. With these and many other a time-honored and successful bait he catches poor human fish. When he has them sizzling on the frying pans of Hell, it will be too late.

BUT SOMETHING COULD BE DONE NOW! Why be a sucker?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: POOR FISH!

MARCH 9. SPIRITUAL AMNESIA

Periodically we read in the paper of a victim of amnesia who has been picked up by the police. The person remembers absolutely nothing of his past: name, parents, home. It's a terrible state and seems to leave its victim an isolated molecule in the universe.

Now, from the spiritual viewpoint, there are ever so many people who are thus isolated. They do not know that they came from God; they have no idea what they are doing in this world; they fail to realize that Heaven is their home. They are in a real sense LOST in the universe, for they do not know their place in it.

We with our gift of faith should know better. But in practice, we can approach very close to spiritual amnesia by living AS IF there were no God, AS IF Heaven and Hell did not exist, AS IF life ended with the grave. We thereby become isolated from God, the source of all reality. It's a terrible state and the beginning of eternal isolation in the wards of Hell.

MARCH

MARCH 12. OUR SIGN

One of the things that onlookers most remarked about Bernadette of Lourdes during her visions of Mary Immaculate was the excellent and devotional manner in which she made the sign of the cross. They said: "If the sign of the cross is made in heaven it must be made in the way Bernadette makes it."

I wonder if people noticing the way we made the sign of the cross at the beginning of our prayers this morning would say as much of our manner of saluting the Most Holy Trinity. If you think of what you are doing you will not make the sign of the cross haphazardly. Strive today and always to be conscious of what you are doing when you make the sign of the cross. Give good example and others will imitate you in this matter.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: MAKE IT COUNT. TOUCH ALL BASES.

MARCH 13. WILL YOUR SALVATION

In one of the persecutions in China, a young Annamite girl was brought before the judge and asked to deny her faith. She resisted such an idea and the judge had recourse to threats of horrible punishments. Seeing that he was making no headway, he offered her a life of luxury, if only she would consent to do his wishes. She refused still more firmly. The inhuman judge then ordered her to be buried alive.

The executioners dug a deep hole in which they had her stand. They then piled earth until it reached her chin. Again, they asked whether now she had changed her mind, but her lips only moved in prayer. So they covered her with earth. But then they heard her utter a sound and they thought that possibly she had changed her mind. So they dug away the dirt quickly and uncovered her head once more. When again they questioned her, the words they heard were: COST WHAT IT MAY, I MUST SAVE MY SOUL.

This determination must be ours as well. There are only two possible alternatives for us in eternity: Heaven or Hell. Actually, we CHOOSE OUR ETERNITY by the daily and hourly choices we make in life.

St. Thomas Aquinas was once asked by his niece what she must do to save her soul. His answer was: YOU MUST WILL IT.

Are we determined to save our soul?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: YOU CHOOSE YOUR ETERNITY.

MARCH 14. CORRESPONDENCE WITH GRACE

A power shovel in operation is a fascinating sight. The operator with a few simple motions turns the huge machine about, sets its scoop into a bank of earth, and turns it about again to deposit the dirt in a waiting truck. The human effort expended is slight compared with the work that is done so quickly and so easily. In the work of our salvation, in our daily

MARCH

spiritual tasks, in the work of resisting temptations the grace of God will provide all the power necessary, but we must be on the job and use that power. Without the cooperation of our free will that marvelous machinery of grace might remain idle. We should notice particularly that if we continue to neglect the helps that God gives, His graces will be less frequent and less powerful, and we may find ourselves very weak when we most need His help. On the other hand, a bit of generosity early in the day will bring important helps needed later that same day. To extend the same operation over greater lengths of time, fidelity to graces given now during your years in school will bring supernatural strength and success in later life.

MARCH 15. UNIVERSAL SORROW

There was a man in prison chained fast to the wall. There were chains around his arms, his legs and his feet. He wanted to get away, so he tried to loosen the chains. He worked very hard. At last he got the chains off his arms. Then he succeeded in slipping them off his feet. He got the right leg free. But when he came to work at the chain on the left leg, he found it impossible to take it off. Please note that it was all the same to him whether he was held fast to the wall by but one chain or by several, for in either case he could not get away.

In like manner, as long as the devil holds the soul by one mortal sin, the soul cannot free itself from him nor can it have its sins forgiven. Our sorrow for sin must be universal: it must extend to all mortal sins or else it remains ineffective.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: CLEAN THE BOARD.

MARCH 16. BE A STAR FOR ALL ETERNITY

Today the word star brings to mind, not so much the heavenly bodies which for ages have radiated their light to our insignificant planet, but the men and women who are prominent in the field of entertainment and sports, especially motion pictures. Current literature keeps people agog about their every whimsy, romance and fiasco. Eager millions devour the latest tidbits about their personalities and achievements and seemingly regard them as the ideals of human living.

But where, we might ask, are the stars of yesteryear? Who thinks of the outstanding people who made the headlines of twenty-five, fifty or a hundred years ago? Their memories are encased in long forgotten publications or occasionally in books of very limited circulation. Truly, rather than stars which shine on and on, these personalities seem rather to resemble meteorites which burn themselves out in a flare lasting a mere matter of seconds.

The real stars shine on and on. They are those who by living for God have merited a place in Heaven. In particular, the great and bril-

MARCH

liant stars are the people who have devoted their entire lives to the service of God and their neighbor, whether that be in the priestly, the religious or the lay state.

If you want to be a real star, do not seek the meteoric fame of the moment. **BE A STAR FOR ALL ETERNITY.**

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: **BE A STAR FOR ALL ETERNITY.**

MARCH 19. GLORY NOW OR THEN

A man who might have been famous as a painter, but had become a monk instead, uttered these profound words, "Do you not know that the immortality of this world is as nothing compared with that of eternity, which he shall have who, despising the honors and pleasures of earth, follows Christ in lowliness and suffering?"

Too many people are looking for their happiness in the world. If they are praised or magnified; if they have better clothes or a bigger car than their neighbor; if they can see their names blazened across a newspaper for better or for worse they are completely satisfied. The passing glory of time absorbs their entire attention. They think little or not at all of eternal happiness and glory, so they do nothing to deserve it. Our Lord Himself told us that if we seek the praises of men we have received our reward, and should not expect it hereafter.

Let us then labor here in such a manner that we will be deserving of heavenly reward. "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

MARCH 20. CRUCIFYING CHRIST

St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of certain people "crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making him a mockery." (Heb. VI.6). It is true that historically speaking Christ has ascended into Heaven where He reigns gloriously at the right hand of the Father and hence nothing that is done by man can injure Him henceforth.

Still Christ suffered for each and every one of our sins, especially our mortal sins. Our willingness to commit a mortal sin is equivalent to consenting to crucify Christ. We in effect cry out with the perverse Jews of His day: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" In this sense, then, every mortal sin crucifies our Lord. He suffered and died for this sin and even if it had been the only mortal sin ever committed He would have undergone the Passion to expiate it.

Let the sight of the crucifix and the thought of Jesus hanging on the Cross in agony deter us when we are tempted for a momentary gratification to commit a serious offense against our Father in Heaven.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: **DON'T!**

MARCH

MARCH 21. HOLY WEEK

We usually associate vacation with a period of relaxation and recreation. But at this season of the year when we have the most solemn and sorrowful mysteries of our religion commemorated by the Church, it would hardly be appropriate for a Catholic boy or girl to adopt this simple attitude toward the Easter vacation.

There are really two parts to this release from school work. In the first, we have Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the morning of Holy Saturday. The purpose of not having school on these days is to enable you to attend the services of the Church and enter into the Passion of our Lord. On Holy Thursday, you should go to Mass and receive Holy Communion for it is the very day on which Christ instituted the Most Blessed Sacrament. During the day you should make several visits to the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the church.

On Good Friday, we have the saddest day of the year. You could attend the Mass of the Presanctified in the morning and in the afternoon there are the Three Hours Devotions in honor of the period our Lord hung on the Cross.

If you enter into the sufferings of Christ on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, you will find a real joy and exultation on Holy Saturday when during the Mass the Church rings the bells at the Gloria and begins the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord. For the remainder of the Easter vacation you will feel that you have a right to be joyful and your joy will be full in Christ.

MARCH 28. RISEN WITH CHRIST

The spirit of Easter consists in putting on a new life. "If you be risen with Christ," says St. Paul, "seek the things that are above . . . Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." (Col. III.1, 2.)

When Christ's body was laid in the tomb, it was all bloody and disfigured. But it arose glorious and radiant with light. So also when we rise at the end of the world, our bodies will be transfigured like that of our Lord. We find a symbol of this too in nature in the development of the butterfly. This resplendent creature starts off as a lowly worm, is then transformed into a dead looking chrysalis and after a period in this "tomb" emerges in all its glory.

To enter into the spirit of Easter, we should be a new creature in Christ, seeking to live by Him and by His life rather than in our own earthly and selfish manner. One of the best ways of doing this is to receive our Lord in Holy Communion and ask him to transform us into Himself.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: RISE AND SHINE WITH CHRIST.

MARCH

MARCH 29. PATRON OF A HAPPY DEATH

Today the Church celebrates the feast of St. Joseph, the Foster Father of our Lord and the Protector of the Universal Church. St. Joseph is also held in highest regard as the patron of a happy death. The office of the Church today recalls this in the hymn of lauds: "Christ and the Virgin were with him at his last hour and watched by him their face gleaming with sweet serenity." St. Joseph went to Heaven forever to enjoy the beatific vision of Him Whose humanity he so long and so closely contemplated on earth. St. Joseph is justly considered the patron of the dying.

Ask St. Joseph today in your prayers to help you to live in a manner pleasing to Christ and to Mary, so that at death they will receive you into their arms in Heaven.

MARCH 30. ST. MARIA GORETTI

On June 25, 1950, there occurred in Rome an event which in many respects was unparalleled in the history of the Church. This was the canonization of Maria Goretti, who died July 6, 1902, as a result of being stabbed fourteen times by a youth who wanted to violate her chastity.

For the first time, it is believed, a mother was present at the canonization of her daughter. So great was the crowd that the ceremony had to be held in front of St. Peter's rather than inside the church. There was an estimated 500,000 present.

The Holy Father asked: "Young people, beloved boys and girls, are you resolved firmly to resist any attempt whatever against your purity?" They responded with a great chorused "Si" (yes). Similarly, he asked the parents if they were willing to do everything to safeguard the purity of their children.

This modern martyr of chastity who died at the age of eleven has been set up by the Church as a timely inspiration to all of us in an age which rivals pagan Rome in its lusts. Let us pray to her for the grace of perfect purity.

APRIL

APRIL 2. DOUBTING THOMAS

One of the greatest proofs of the Resurrection is the unbelieving attitude of the Apostles and in particular of St. Thomas. They were not overwrought visionaries who were looking for or even expecting this miracle. True, our Lord had often told them it was going to take place, but how could they be expected to understand what He was saying? When the holy women reported that the body was missing from the tomb, they probably did not believe them. But finally, our Lord Himself appeared in their midst and asked them to touch Him so they could be sure He was real. He even ate something to demonstrate that His Body was not a figment of their imaginations or merely an apparition.

But Thomas was missing from the group of Apostles when Christ appeared to them on the evening of the Resurrection. And in spite of all the other ten could tell him, he loudly proclaimed that he would not believe unless he could put his finger into the place of the nails and his hand into the wounded side. So when, a week later, Christ came once more among His Apostles, He asked Thomas to do these very things. But now he was convinced to such an extent that he cried out: "My Lord and my God!"

In a way we learn more from the unbelief of St. Thomas than we could have learned from a ready faith. Even today, at the elevation of the Mass, we borrow the words of this Apostle and say: "My Lord and my God!" Is our faith strong and living or are we a "doubting Thomas"?

APRIL 3. IS CHRIST CALLING YOU?

When vocation is spoken of as a call from God, some people are apt to imagine that a voice is heard from Heaven at least in one's soul urging one to enter the priesthood or the religious life. A little inquiry among the thousands who have taken up a religious vocation will quickly remove this misapprehension.

In the normal working of God's providence, we may get the idea of following the higher life from a talk, a sermon, the death of a friend, or the happiness we note in those who have given their lives to God. Then it is true we may have an inspiration of the Holy Ghost inciting us to this noble ideal: "Every holy deed and thought comes from Thy beatitude. . . ."

We should especially endeavor to discern the divine will by means of prayer asking our Lord very simply: "What wilt Thou have me do?" and trying to find the answer in our hearts. This would be a particularly good practice after Holy Communion.

If we are convinced our Lord wants us to follow a priestly or religious vocation, nothing should be able to stop us—neither the goods or pleasures of life, the opposition of friends or family or even our own fear of what might happen if we take this step. However, we should seek prudent advice from wise and enlightened counsellors and not trust entirely to our own ideas as we might be deceiving ourselves.

A P R I L

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: IS CHRIST CALLING YOU?

APRIL 4. COURAGE AND HOLY COMMUNION

During the Crimean War, a French officer, who was a man of great piety, received an order to attack one of the enemy's strongholds. In an instant he was at his post at the head of his men, and rushed forward to the attack. The onset was terrible, but in the midst of the glittering bayonets and the showers of bullets, the officer was as calm as if he were on parade. His bravery gained the day, and the fort was captured. His General, who had witnessed the scene from a distance, went to meet him. "Colonel," he cried out, "what bravery! Where did you learn to be so calm and so self-possessed in the midst of such imminent danger?" "My General," he answered, with sublime simplicity, "I received Holy Communion this morning."

If we want courage to meet the sufferings, temptations and difficulties of life, we can find it in the same source—the Holy Eucharist. For in this Sacrament, Christ gives us His own strength and fortitude.

APRIL 5. SPIRITUAL GERMS

If we knew that a glass of water had typhoid germs in it, would we drink it? If we knew that the food that is being sold in a certain market was poisoned, would we go there to buy it? Yes, we are mighty careful to protect our bodies from germs and harmful drugs of all sorts. But what about our souls?

Anybody who reads magazines that give him bad thoughts and temptations, is literally pouring spiritual filth and germs into his soul. So also, the person who goes to improper motion pictures or looks at immodest or suggestive pictures. Or likewise, he who listens to bad stories or jokes. We are very careful to protect our bodies from harm. Why haven't we equal common sense in caring for our souls which are much more valuable. No matter what we do our bodies are going to die and corrupt. But our soul will go on forever, either in Heaven or Hell.

Our Lord characterized this situation in the words: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." If the children of God were only to use as much common sense about their souls as people in general do about their bodies, they would be very wise indeed.

APRIL 6. ALLOW FOR DRIFT

An aeroplane is not like an automobile or a train. As it travels along it has nothing to hold it in place and so it is subject to drifting with the wind. It may be headed directly for its objective, but if there is a current of air from the side it will not be able to make a direct course simply by aiming in the proper direction. To keep on a line that leads directly to

APRIL

its destination, the aeroplane must be headed into the wind at an angle determined by calculations involving several factors such as wind speed and direction, the air speed of the aeroplane and the like.

So likewise in life, it is not sufficient to take a neutral attitude toward modern trends of thought and action. If these are contrary to the Christian way of life, we must definitely oppose them in our conduct and thinking if we are to remain free from their influence. Otherwise we find ourselves inevitably drifting along with the pagan currents about us.

As an example, we might consider modern literature, so called. Not only should we keep away from what is patently evil, but we should counteract the pernicious trend of the general run of books and magazines by reading Catholic publications.

APRIL 9. THE GOOD SHEPHERD

One of the favorite subjects of Christian art is the Good Shepherd. We find this picture of our Lord in the catacombs, for example. Today, likewise, we think of our Saviour rescuing the lost sheep from brambles and thorns where otherwise it would starve or be torn to pieces by wolves. We envision Him carrying the errant lamb in His arms or on His shoulders.

Perhaps we are too apt, however, to apply this symbolism to others. We think of those who have sinned more than we have and regard them as the ones our Lord goes out to seek. But actually we are that lost sheep. As often as we have fallen into sin, Christ has come to seek us out. He is not content simply to receive us with coldness or a distant air, but He presses us to His Divine Heart. Our Lord loves us with an infinite love and is willing to forgive us a million times and more.

We would be doing Him a great injustice if we thought that He was unwilling to pardon us. No matter how bad we have been the worst sin we could commit would be to be lacking in trust in the infinite mercy of the Sacred Heart of the Good Shepherd.

APRIL 10. TUNING IN TO GOD

Radio and television have become so commonplace today that people in general take these modern "miracles" for granted. They have ceased to wonder about them even though they do not understand them.

How is it that we can pick music out of the air? Actually, of course, the music is not in the air for otherwise we might be able to hear it. But all around us electromagnetic waves are surging and resurging from numerous radio stations. When we turn the tuning dial of our radio, we vary the capacity of condensers so as to put its circuit into resonance with the electromagnetic waves of one particular wavelength. These are then amplified in the tubes of the radio, they are transformed into other electrical impulses which again are amplified to activate the loud speaker and sound issues from our set.

APRIL

Now the radio waves are all about us and yet without the action of the radio we would know nothing about them. Similarly, in the spiritual order, God is all about us and through us and in us. But to appreciate this fact and derive benefit from it, we must tune in our minds and souls to Him by prayer. Because He is everywhere, we need only think in order to pray. God does not need our words in order to hear us, for He knows our minds and hearts.

How often do we tune in to God during the day?

APRIL 11. SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH

When God the Father sent His Beloved Son into the world, He placed Him in the care of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Hence it is with justice that the Church says of him: "Behold the faithful and prudent servant whom the Lord placed over His house." The greatest treasure of the Father was placed in his care.

That is why the Church has proclaimed St. Joseph the Patron of the Universal Church. There are patrons of this country and that, of this particular profession or that state of life, but the protector of the entire Church of God is St. Joseph. For if God the Father thought it proper to entrust Jesus to his care, it is only fitting that the Church which is the Mystical Body of Christ should likewise be under his protection.

St. Joseph, then, has an interest in each member of the Church. He regards us as other Christ's and for this reason is most anxious and willing to hear our prayers. Let us on this solemn feast in his honor offer Him our prayers of praise and thanksgiving as well as our petitions for the blessings we need.

APRIL 11. A DRIP SPEAKS

One of the fairly recent developments of Americanese is the word "drip". So-and-so is a "drip" meaning a sort of listless creature with no getup, or perfect wet blanket when it comes to having things done.

However, the drip of water might consider itself maligned by such implications. It might proclaim to the world: "Look at me, people. Am I not a shapely creation of God? See the beauty of my curves. Here I am held together by surface tension, but as I grow fatter and fatter a greater and greater strain is placed on this force that binds me to the faucet. Soon I shall fulfill my destiny as a drip and fall off to make place for another.

"But in the meantime, let me tell you that I feel very satisfied with myself, because I am a good drip. You too, no matter what your talents or lack of them, can leave your mark in the world by being what you should be. If everybody did this, I am confident this old earth would be a happier place to live in. Ooops! Here I go!"

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: SURE I'M A DRIP!

APRIL

APRIL 12. DEATH

How often we have seen death represented as a skeletal creature wrapped in a sheet and carrying a scythe with which to reap his daily harvest of 80,000 souls. Does it ever occur to you that one of these days each of us will have his turn to be one of the 80,000 that must appear before God daily?

Let us consider now for just a few moments that by the end of this class period 2800 souls will have passed to their eternal bliss or everlasting punishment while we continue in this vale of tears. Consider also how necessary it is for us to be ready every moment to render account of our conduct. Death will come like a thief in the night: we must be prepared to meet it serenely. Let us live today and every day as if it were our last and we were to be weighed in the balance of the Just Judge.

APRIL 13. PRAYING FOR SUCCESS

Is it all right to pray that we may win a football game? or pass our examinations well? or get a job?

Yes; if we have a good intention in doing so. And, moreover, God will help us in securing these things if He judges them good for us. But if he sees that they may not be for our good, then He will give us something else.

However, when we pray, we must also take care to exert ourselves and not leave it all to God. It would be foolish for the football team to spend all its time praying and on this basis, have no practice. So also, it is well to pray for success in our examinations, but we should not expect a miracle. We must study hard. Then, if we pray and God sees fit to answer us, He will assist us to achieve our best. When we have studied conscientiously and prayed for help, we need not worry about our examinations. Worry, after all, is one of the worst hindrances to passing. The best way to approach a test is with a calm soul. If we are troubled, we are apt to get all mixed up.

APRIL 16. SORROW LEADS TO JOY

In the Gospel of yesterday's Mass, our Lord gives us a profound truth to think about: "A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth a child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

In other words, for every great accomplishment in life, whether it be achievement in studies, or success in writing or composing or inventing, whether it be founding a family or building a bridge, whether it be accomplishment in this world or the attaining of eternal salvation, there must be difficulties, trials and tribulations. But when we have won through and attained our goal, the joy and happiness is all the greater the more we had to struggle along the way.

This is seen very clearly in an athletic contest. The harder the practise, the more nerve-wracking the preparations, the tougher the opponent, the greater the exultation of victory.

APRIL

Let us not, then, be afraid of difficulties and trials in life. They are the necessary preparation for solid accomplishment and lasting joy and satisfaction.

APRIL 17. DOESN'T ADD UP!

If we could believe the advertisements on our billboards or those heard on the radio, all we need for a happy life is a sufficient number of labor-saving devices, the best types of food and drink, facilities for enjoying ourselves, and the like. The assumption behind practically every ad is this: happiness comes from removing pain and annoyance on the one hand and providing pleasure and enjoyment on the other.

No greater fallacy could be enunciated. It is a complete confusion of two distinct things: pleasure and happiness. The Saints, for example, were the happiest people that ever lived in this world and at the same time they were those who suffered and denied themselves the most. On the other hand, the idle rich with everything money can buy are proverbially unhappy.

People sin because they seek pleasure and self-gratification in some form or other. But sin does not bring happiness either in this world or the next. "The wages of sin is death," says St. Paul.

We should convince ourselves strongly that God made us to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him. It is only in Him that we can find true happiness. As St. Augustine said: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: DOESN'T ADD UP!

APRIL 18. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

While St. Ignatius was studying in Paris, he met there a young man similarly engaged. His name was Francis Xavier. He was a brilliant student and had already become famous as a teacher. But he was full of ambition and unwilling to live a life of poverty and humility according to the teaching of Christ and the insistent pleadings of Ignatius. His life, though very pure, was not wholly consecrated to God. Ignatius saw the elements of spiritual greatness in him and tried to persuade him of the foolishness of seeking anything in this world but the glory of God. For a long time, pride was too strong. But Ignatius brought to his attention again and again the words of Jesus: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" Francis argued that he didn't intend to endanger his soul. But Ignatius told him that he was doing so by resisting the call of God to give up his private ambitions and devote his whole life to procuring God's honor and glory. In the end Ignatius conquered and Francis Xavier became the great Apostle of the Indies.

We can put the same question to ourselves. Anything we do in life that is not directed toward God is a total loss. Why should we set our

APRIL

heart on earthly riches, honors and pleasures, things which have no eternal value, when we might be winning heavenly glory and happiness by leading a truly Christian life? Why should we endanger our salvation even by seeking these trifles?

APRIL 19. ARE YOU A SLAVE?

If somebody were to come up to you and ask: "Are you a slave?" doubtless your indignation would be great. You would be tempted to "slap him down" for asking such a question.

And yet, there is a more horrible form of slavery than being bound to work for another man: it is the slavery of vice. And how many slaves there are on this basis—men who cannot say "No" to drink, to sinful pleasures, to their temper, to their impatience. Often in their better moments, they would like to become normal, happy human beings—but they feel themselves bound as by chains of steel.

Is their situation hopeless? No. But they must seek a remedy where it can be found. They must go to One Who can break their bonds as if they were nothing. Christ has come to free us from the terrible slavery of sin—a bondage to the devil that ends up in eternal torment. He will make us free, if we go to Him and use His Sacraments, especially penance and the Holy Eucharist. But without Him, we are doomed to remain slaves forever.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: LET CHRIST FREE YOU.

APRIL 20. OUR UNION WITH GOD

Our lives on earth find an apt illustration in the broad whirling-table sometimes found in the funhouse. For those of you who have never ridden on one, the whirling-table starts from a stationary position, increases in speed gradually, until finally it is revolving at a reckless rate. Fifteen or twenty people get on before it starts. By the time the table is again at rest only two or three remain, those at the very center. Centrifugal force has thrown everyone else to the circular wall around the table.

Life is this table, for as we go through life we must take the many bumps, bruises, and reverses it deals us. If we expect to maintain our position as a true Catholic during the entire "ride," we must cling to the center of all life—God. The closer we stay to Him in all our troubles the less we will have to fear of being cast off from Him. Make it a point today to pay Christ a visit in the Blessed Sacrament. Tell Him that you wish with all your heart to remain close to His heart at all times.

APRIL 23. GOOD READING

We are well accustomed to the fact that the laws of nature work with precision and without exception. No one in his right mind jumps off

the roof hoping that this one time the law of gravity will fail to work. Our Lord expressed this thought in the words: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

But in the spiritual order, we sometimes fail to realize that the laws governing the soul are just as inexorable as those governing the body. We fill our minds with cheap, suggestive or impure ideas whether through books, magazines, radio programs or motion pictures and we wonder why we have such terrible temptations to impurity or why we find it so difficult to concentrate during prayer. What else should we expect? "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?"

Obviously if we would have holy thoughts, if we want our mind filled with wholesome and consoling images, we must put into them ideas calculated to produce these effects. It is not enough to refrain from allowing evil into our souls: that would create something of a spiritual vacuum. We must fill this vacuum with good and holy pictures and concepts.

That is the great blessing of reading spiritual books, pamphlets and magazines. This practice can quickly lead us to a greater love of God by the holy sentiments aroused in the soul. When we come to relish holy reading it is a sure sign that the Holy Spirit is working within us. (Recommend specific books, magazines, etc., that may be available.)

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: "OH, HE READ SPIRITUAL BOOKS."

APRIL 24. VALUE OF SELF-DENIAL

In the life of Father Ravignan, there is a very instructive incident of a young man about the age of 22 who was very keen intellectually. He came to him to discuss several questions. The priest asked him: Are you a Catholic? He answered, Yes, but that he had not received his Easter Communion for some years. The priest said that he ought to go to confession and refused to discuss the questions till he had done so. Finally, after coming back again and again, Father Ravignan succeeded in getting him to perform some acts of self-denial. As a result he went to confession and received Holy Communion. Then Father Ravignan offered to discuss the doubts and difficulties he had formerly proposed. But the young man said that he now saw the answers to them.

From this incident, we learn that truth is often obscured to those in sin; that the way to get rid of sin is to go to confession and repent; but that this is possible only when we have made up our minds to deny ourselves and overcome ourselves. Only to the extent that we are doing this can we claim to be true followers of Christ. For he said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

APRIL 25. THESE ARE THE STARS

In a remarkable statement (C. D. June 1947, p. 83), Bing Crosby of Going-My-Way fame says:

APRIL

"There are some people in this world who are playing all the time at high adventure and who never step out of their roles day or night. But the funny thing about them is that they don't seem to realize what heroes they are. We play them in the movies once in a while. They're the Father O'Malleys and the Sister Benedicts and the Brothers whom Hollywood writers frequently don't bother to name. They are the people whose lives are filled with real drama. Day after day the padre goes along, straightening out the lives of others who have gotten into tangles of one sort or another. Day after day the Sister of the Brother works patiently, shaping the characters of girls and boys who will be mainstays of this good American way of life of ours, which is founded on belief in God . . .

"The priest and the religious are the real makers of history. The rest of us run a business and make some money, and after a little while we're gone and the money's gone. But they are building kingdoms of spiritual values that are going to influence and rule generations years and years away.

"Of course, we've each got our little spot in this big movie of life and the trick is to play our part the way the Great Director wants it played. Most of us are spotted to places like mine—with a bunch of youngsters and a good wife at home to provide for. But some of us can move up into really stellar roles, if we answer the call when the Great Director goes about casting. The important thing is to have studied our abilities and to know whether or not we can play the roles when they are opened to us.

"For me—I envy the boy who gets cast for life as a Father O'Malley and the girl who gets called up for lifelong starring as a Sister Benedict. In my book, they are the ones whose names are going to stand first on the program, spelled out in capital letters, and in good black type. In my book, these are the stars."

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: BE A STAR FOR ALL ETERNITY.

TEACHING AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR vinylite prayer card. COMMUNION—VOCATION, prayer after Communion and prayer to know one's vocation. (Write for sample.)

APRIL 26. ST. POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA

St. Polycarp was a disciple of St John the Apostle. In his old age he was taken as a Christian and brought before the Roman tribunal. The Roman proconsul said to him: "Swear by the genius of Caesar, and I will discharge you; blaspheme Christ." Polycarp replied: "Fourscore and six years have I served Him and He hath done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"

When we consider how God has done us nothing but good, how our Lord has died for us on the cross, how he gives Himself to us in Holy Communion, we should like St. Polycarp, resolve to be faithful to Him. Earthly friends, no matter whom they may be, may fail us. But Christ

APRIL

will never forsake us, even in our sins. As the Imitation of Christ says: "Love Him and keep Him for thy friend, who when all others fail thee will not leave thee nor suffer thee to perish in the end."

APRIL 27. GET IT OFF YOUR CHEST

If you had a dangerous disease like cancer, would you go around allowing this growth to eat into you or would you go to a doctor for a remedy? If you knew your system was poisoned would you allow yourself to die or would you hurry to a physician for an antidote?

Sin, especially mortal sin, is a spiritual cancer, a spiritual poison. Why leave it on your soul when it is so easy to get a cure from Christ's personal representative in the sacrament of penance? There is really nothing to fear. The priest, after all, is a man inclined to evil like the rest of us and subject to sin. Your secret dies in him. And God, Whom he represents, desires nothing so much as to have you return to Him with sincere contrition. Our Lord loved sinners. As He Himself said: "They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. For I came not to call the just, but sinners." (St. Mark. ii. 17)

APRIL 30. BE CAREFUL. DEATH IS SO PERMANENT

In a safety campaign an Army car was driven back and forth across the Bay Bridge in San Francisco bearing the motto: "Be careful. Death is so permanent."

The idea, while not particularly of the supernatural order, has merit. For a moment's inattention at the wheel, for not looking while crossing the street or stepping from behind a parked car, people get killed and despite the many advances of modern medicine nothing has been accomplished as yet in the difficult art of bringing people back to life.

True, as our Lord tells us, we ought to fear the death of the soul rather than that of the body. But we still have an obligation under the fifth commandment to take reasonable means to preserve our own life to say nothing of being mindful of the lives of others. There is no particular virtue in being foolish or thoughtless.

Much of the troubles in traffic and the accidents resulting therefrom arise from the attitude: "Me first!" There is a lack of common courtesy, charity and even elemental regard for the rights of others. By taking the Christian spirit of "others first" we shall make our contribution toward greater peace and safety in traffic.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: BE CAREFUL. DEATH IS SO PERMANENT.

MAY

MAY 1. WHO WILL WIN?

It is a curious fact that on May 1, the very day we customarily honor Mary as Queen of the May and inaugurate her month, the Communists make it a point to foregather and commemorate their bloody deeds. So much is this the case that in recent years, there have been counter-gatherings on the part of Catholics to pray to Mary for those of her children who are blinded by the errors of Marx and Co.

Well may we pray to her since in her apparitions at Fatima, she has promised that if we say the Rosary, Russia will be converted and the world will have peace. If we do not heed her directions there will be great persecutions and troubles in the world, but finally, her Immaculate Heart will triumph.

As good children of Mary, let us follow her wishes, especially during the month of May, by saying the Rosary daily.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: MARY PROMISES PEACE IF—

TEACHING AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR vinylite prayer card: THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY, the fifteen mysteries with one sentence explanations. (Write for sample.)

MAY 2. RECEIVING GOD'S GIFT

In the early days of our country when the settlers were first making contact with the Indians, it was customary to signify mutual good will by an exchange of gifts. The etiquette of the situation was to give the Indians something they prized, such as pretty beads or similar trinkets and they in turn would present possibly a beaver fur or an ornamental pipe. If, after making your offering you were to refuse to receive the return gift of the Indians, this would have been a great insult and a clear sign of enmity.

Have we ever thought of the Mass from this point of view? Fundamentally, Holy Mass should be an exchange of gifts between us and God. The great value of the Mass is that we have in it the perfect Gift to offer to God. There on the altar is the Divine Victim, the Son of God, and we in union with the priest offer Him to God. No wonder God is pleased and showers down His graces upon us. But the greatest return God makes us is to offer His Divine Son in Holy Communion. When we fail to approach the altar rail to accept God's Gift, we are like the settlers refusing the return gift of the Indians. God is not pleased with us for this lack of appreciation. Mass is not full and complete in its meaning for us unless God accepts our Gift and we receive His. In other words, Holy Communion should be a normal part of Mass for us. God expects that and is not pleased when we refuse to receive Jesus.

MAY 4. DEVOTION TO MARY

Abbe Trochu in his book, "The Insight of the Cure d'Ars" tells the

MAY

following well-authenticated story of the value of even slight devotion to our Blessed Lady.

One day Pere Guillaumet, superior for many years of the house of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Dizier in France, journeyed to Ars. In his carriage the sole conversation was, of course, about the saintly Cure and the marvelous things he was doing. A woman dressed in black rode for a long time in silence beside the venerable Pere Guillaumet. Finally she addressed him:

"Father, allow me to accompany you to Ars. Why should I not go there as well as anyone else? I travel to recreate myself. Would you please tell me when we are there?"

Pere Guillaumet took her along with him to visit the famous Cure. After some minutes of waiting, the Cure appeared in his surplice, and suddenly stopped before this woman in mourning. Pere Guillaumet heard him say to her softly:

"He is saved. Yes, he is saved."

An expression of incredulity was the woman's only reply. Then the Cure d'Ars, carefully accentuating all his words, replied:

"I will tell you, he is saved. He is in Purgatory and needs your prayers. Even in his fall off the bridge he had time enough to repent. It is the most Holy Virgin Mary who obtained this grace for him. Remember the month of May and the altar erected in your room? Your godless husband used not to oppose it in any way. He even sometimes joined you in prayer. That won him pardon at his last hour."

MAY 7. FACING LIFE

There would not be much skill required by the batter at the plate if the only ball pitched was a low, straight ball. The batter would know the exact place to swing every time in order to clout the horsehide. But the actual case is far different. The pitcher has five or six balls he may throw whenever he chooses. Thus, much depends upon the quick eye and fast, alert judging of the batter in picking out the right ball at the right moment.

We have much the same situation in life. We don't know from one day to the next what is going to come our way in the line of trials, vexations, and sufferings. It would be a cinch to take care of many of these things if we knew just where, when, and how they were to come about. We would not then be taken by surprise. But since we have little idea what we will have to undergo during our lifetime, there is only one way out—like the batter, we must develop skill and be prepared *for everything*. The general conditioner is prayer. During this rosary, then, ask Mary for the strength necessary to meet all contrary events with fortitude and decision.

MAY 8. CONVERSION OF ST. AUGUSTINE

There is a common but mistaken impression that the saints were privileged characters who without trouble or difficulty of any sort were

M A Y

raised by God to intimate friendship with Him. But the fact is they were just like us in all their tendencies and desires. They had the same temptations, sometimes worse; they felt lazy; they got tired; they became discouraged; they smarted under the pain of insult and contempt. Some of the saints, in fact, were so much like us that they began life by falling away from God. We have a striking example in the Gospel in the person of Mary Magdalene, who by her heartfelt sorrow became such a favorite of our Lord.

Today the Church celebrates the conversion of St. Augustine. In his early days, he went to Rome from his home in Africa to continue his studies in rhetoric and philosophy. There under the influence of bad companions and the promptings of his own nature, he fell into a life of sin and even in his intellectual pride renounced his faith. After a number of years in this pitiable state, he was converted to God by reading these words in the Epistles of St. Paul: "Not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and impurities; not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." Thereafter, Augustine was a changed man. But he had a long struggle against his passions.

His life and conversion show us that we should never despair. With God's help and with prayer, we can overcome ourselves and even become great saints in spite of our human weakness.

MAY 9. ARE YOU A WALKING CORPSE?

Imagine a boy of your age walking along with vigorous strides. He is well built, muscular, healthy. He seems a picture of life and vitality.

But could it be that beneath this rugged exterior there is an inner corruption of the tomb? This would be the case if his soul were in the state of mortal sin. He might then be spoken of as a walking corpse.

To the youth who desires life in all its fullness this is hardly an ideal state. Obviously a strong body but a DEAD soul is a terrible caricature of life. Should the body die, there would be nothing left but a dead soul which the devil would claim as his own and drag into Hell.

But if our soul is alive, then even the death of the body matters little. For the soul continues on in bliss and eventually takes the body back to itself in its eternal happiness.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: ARE YOU A WALKING CORPSE?

MAY 10. LITTLE BY LITTLE

We have all some time or other admired a weight lifter who seems to be able to raise weights of five hundred pounds with astounding ease. If we attempted such a feat we would probable be hardly able to budge the weight. Do not think, however, that the weight lifter acquired his prowess without regular training. No doubt he commenced with smaller weights and gradually by practice increased his skill and hardened his muscles till he could balance the greater ones.

MAY

In trying to perfect ourselves or to overcome some fault in our character we must not think that we can achieve this objective in a single operation. We must strive by a gradual process of removing our small faults by little and repeated acts of virtue till we can manage to accomplish the greater feats of banishing and conquering large faults. It takes practice and plenty of it!

MAY 11. SPIRITUAL CONFIRMATION

Perhaps you have heard of the practice of spiritual communion. At any hour of the day or night, we can do something very pleasing to our Lord by expressing a desire to receive Him and asking Him to come to our hearts spiritually. This is spiritual communion.

There is also such a thing as spiritual confirmation. The day we were confirmed, we received the Holy Ghost with His seven-fold gifts. But we may at any moment of the day or night pray to Him asking Him to renew His presence in our souls. This is spiritual confirmation. When we say the prayer, "Come, Holy Ghost . . ." particularly, we should remember that if we pray with sincerity, our request will be answered and the Holy Spirit will really come into our hearts to enlighten us and inflame us with His love.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: COME, HOLY GHOST!

MAY 14. RUBBER HEELS FOR SOULS

The machine vibration in a factory was so hard on his system that a young man got a rubber mat and stood on it while he worked. Finding it inconvenient to always carry the mat with him, he cut it up and attached the pieces to the bottom of his shoes. His name was O'Sullivan, on whose heels a good many of our readers doubtless stand today, to absorb the shocks that tire them out. The "shock" of life today is no less a wear and tear on the soul. If you sit still a minute, someone is sure to ask if you feel sick. Home is a morgue without the radio's blare. Jump here! Jump there! Never mind where we're going, so long as we're on the go.

The shock absorber of the soul is prayer. Some people keep their rubber mat in the church and use it there. But a wise man has rubber heels for his soul—praying in the midst of crowds, at work, in the football stadium—everywhere—and his soul is in peace.

MAY 15. ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Three centuries ago (April 30, 1651) there was born in the city of Rheims John Baptist de La Salle. He was a member of a noble family,, was well endowed with this world's goods and to all appearances was destined for ecclesiastical preferment.

But by the mysterious ways of Providence, he was led to found the Brothers of the Christian Schools, an organized body of religious men devoted to providing a Christian education to the poor and underprivileged. Since then, many other congregations of teaching Brothers have

MAY

sprung up in the Church. These men are not priests, but they devote themselves entirely to the work of Christian education of the young.

The need for volunteers in this field is almost as great today as it was in the time of St. John Baptist de La Salle. If you do not feel you have a call to this particular vocation, you should at least pray that God will raise up more teaching Brothers, otherwise the day may come when your children will not be able to receive a complete Catholic education.

MAY 16. ST. FRANCIS BORGIA

St. Francis Borgia was a noble at the Spanish court, but unlike most such people he led a devout and penitential life. He spent several hours a day in prayer on his knees. He fasted and practised austerities.

When Queen Isabella died, he was given a very disagreeable duty. Being a person of first importance, her funeral obsequies had lasted a rather long time. Before the coffin was to be put into the grave, it was his task to look within and identify the Queen's body. The sight he saw made a definite impact on his soul. She who had been noted for her beauty was already becoming a mass of corruption. He resolved that henceforth he would serve a Sovereign Who was truly noble. Accordingly, he left his position at court, became a Jesuit and later was elected General of the Order.

Like St. Francis Borgia, we should convince ourselves of the passing nature of all things in this world. We ourselves personally must die and leave everything. Why should we become so attached to the goods of time as to allow them to cause the loss of our soul for all eternity?

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: YOU! IN 2049 A. D.

MAY 17. MAGNIFYING EVIL

Somebody has said: "A penny will hide the biggest star in the universe if you hold it close enough to your eye."

Similarly, if you use a microscope on a very small insect, it might scare you as it comes to look like a tremendous prehistoric monster.

There is such a thing as getting too close to our troubles and difficulties. We worry and fret about them; we turn them over and over in our mind; and the result is they seem to be about one hundred times as great as they really are.

For example, somebody says an unkind word to us. It might not even be intentionally designed to injure us. But it sticks in our souls. We work ourselves up and try to figure out the best way to get revenge. One little word has obscured from our minds all the good things we have in life. Why let it get you down?

The best way to overcome this state of mind is to think how small these difficulties appear one year later. They seem like nothing. We wonder how we ever got so overwrought. When we feel this exaggerated attitude coming on, let's try to distract ourselves with some wholesome activity.

MAY

MAY 18. 'TAIN'T FUNNY, YOU MUCKER!

There's a story told of a boss who returned from lunch and invited the staff into his office to listen to a few jokes he had picked up. After two or three he noticed everyone was laughing except one lone girl.

"What's the matter?" grumbled the boss, "Haven't you got a sense of humor?"

"I don't have to laugh," said the girl. "I'm leaving Friday anyhow."

It is not unusual to find ourselves in a group where stories are being told that aren't funny (for another reason) and at which we laugh or give an indication of approval. Dirty stories should be treated as stupid stories. Funny or not, we should exercise the independence of the girl who was leaving Friday.

MAY 21. THE GREAT SUPPER

Our Lord once spoke a parable of a king who made a great supper and invited many. But they all began to make excuses: "I have bought a farm and therefore I cannot come." "I have purchased a yoke of oxen and must needs go out and try them." "I have married a wife and therefore cannot be present." And the king hearing how these people preferred their own petty interests to his supper swore that none of them would taste it. Instead he sent his messengers out to invite anybody and everybody to come.

Now, this may be taken as a picture of the Great Supper of the Holy Eucharist. God invites us to this magnificent repast where there is nothing set before us but His own Divine Son, the greatest gift He can offer us. And yet how many make excuses for not partaking of the Lord's Supper:

"I must go to a dance on Saturday night and therefore I cannot go to Holy Communion."

"I find it too difficult to keep in the state of grace and confession is irksome."

"I want to have some fun. If I go to Holy Communion, I will be tied down."

"I'm not interested. Holy Communion won't get you anywhere in this world."

"It's all right for girls and women to be religious, but you can't expect a real man to go for that sort of thing."

Will God accept these flimsy excuses? Will He allow His invitation to be spurned in this fashion? If we don't go to Holy Communion at least once a week, have we any good reason, or is ours a poor excuse which God will not accept?

MAY 22. THE KNOCKOUT BLOW

In prize fighting, the aim is to knock out one's opponent. Failing that, a victory may be secured in the opinion of the judges by giving a better display of boxing.

MAY

A fighter, however, may be actually doing better than his opponent, but the latter bides his time and in an unguarded moment strikes a lethal blow and thus wins the contest.

Similarly, the devil is willing to let us have a little spiritual success in unimportant matters, if only he can give us the knockout blow of mortal sin. He doesn't mind if we say our morning and evening prayers, if we are obedient to our parents, if we are pure, providing he can get us to commit some other kind of sin, such as stealing. One mortal sin is enough to knock us out spiritually and put us in a position for going to Hell.

Now the skillful fighter is aware of this design of his opponent and takes all the necessary means to avoid falling a victim to his plans. Not only does he develop a good offense, but just as important he builds up a good defense. He studies the style of boxing used by his adversary and endeavors to develop the means for neutralizing its deadliness.

Similarly, in our spiritual warfare, we must not only have a good offense (frequent prayer, Mass, Holy Communion, confession) but a good defense as well. This means in particular avoiding the occasions of sin. Entering an occasion of sin is like sticking your chin out to let the devil give you the finishing blow.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: DOWN . . . AND OUT!

MAY 23. PRIZE REAL VALUES

When St. Bernard planned to enter the religious life, he brought many others with him including four of his brothers. When they were leaving home, they saw their younger brother Nivard playing with some companions of his own age: now that they were going, he would be the heir. So they said to him:

"Now that we are entering the monastery of Clairvaux, you will one day be master of this grand estate."

"Oh, no," cried the child, "that must not be; that would be an unfair division. You are all taking Heaven for your portion and leaving me this world for mine."

Later, when he had grown up, he followed his brothers' example and in his turn chose heavenly riches in preference to the goods of this earth.

MAY 24. THE TWO CANS

Two boys went to the river with tin cans to fetch water. One brought back a great deal more water than the other. The reason: he had a larger container.

Two persons go to Holy Communion. One comes back with more blessings in his soul than the other. The reason: he made a better preparation. His soul was more disposed to be united to Christ and profit by His graces.

What about our preparation for Holy Communion?

MAY

MAY 25. GOSSIP

St. Philip Neri, who died in Rome May 25, 1595, was one of the most sought, most popular and most practical confessors the Church has ever known. In addition, he had an abundant sense of humor.

On one occasion a woman accused herself in confession of doing considerable gossiping and talebearing about other people. For penance, he told her to buy an unplucked chicken in the market place and while she was going home, to scatter the feathers through the street. Then she was to return to him.

When she reported, he said: "Now to complete your penance you must go back and pick up all the feathers and bring them here to me."

"But, Father," the woman exclaimed, "you know that is impossible. The wind blew them away, and I could never hope to recapture them now."

"Quite true," the saint replied, "and neither can you recall the damaging words about your neighbors which by this time have passed from mouth to mouth far beyond your reach. Be careful in future to watch every word you utter."

MAY 28. THE MIGHT OF PRAYER

If all the 1,600,000,000 people in the world were rolled into one, such a giant would be ten billion feet tall, or almost two million miles high. Standing on the earth he could look down at the moon, which would scarcely reach above his ankles. The sun over his head would be no higher than forty-six times his own height.

Yet, such a giant would never be as mighty as a little child on its knees reaching to God through prayer. For prayer puts at our disposal the almighty power of God.

It might be compared to the switch which turns on the electricity that runs the machines of an entire factory. We of ourselves could not do the work of any one of these machines. Yet by simply pressing a button, not one machine, but all of them are put into action.

Similarly, of ourselves we can do nothing in the spiritual order. But if we seek the power of God in prayer, then we can do anything.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: THROW IN THE SWITCH.

MAY 29. NO REASON FOR BEING DOWNHEARTED

St. Philip Neri, a most cheerful saint, once saw a nun very much depressed. He queried: "What are you up to now, Sister Scholastica?" "Why these scruples? You are going to Heaven, aren't you?"

She shook her head. Evidently that was what bothered her.

"I tell you: Heaven is your portion," assured the Saint cheerily. "I'll prove it for you. Tell me: For whom did Christ die?"

"For Sinners."

"And what are you?"

M A Y

"A poor sinner."

"Well then . . ."

It is absolutely true. Our Lord was the friend of publicans and sinners: that was the accusation of His enemies. And He Himself said: "I came not to call the just but sinners to repentance." Let us then have absolute confidence in the goodness of His Sacred Heart, no matter how many times we fall into sin.

MAY 31. PERSONAL LOVE OF JESUS

The devotion to the Sacred Heart is one of the modern devotions in the Church. It received its principal impetus from the revelations made by our Divine Lord Himself to St. Margaret Mary. The pierced Heart of Christ is a symbol of the forgotten, despised and injured love of God for man. How God has loved us! Of His own volition has He brought us into being that we might share in His happiness. So much did He love us that He left Heaven, the abode of delight, left all His glory and magnificence and came down to earth to die for us upon the cross. So much does He love us that He willed to be with us all days in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. And yet, how true is the complaint He made to St. Margaret Mary in His third revelation to her (June 16, 1875): "Behold this Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, in order to testify its love. In return, I receive from the greater part only ingratitude, by their irreverence and sacrilege and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this sacrament of love." Have we a real personal love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Do these words of His apply to us? Are we cold towards Him? Let us begin from this day to return love for love by making Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament our best Friend, and by making reparation for the coldness, the contempt, and the ingratitude of others as well as our own.

JUNE

JUNE 1. WHAT CAN WE GIVE TO GOD?

All through the history of the world, man has felt the need of expressing his gratitude to his Maker for the wonderful benefits he has received from Him. Thus we find Cain and Abel offering sacrifice and similarly with the patriarchs and the Jews. Moreover, the idea of offering something to God or what they believe to be a god is found with universal persistence among all tribes of the earth.

But actually, what can we give God Who needs nothing and Who in reality owns the world and even ourselves? Is He really satisfied with what we offer Him or does He look for something more?

Of course, in the Mass we have the perfect Gift to present to our Father in Heaven for we offer up His own Divine Son. Nevertheless God is not satisfied unless we do something more. What He really wants of us is our love. Apart from that all our gifts do not fully please Him.

“Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us.” (I St. John IV:19).

JUNE 4. CHEATING HURTS YOU

In our childhood games we may have heard the expression “Cheaters never prosper” hurled at us by our companions when they claimed we were not following the rules. But of course with age and experience we find that actually a certain temporary advantage is gained by those who are dishonest whether in school or business life. However, the fact still remains that fundamentally the cheater loses out and hurts himself most of all.

Consider, for example, the boy who cheats in his studies. He is able to pass and get his diploma because he copies homework and examinations. What is the net effect on himself?

1. Because he succeeds by cheating, he does not apply himself to study and so he never learns. He has the name of having an education but the reality is not there. In later life, he may cry over himself because he didn't spend his time in school properly, but that will do little good. In actual life, people are rated by what they can do, not by the diplomas they have.
2. The boy who cheats thereby warps his character. The habit of getting by through easy and dishonest tactics can lead to serious trouble in life. It may even result in prison and disgrace.
3. Cheating is basically an act of cowardice. We haven't the courage to meet difficulties face to face, so we try to get around them.

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: CHEATING HURTS YOU.

JUNE 5. ON MAKING EXCUSES

The parable related by our Lord in yesterday's Gospel is a masterpiece of analysis. The art of making excuses is one of the most developed traits of tortuous human nature, whether we examine it in the young boy

JUNE

who has raided the pantry shelf, the student who has arrived late for class or minus his homework, or the adult who must explain to a belligerent wife why he is getting home so late. One thing that is clear about making excuses as opposed to having an excuse is this: we aren't telling the truth.

If we were to ask why the students in this class don't go to Mass and Communion every day, there would probably be some few genuine excusing reasons. But for the most part, there would either be no reasons at all or they would be manufactured to suit the occasion.

In other words, if we don't want to do something, we find an excuse to keep our conscience quiet and stop the mouths of others.

On the other hand, if we had a generous love for our Lord, we would want to attend Mass daily and receive Him frequently in Holy Communion. We would find it a real hardship not to be able to do so. But when we don't want to go, we manufacture excuses.

JUNE 6. THE SPARTAN AND THE FOX

In ancient Sparta, a warlike nation on the Greek peninsula, young boys were brought up in vigorous discipline. They were supposed to accustom themselves to pain and not whimper or cry when they were maltreated. The story is told of a young lad who stole a fox. While he was going along, he was met by some older men who held him in conversation. Rather than reveal his misdeed, he remained unmoved and gave no evidence of pain while the fox was eating out his vitals. It was only when he had fallen down dead that the men realized what courage he had displayed.

The fox in this story might be taken as a symbol of passion. When we yield to it, we find ourselves consumed as it were in our souls. Externally, we may give no inkling of the depths of our misery and suffering, but all the while the evil passion is destroying our spiritual life. To remedy this, let us expose our condition to the priest and endeavor with the help of the grace of sacraments and prayer to prevent this passion from injuring our soul and causing spiritual death by mortal sin.

JUNE 7. VIRTUE—MANLINESS

The study of words and their derivation very often reveals a depth of meaning unnoticed by the casual observer. A case in point is the word "virtue". It comes to us almost directly from the Latin "virtus" meaning strength, courage, excellence. This word "virtus" in turn is built on the Latin "vir" meaning man. Virtue, then, is something that should characterize a man.

In truth, it takes a real man to be virtuous. Some there are endowed with physical strength making them able to overcome opponents in the boxing ring, in a wrestling match or on the playing field. Others have the ability to dominate others as bosses or officers in the armed forces. All this does not prove they are truly manly. If they are unable to overcome their laziness, their impure desires, their anger, for example, they are not

JUNE

real men—they haven't virtue or manhood. They are weaklings. Only that person who is able to overcome himself has true strength of soul and is deserving of the name man. "Be a man, not a mouse."

VISUAL AID: The RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR poster: THE GREATEST VICTORY—OVERCOME YOURSELF.

JUNE 8. A SPIRITUAL VACATION?

Most normal people look forward with anticipation to the period of vacation from work or school. A change of occupation is pleasant even if it means passing from the routine of school to the routine of a summer job. It will be physically and mentally refreshing to do something different, and perhaps we need a change after a long school year. When the discipline and regularity of school work is removed, many will be inclined to relax their habits of prayer, of receiving the sacraments, and of spiritual endeavor in general. But a spiritual vacation is neither necessary or desirable. The soul is not made up of matter, of parts, of physical tissues that must be renewed. The change of occupation that the summer brings should not change our relations with God. We should take into account in making summer plans that with new interests we may be in danger of neglecting religious duties and that the summer may bring temptations that must be overcome by the grace of God. Regular prayer, frequent Communion, the good habits that we have formed must be continued through the summer with even greater energy.

