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Chosen vessels -
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VESSEL OF POWER



VESSEL OF LIGHT



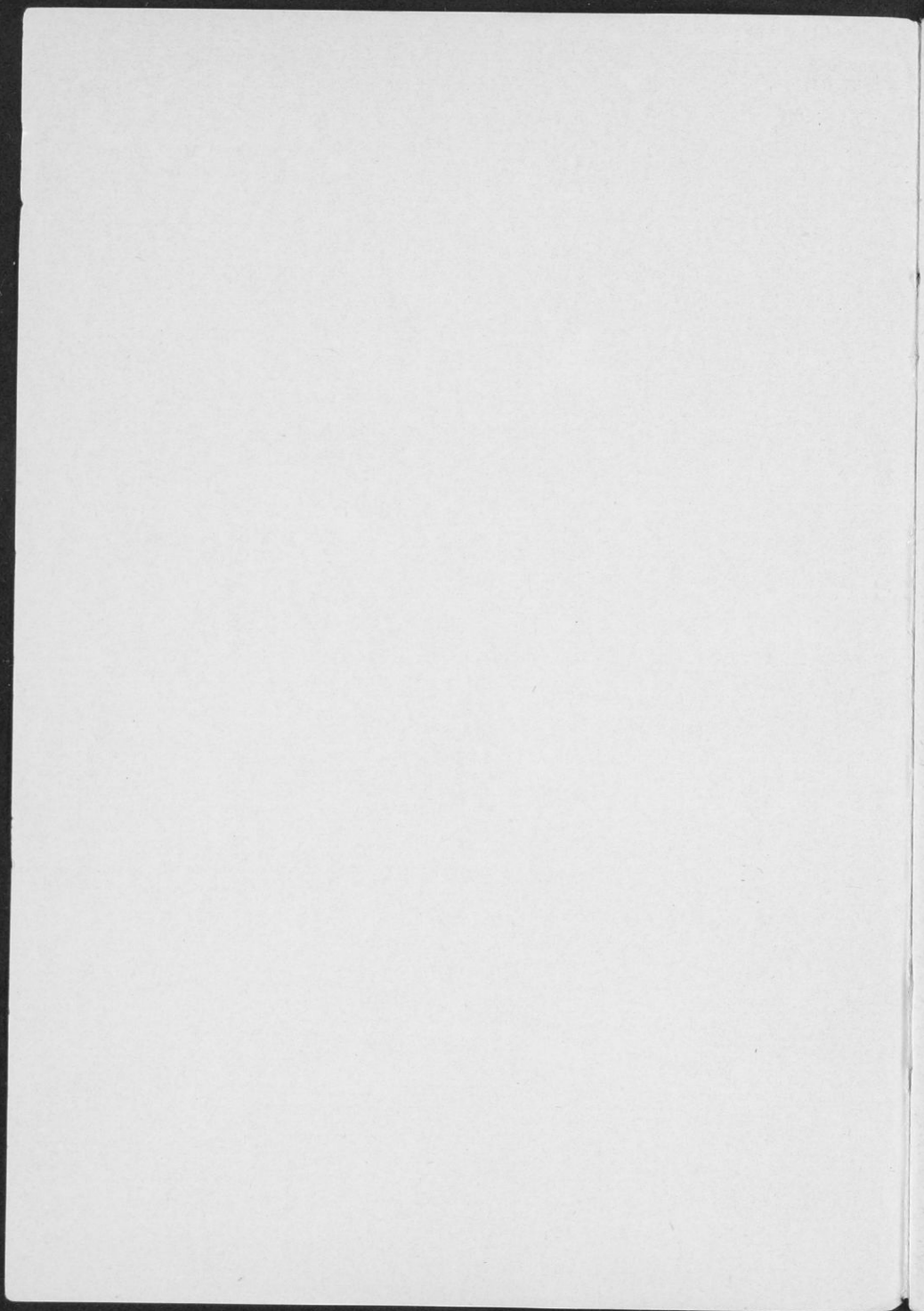
VESSEL OF AFFECTION



VESSEL OF THE LORD

Chosen Vessels

Very Reverend Monsignor
JOHN J. DOUGHERTY



'CHOSEN VESSELS'

Four addresses delivered on the Catholic Hour during the month of November, 1955, by the Very Rev. Msgr. John J. Dougherty. The program is produced by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company.

BY

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Peter: Vessel Of Power

Address Delivered on November 6, 1955

May I recall to your minds something that is true of all of us? We are attracted more by personalities than by ideas. The power of a personality with a burning idea is immeasurably stronger than the same idea in cold print. In places where ideas are expressed, in the church as much as in the theater, the magnetic personality draws the crowds. The hazard for religion is that the fascination with personalities may make people forget that the object of their worship is Christ Jesus, Our Lord. He is the personality at the heart of our religion, the living idea, who came to cast fire on the earth, who said of himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)

The personalities that draw crowds are the living personalities of the present. Because of the modern miracle of television a personality can attract millions of people and influence them for good or for evil. The great personalities of the past speak to us only through their books. How little they are known! Someone recently remarked that Mickey Mouse was better known around the globe than Jesus Christ. It is not easy to get to know personalities of the past. The knowledge we do have of them is often pale and one-dimensional like the faded picture of a patriot on a school-

room wall. If you ask a child where Jesus is, he will point to a plaster statue in the church or to the stained-glass window. I fear sometimes that he is almost as lifeless as that of grown-ups. So too with the saints. We are apt to think of them as something less than human, as shadowy realities like the ghost of Hamlet, rather than as real people, which they most certainly were. How real to you, for example, is the Apostle Peter? What does he mean to you?

People who know Peter like him because he was so human. They like saints to talk and act like people, not like sanctimonious stuffed shirts. They are pleased to see Christ choose a man like Peter, a vessel of clay. It makes them feel good about Christ; makes them bold enough to think it might be possible for him to choose them for something he wanted done, and that with his help they might even get it done.

It is interesting how you can come to love a man out of the past, someone you have never seen. I have known children who love mothers they have never seen, and wives who love husbands they will never see again. Death can separate, but it cannot kill love. If these loves are possible, is it not possible to

love the saints, especially since they were so good and lovable. Of course we have to know them before we can love them.

I suppose the thing that people remember best about Peter is his denial of Jesus. That was a dramatic and testifying act of human weakness, and what made it worse was that he talked so big before-hand. At the supper a few hours before he had said to Jesus with the tone and the flourish of a braggart, "Even though all shall be scandalized, yet not I." (Mark 14:29) "Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death." (Luke 22:33) When a man talks like that his pride is showing badly, and he is riding to a fall. When you wear your heart on your sleeve it is liable to get scarred.

Peter talked differently later that night when he stood in a hostile courtyard and the maid servant said, "This is one of them." Three times he denied his Master, and the third time he did curse and swear that he knew not the man. "And at that moment while he was yet speaking, a cock crowed, and the Lord turned and looked at Peter . . . and Peter went out and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:61f)

We love Peter because he is understandable. We see ourselves in him. In his boasting we hear an echo of our own. We see our reflection in him, so strong in words, so weak in deeds. We

see ourselves in him, carried away by the first wind of temptation. And like Peter we see ourselves so often shameful and sinful, weeping for sorrow.

Peter's denial tells us something about him; it does not tell us everything. You will understand what he later became when you hear how people felt about him, how "they carried the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and pallets that, when Peter passed, his shadow at least might fall on some of them." (Acts 5:15) That is why Christ chose Peter, because of what he would become. The vessel of clay would come to hold some of the power of Christ. Something of the healing power of Christ would be in his words, and the tongue that denied him in the courtyard would glorify him at the Temple Gate. When the lame man asked for an alms, Peter said, "Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, that I give thee. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and walk." (Acts 3:6) And leaping up the lame man began to walk.

The vessel of clay would come to hold something of the courage of Christ, and make amends for the weakness in the hostile courtyard by courage in a hostile court. When they charged him not to speak or to teach at all in the name of Jesus, he replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God,

decide for yourselves. For we cannot but speak of what we have heard and seen." (Acts 4:19)

And who was the man who became the courageous Apostle? He was a fisherman from Galilee. He lived in Bethsaida on the lake and owned his own boat. He lived there with his mother-in-law and his brother Andrew. His wife must have died young. When he was young his hair and beard were black and full like an Israelite king. He would have the face and hands and shoulders of a fisherman. He spoke with a Galilean accent, not heard in the finest circles of Jerusalem. Like so many of his countrymen he was drawn to the Jordan Valley by the prophetic personality of John the Baptist. There he met Jesus. The first time Jesus saw him he said to him, "Thou art Simon the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas." (John 1:42) *Kepha* is the Aramaic word for rock. Jesus announced to Simon that his name was to be changed. This was significant, and Simon knew it, for in Old Testament days when God gave a mission he often gave a change of name. Thus he said to Abram, "Neither shall thy name be called any more Abram; but thou shalt be called Abraham: because I have made thee a father of many nations." (Gen. 17:5) (*Ab-raham*) The Romans too used to say, *Nomen est omen*: in the name is the dest-

iny. Why did Jesus name Simon rock? We shall see.

The Peter who met Jesus at the Jordan was a strong, likeable Galilean. He had the deep religious feeling born of the great tradition of his people Israel. His heart burned with the patriot's resentment of Rome's mastery and tyranny. He was manly, impulsive, impetuous, natural and good. He was a lovable clod of mortal clay, and his thoughts and speech made that known. When he met Jesus faith touched the clay and by slow and painful transformation it was changed into a chosen vessel.

Peter's natural character stands out clearly in the things he said and did. His transformed self also has an immortal monument in his unforgettable words. Look first at Peter, the natural man. It was the night of the Last Supper in the Upper Room. Jesus removed his tunic and girded himself with a towel. He poured water into a basin to wash the feet of his Apostles. He came first to Peter, and Peter cried out, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Washing feet was the work of a slave. Jesus answered, "If I do not wash thee, thou shalt have no part with me." Then Peter said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." (cf John 13:4ff) Here is the natural, impulsive man. He carries his heart on his sleeve, but it is a good heart with great

power for good. This good heart spoke to Jesus after the miracle of the great haul of fish, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8) His good heart spoke when many disciples left Jesus after his discourse on the Bread of Life. He asked the Twelve, "Do you also wish to go away." Simon answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (John 6:68f)

The good heart of Peter was good soil for supernatural faith. The loving heart of Peter spoke at Caesarea Phillipi when Jesus said to his disciples "Who do you say that I am." Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That was not the good natural heart of Peter speaking, not the clod of mortal clay, not flesh and blood. It was the heart transformed by the gift of faith, as Jesus made clear, saying, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven." (Matt. 16:17)

When you are remembering the things that Peter said put those words in the first place. We need to ponder them well, for Christ himself tells us that he is not expressed in natural terms. In his presence flesh and blood falter. The real Christ is not to be found in Form Criticism, or Comparative Religion, or the Dead Sea Scrolls, for human minds with human

means produce only human answers. The human mind needs the gift of the heavenly Father; it needs the more than natural light, it needs the light of supernatural faith. This is what the personality of Peter has to say to contemporary Christians. Peter does what every Christian personality should do, draw men toward Christ. He reminds us that we are clay and that by the gift of God we can become steps of clay by which men can climb to Christ.

Jesus said more to Simon at Caesarea Phillipi. The omen in the name he gave him at the Jordan was now to be fulfilled. He continued: "And I say to thee, thou art Peter (*Kepha-rock*), and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:18f)

These words are charged with spiritual significance and religious mystery. Jesus used figures of speech that stood for spiritual realities. Simon was given a name meaning rock, and at the same time symbolic keys were given to him by the Lord. The meaning of keys is as obvious to us at it was to the Apostles. Keys give you the

power to open and to close. Jesus himself explains the figure by the words "bind" and "loose," and he affirms that Peter's power spans earth and heaven. This can only mean that unique and awesome spiritual power is given to him, whose judgment is endorsed in the very court of heaven.

The meaning of the other figure, the rock, is not as obvious to us as the symbolic meaning of the keys, for we do not ordinarily use a natural rock as a foundation for a church or a house. We construct our foundations. But in those days temples were often built on natural rock, as was the Temple of Herod in Jerusalem. The rock supported the temple and held it together. Simon was called *Kepha*-rock because the spiritual temple of Jesus, his church, was to be built upon him. He was to be the principle of truth and unity in the Kingdom of Christ on earth, and in vain would the powers of darkness storm against it. In a word Peter became the spiritual leader of the Church by Christ's appointment.

This may seem remote and archaic to the atomic age, but it seems awfully close and living when you stand at the tomb of St. Peter in Rome, and raise

your eyes to Bramante's majestic dome high above you and behold in golden mosaics the giant words, "*Tu es Petrus*" — Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. It seems awfully close and living when you stand in the Vatican and see a tall slender man in white enter the room, Pope Pius XII. He speaks in half a dozen languages to his spiritual children from all over the world, and you go back in memory from the twentieth century to the fifth, and recall the words of the fathers at the Council of Chalcedon when they heard the decree of Pope Leo, "Peter has spoken through Leo" — and a sort of chill goes through you.

Scripture, history, and the living Pope make Peter come to life. It is as if the plaster statue in your church suddenly began to move and speak as in the legend of Pygmalion. The statue may never come to life, but the reality it stands for must be living reality. I hope that through these words you have come a little closer to Peter, the impulsive, impetuous, lovable Galilean, courageous Prince of the Apostles, long since dead but mystically and wonderfully alive.

Paul: Vessel Of Light

Address Delivered on November 13, 1955

What modern man has accomplished in the matter of communications is altogether amazing. We may get used to it, and take it for granted, but a new flight record from London to New York or a new coaxial cable remind us that it is quite worthy of our amazement. Because of this scientific wizardry I can communicate with you now as you sit at home or cruise along the highway. Because of it my face can be brought to your living room as well as my voice. Because of it I may call you some morning in Los Angeles and sit with you that night at dinner after a non-stop flight from New York. Truly modern man rates an A for achievement in technical communications with his fellow-man.

What about our communications with God? What grade do we merit there? That is a provocative question, and only God can answer it, but I will venture an opinion. I think all of us could do better in our communication. It is not just a matter of contact with a church or with church people. I am in contact with you now, but am I really communicating with you? I mean, you hear my words, but am I getting through to your mind and heart? Parents are well aware of the difference between talking to children and

getting through to them. Getting through to the heart is the kind of communication that religion demands, as Jesus taught in the Parable of the Sower. Like seed, he said, the word may fall on stony ground or on good soil. The spoken words must take root in the heart for true spiritual communication. There must be a disposition of readiness in the listener, the soul-soil must be right. But religion is much more than one man trying to communicate with another. In the last analysis it must be a spiritual communication between man and God.

It is historical fact that some men have achieved a remarkable degree of communication with God, and among the greatest of these is Paul the Apostle. Here is his description of an experience of union with God from his letter to the Christians of Corinth, "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows — such a one was caught up to the third heaven . . . caught up into paradise and heard secret words that man may not repeat." (2 Cor. 12:1ff) In these words the Apostle describes the extraordinary religious experience we call mysti-

cal, a rare and intimate union with God above and beyond the natural order of things. It is not my purpose now to explore that aspect of Paul's personality, but rather his ordinary everyday communication with God through faith and love. This is the experience of Paul that is like our own and it can teach us much.

If a man who communes well with God is to help us, he must be able to communicate with us. You might say he must be able to speak two languages, the language of God with God and the language of men with men. In that bi-lingual gift Paul was a genius. It is interesting to imagine him as an orator debating with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens. That experience we can only imagine, but we can almost hear the sound of his oratory when we read his letters. They make up the most notable correspondence in human history. In them we behold the power of a man to communicate with men; in them we hear the speech of a man who spoke with God; by them God gets through to us in immortal words like these: "In all things we overcome because of him who has loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God,

which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord." (Rom 8:37-39)

Experience helps us to grow in the power to communicate with one another or with God, especially the harsh experience of suffering. It is easier for me to talk seriously to a generation that has experienced three wars than to a people that has known only abundance and ease. It is easier to get through to a man with religious ideas when he is at the end of his rope, or as the alcoholics put it, "when he has reached his bottom." The poet Francis Thompson described the bitter experience of his flight from God in the spiritual classic called *The Hound of Heaven*. This is his description of his final state:

Naked I wait Thy love's up-
lifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece
Thou hast hewn from me.
And smitten me to my
knee;
I am defenseless utterly.

Only in that hour of utter desolation as he lay charred and spent upon the earth did God get through to him with this message.

All which thy child's mis-
take
Fancies as lost, I have stored
for thee at home:
Rise, clasp my hand and
come.

It is the crushing awareness of our need that disposes us to hear

what we have never heard before in words we have often heard before, and to see what we have never seen before in things and people we have looked at so long.

An experience we all have known is the experience of the divided self; the realization that part of us hungers to grovel in the mud and part of us yearns to move among the stars; the awareness of a sense of shame and guilt when the mud has soiled our souls; the inner argument with ourselves as we seek to justify our action pacing round and round "in the small circle of pain within the skull"; the experience of sin and the ceaseless struggle with it — all this makes us seek hungrily for an answer. It is then that these words of Paul get through to us: "We know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold into the power of sin. For I do not understand what I do, for it is not what I wish that I do, but what I hate, that I do. But if I do what I do not wish, I admit the Law is good. Now therefore it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwells, because to wish is within my power, but I do not find the strength to accomplish what is good. For I do not do the good that I wish, but the evil that I do not wish, that I do. Now if I do what I do not wish, it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in

me. Therefore when I wish to do good I discover this law, namely, that evil is at hand for me. For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inner man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and making me prisoner to the law of sin that is in my members." (Rom 7:14-23)

On hearing these words in the maturity that comes with experience we are comforted, for we understand that we are not exceptional or abnormal in our spiritual weakness. We share the common lot of all men, who by nature are prisoners to the law of sin. The most alarming symptom in our society is not its sins, but its loss of the sense of sin. We are prone for example, to condone sexual morality in the name of statistics, to excuse it in the name of liberalism. It is a great consolation to a religious man when he hears these words and realizes that the great Apostle was a man with the conflicts of a man, and by the power of Paul's words God gets through to him with a message of hope.

Modern man may have lost the sense of sin, but he is not unaware of his predicament. It has been explored by his poets, playwrights, and philosophers, and anxiety with all its shades and synonyms is the theme from Broadway to Paris' East Bank. Everywhere modern man is confronted with a picture or

a caricature of his condition. Two things about it strike me: sex is printed and pictured with the excitement of discovery as though man were forever juvenile; questions clothed in eloquence get empty answers or none, as though men enjoyed the dark. This dark pessimism of our century is at least better than the trivial faith of the nineteenth century with its mirage of the ascent of man from ape to superman, from peasant to landowner, and from serf to commissar. I respectfully invite modern men to forget their new words for a moment, to hold a quiet mood for a moment that these words of Paul may get through: "All have sinned and have need of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) "Unhappy man that I am! who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Christ Jesus Our Lord." (Rom. 7:24)

Paul's answer to the problem of man in the first century is the Church's answer to the need of man in the twentieth century — Christ, the divine Redeemer. Paul said of him, "though he was by nature God, (he) did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to, but emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto man. And appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to death on a cross." (Phil. 2:6-8) The cross was Paul's

theme, his battle cry of victory and freedom. He wrote to the Christians of Corinth, "We, for our part, preach a crucified Christ — to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:23f) The answer of Paul is not some ancient intellectual slight-of-hand, nor the strange invention of a sick mind, nor something he got on loan from pagan mythology. It is the answer he got from Christ himself and his Apostles; an answer rooted in the mystery of man. At the heart of the mystery of Christ, Paul saw the divine love for men. He wrote to the Church of Ephesus: "God, who is rich in mercy, by reason of his great love wherewith he has loved us even when we were dead by reason of our sins, brought us to life together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together . . . that he might show in the ages to come the overflowing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not from ourselves, for it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:4-9)

The supreme and overwhelming communication offered by the Christian faith is living union with God. I realize that this statement can open the door to wrong interpretation,

all sorts of pseudo-mysticism, and religious quackery, but you cannot bury God because someone makes him in the image of a golden calf. This central truth of Christianity stands despite all its weird caricatures. The vital union of the Christian with God is effected through an identification with Jesus according to St. Paul. In his letter to the Christians of Galatia he wrote, "With Christ I am nailed to the cross. It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me (2:20f) Grace, therefore, is a sharing in the spiritual energy of Christ, the life-giving power that comes from God by which the new and good life is possible. Faith is the disposition necessary to receive this new life and it is given in the rite of Baptism. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (3:26f) And to the Romans, "We were buried with him by means of Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we may also walk in the newness of life." (6:4)

Man is forever inclined to make God according to his own image, to bring God down to his

size. A side effect of this inclination is that men are forever trying to reduce Christianity to human dimensions. Notice the pictures of Christ that Americans prefer. He looks ever so much human, a cross between an actor and a half-back. Compare them with the portraits of the great medieval artists or of the earlier Byzantine mosaics. Christ is a man, yes, but with aura of majesty about him and something of the shadow of God. The Christ of Paul is more than human, much more than a man, for fallen men could not be redeemed by another fallen man. He said, "In him were created all things in the heavens, and on earth, things visible and invisible . . . all things have been created through him and unto him . . . For it has pleased God the Father that in him all his fullness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. 1:16ff)

Is the Gospel of Paul obsolete? Must the Church sit like a widow desiccated and desolate and hope for a new Paul with a new gospel, that will please the modern mind with proper proportions of existentialism and depth psychology? God forbid! We do not need a new gospel, but we need a new heart in man, a heart with the vision to see that his predicament is be-

yond his own repairing, whether he looks at himself, his nation, or his planet. The first step toward salvation is the recognition that his first and

greatest need is for God, and the second is that he will find him in Christ, with the help of the Apostle, for "the heart of Paul is the heart of Jesus Christ."

John: Vessel Of Affection

Address Delivered on November 20, 1955

All the evidence seems to point to the fact that we mortals love change. The first evidence I adduce to prove this statement is fashions. Fashions change almost as often as a woman changes her mind. If further evidence is needed, I point to the motor car. Cars do not change every season, but they do change every year. Then there are the household appliances, and the new models in TV and Hi-Fi, not to speak of our music, our literature, our art, and so on. The things about us are forever changing because we change them. We love it.

A tremendous amount of genius goes into our changing designs: so much technical and artistic skill, and so many man hours. It seems that man has the power to change everything except himself. I ask you not to be shocked at that statement, but to think about it. To change a man, whether yourself or someone else, is the toughest job of all. Have you ever tried to help an alcoholic to change, to stop his drinking? It is one of the most discouraging tasks in the world. It often takes years to achieve, and all too often the reward for your effort is failure. Take a good long look at yourself. How much have you changed over the years in your thinking, your attitudes, your habits? Are you more tolerant at forty-five than you were at twenty-

five, more understanding, more kind, less selfish?

At the root of personal change is self-knowledge. To change anything you must first see it, and seeing ourselves as we are is a very difficult assignment. As Jesus put it, we see the splinter in our brother's eye, and we do not see the beam in our own. To work for a change in ourselves it must be seen as possible and as desirable. It would be absurd for me, for example, to beseech you all to become ski jumpers, for you could not, if you would, and you would not if you could. I can ask you to become better people, because it is desirable, and it is also possible. I think we might get some help in the matter, if we look at a man who did change. and try to see what made him change. I refer to John the Apostle.

My first recollection of Saint John is when I saw him as a boy in a painting on a church wall. The artist had cast him in a sentimental, almost womanish, attitude standing beside the cross of Christ. I know now that John would have fared better, if the artist had read his New Testament more carefully. In Saint Mark he would have found John and his brother James called "sons of thunder" (3:17), and he would have painted John as the stormy one, not as the soft one. He would

have made the fisherman's face the color of outdoors, his jaw square and his shoulders broad, and when he put down his brush, he might have cried, "There was a man!"

Fishermen have as much trouble with themselves as butchers, and bankers, and clergymen. It was just as arduous for John to change as it is for us. I understand why they called him "son of thunder" when I read of his fiery anger in Saint Luke's Gospel. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem with His disciple. They had to pass through Samaria. The Master sent some of His disciples to the town they were approaching to request food and lodging. The Samaritan townspeople refused them hospitality. They were intolerant of Jews and resented the fact that they would by-pass the Samaritan Temple on Mount Garizim to go to the Temple in Jerusalem. When the messengers returned with the word that Jesus and His followers were not welcome, John and his brother cried out in their wrath, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" (Luke 9:54). They would never have uttered those words as Galilean fishermen, but now as followers of Jesus they were filled with a sense of their own spiritual power; they felt a certain kinship with the prophet Elias, who long ago called down fire from heaven upon the captains of the king in this very

land. But Jesus said to them "You do not know of what manner of spirit you are; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy man's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:56)

Saint Luke does not tell us of John's reaction to the words of Jesus, but we can surmise it. The fisherman could hear his thundering spirit speak in his words, and hear the gentle spirit of Jesus in His reply. His avenging spirit would call down fire to destroy; Christ's redeeming spirit desired only to save. He could compare the two utterances and see the contrast, just as we can compare our words with Christ's. He could see himself in his words, and see his need to change, to become like his Master. He could see himself corrected by Jesus because he was wrong. By accepting the correction of Christ, by admitting his mistake, he could take the first step in the direction of change.

Change is as slow and arduous for fishermen as it is for aldermen. John was close to Jesus for almost three years, as were the other Apostles. The change from men to Apostles was ever so slow, even with Christ as living teacher and model. The evidence for this is found in the Gospel of Saint Matthew. It was toward the end of Jesus' life. He was on His way to Jerusalem where He would be crucified. The mother of James and John came to Him with a request. She said, "Com-

mand that these my two sons may sit, one at thy right and one at thy left hand, in thy kingdom." Jesus knew that the mother was spokesman for her sons, and that in her words he was hearing their ambition. The first places in his kingdom, no less! Probably the old dream of earthly power and kingdom still clung to their hearts all these days with Jesus. He spoke to them, saying, "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink the cup of which I am about to drink?" The cup was a symbol of suffering, for He the king, would be crowned with a crown of thorns, robed in the purple of his own blood, and be mounted on the throne of the cross. "Can you drink of the cup," He asked, and they replied, "We can." They did not yet know the bitter contents of the cup, but they were willing to share the cup that was His because they loved Him. They were willing to follow Him, to be identified with Him, to share in His suffering for them by their suffering for Him. This is the second important lesson in the matter of change; to accept the pain of life in union with Christ, to say to the cross, "I can — with the help of God"

Let us look now at the changed man, John the Evangelist. The years have passed. He can look back upon that fateful Friday on which Jesus died on the cross, and understand the meaning of the cup that Jesus spoke

of. He can look back upon the Sunday that followed, the strange, exciting report of the women who had gone to the tomb early in the morning — that they found it empty! He can recall how he raced with Peter to the tomb and found the body gone; then the coming of the risen Lord that very night in the Upper Room: His appearance among them for forty days and then His departure, and the deep unbearable loneliness after. Experience like that can shake a man to the very core of his being, but there must be a readiness of heart, the disposition to believe. We see the changed John in his writings in the New Testament, the Fourth Gospel, the three letters and the Apocalypse. A man reveals himself in his writings, and in his John reveals his transformed heart, and the force that changed him.

Knowledge of self is the beginning of change. Experience, good or bad, interpreted rightly helps us toward change, but the force that really effects personal change is love. If the poets, playwrights, song-writers, and philosophers are right, human love can change a man, put a glint in his eye, a spring in his step, and a song in his heart. True human love has the power to transform. That no one can deny. A man can be inspired to greatness by the knowledge that he is loved by a woman. From that love he takes strength and courage. By it his

spirit is warmed and nourished. Love is undoubtedly the greatest gift one human can offer another. It is our greatest joy and fills our greatest earthly need. I believe that as humans we need more to be loved than to love. I know that we can be transformed by being loved, if the experience is interpreted with some wisdom. But I believe too that there is a love greater than human love, a love that begets greater power, imparts greater strength of joy, effects greater transformations. It is the love of God for men. It is as much greater than human love as God is greater than man. I believe that true human love is an image of God's love, a created image, a little image, like a shadow cast by the moon or a very distant echo. I admit that the love of God is different and difficult to know. It is not felt by the human heart as human love is felt, nor held in human arms like human love. It is only known and held by faith. I think this love of God needs special emphasis today because contemporary religion is inclined to pull God down from His height, to bring Him down to man's size, to make faith as convenient and as earthbound as the corner drugstore. The Christian faith is more than a sigh or a signature. It is a total surrender of the mind and heart to Christ, a going up to God.

John reveals the surrender of faith and his response to

God's love in his first letter: "In this has the love of God shown in our case, that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. In this is the love, not that we have loved God, but that He has first loved us, and sent his Son a propitiation of our sins." (4:9-10). This points up the great force that changed John and that can change us, God's love for us as seen in Christ. This knowledge is rooted in faith. By faith in Christ we come to the knowledge and the burning conviction that God loves us. This is the way John put it: "We have come to know, and have believed, the love that God has in our behalf." (4:16) And then he points to the transforming effect, "Let us therefore love, because God first loved us." (4:19). We need this faith as long as we walk the earth, for so often it seems that God does not love us. Faith is the acceptance of the love of God in his terms. It is the acceptance of his definition of love for us, which is Christ, of Whom John said, "He who keeps his word, in him the love of God is truly perfected." (2:5). By the perfection of that love John came to walk as Christ walked and the change in him gives us hope.

John saw God's love for him in Christ. He describes himself in the fourth gospel as "The disciple whom Jesus loved," and in it he relates those wonderful words of Jesus at the Last Supper, "No longer do I call you

servants . . . I have called you friends." (15:15). His friendship with Jesus recalls another noble friendship of the Bible; that of David and Jonathan, and the words that David uttered when Jonathan died in battle, "I grieve for Thee, my brother Jonathan: exceeding beautiful and amiable to me above the love of women. As the mother loved her only son, so did I love Thee." (2 Kings 1:26). John was the closest friend of Jesus among the Twelve, and they understood that at the Last Supper he would sit beside the Master. John had been chosen with Peter and James to witness the transfiguration of Christ at Mount Thabor and the agony of Christ in Gethsemani; and just before He died on the Cross Jesus entrusted His mother Mary to John, and John tells us in his gospel that "from that hour the disciple took her into his house" (19:27).

It was friendship with Christ that transformed John. The feeling of this friendship runs through the fourth gospel. You feel it as you read the first chapter when John tells how he and Andrew met Jesus. They walked after Him when John the Baptist pointed him out, and Jesus turned around and said to them "What is it you seek?" They said to Him "Master, where dwellest Thou?" He said to them "Come and see" and they stayed with Him that day. You feel it in his description of the wedding feast at Cana and the

story of the Samaritan woman at the well. You feel it when John repeats these words of Jesus, "I am the good shepherd and I know mine and mine know me." (10:11.14) You feel it when you read Jesus' words, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." ((11:25). You feel it especially in the discourse of Christ at the Last Supper which only John relates; words like these, "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; that as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (13:34). "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." (15:5).

The friend whose love transformed John was more than a man. He was the object of his faith as well as of his love. John expressed that faith in his gospel when he wrote "We saw his glory — glory as of the only-begotten son of the Father — full of grace and truth. No one has at any time seen God. The only-begotten son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him." (1:14.18). He expressed that faith in stating the purpose of his gospel. "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believ-

ing you may have life in his name." (20:31).

The Christ that John loved was the divine Christ, the Christ of faith, the Christ of mystery Who alone gives meaning to the mystery of human existence. John was changed by the divine friend, and his transformations gives us hope that we too can be changed, especially if we remember always the words of

John 17 the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper, "I pray for them . . . I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that thou keep them from evil . . . Sanctify them in truth . . . that they may be perfected in unity, and that — the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them even as thou has loved me." (17:9-23).

"Mary, Vessel Of The Lord"

Address Delivered on November 27, 1955

I should like to speak to you now about someone very dear to me, Mary, the Mother of Jesus. I shall try to describe my thought and feeling about her as a Catholic. The Church I belong to has a long and lovely tradition surrounding Mary. It is most readily seen in its great embodiment in architecture and art. Many of you have seen the great medieval cathedrals of Europe built in her honor, Notre Dame, for example, the venerable and dramatic Cathedral of Paris. The name Notre Dame means Our Lady. You all know the Madonnas of the Florentine masters, so often reproduced on Christmas cards. When I wandered through the galleries of Florence enthralled with these treasures, they spoke to me, not only of genius, but of love. The medieval painters loved Our Lady. The cathedrals and the paintings are only part of the centuries-old Marian tradition of the Church, the visible part so beautiful and so inspiring. There are hymns and poems in so many languages, so many stirring Ave Marias, countless pieces of sculpture, books of devotion, and theological treatises without number. The question naturally arises: Why this old and lovely tradition? Who is the Lady who inspired it?

To answer the question I must take you back almost two thousand years. After Jesus left this world and ascended to the Father in heaven, the Acts of the Apostles tell us that His followers "returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet . . . and when they had entered the city, they mounted to the upper room," and there "with one mind (they) continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." (1:13f) The tradition begins there in the upper room at Jerusalem. That group made up the Church at its beginning, in number about one hundred and twenty. They were the first Christians. They had followed Jesus, heard His word, and seen His miracles; were witnesses to His death and His resurrection from the dead. They believed in Him, and had come to the upper room to await the Holy Spirit whom He promised to send them from on high. On Pentecost Sunday, the Holy Spirit came and they were filled with His divine presence and power. That day was the birthday of the Church of Christ, and Mary was there. The disciples who looked upon Jesus as their brother loved her as their spiritual mother, for had He not said to John from the Cross, "Behold thy mother,"

and to Mary, "Behold thy son" (John 19:27).

I like to think of Mary in the upper room surrounded by the disciples of Jesus. I like to imagine her speaking to them and watch their faces as they listened. I think of her face as lovelier than any Madonna of Botticelli or da Vinci. She was at that time a woman about fifty years old. No doubt there were wisps of grey in her raven hair, and lines of suffering in her olive skin. There were depths in her eyes no man could fathom, distant lights and soft shadows as of eternity. I feel that the spell of her beauty was cast upon the infant Church in that upper room. That is how it began, and the Church that grew big enough to embrace the great globe itself, never forgot her. The spell of her beauty will haunt it forever.

In those first days the Church preached Christ. He was the absorbing center of its faith, and devotion. In the brilliant light of His divine personality all those around Him were cast into shadow. But with time the Church discerned those human persons who stood close to the divine Christ, and the closest was Mary. After Matthew and Mark had written their Gospels, Luke, the beloved physician, undertook to write the third gospel, "after following up all things carefully from the very first," (Luke 1:3) as he tells us. Luke begins his Gospel with

the narratives that all the world loves, the history of Jesus' infancy: Gabriel's message to Mary at Nazareth, Mary's visit to Elizabeth at Ain Karem, that loveliest of songs, the Magnificat, the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. Old legends tell that Luke was an artist as well as a doctor. Truly he has left us word-pictures that have inspired artists through the ages, and which are so dear to all of us.

It would be sadly remiss on my part to emphasize only the beauty of Luke's Gospel, and not to speak of its truth. The great truth about Mary and her greatest glory is that she is the Mother of Jesus. That breathtaking dignity of Mary is related by St. Luke in these words of the angel Gabriel, "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he shall be king over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (1:3) Mary understood from this message of the angel that she was to become the Mother of the Messiah. The words of Gabriel were reminiscent of words the prophet Nathan spoke to David a thousand years before, reminiscent of the prophetic words of Isaias about

the Messiah-King spoken seven centuries before. The name she was to call the child, told Mary that He would redeem His people, for Jesus means "the Lord saves." The Gospel of Luke therefore affirms that Mary is Mother of the Messiah, but more, for it adds these words: "the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God" (1:35).

This is the Gospel truth about Jesus that gives Mary her greatest glory. She is the Mother of the divine Messiah. The Church that accepts the divine Christ is overwhelmed with the dignity of the woman chosen to be His mother. The everlasting God knows no mother or father. He is the eternal One born of no other, the One Who is before all and above all, Maker and Father of every creature. The revelation of Jesus made known to us the three-fold unity in God, the inner life of divinity in the Father, Son, and Spirit. That divine revelation also made known the Incarnation of the Son, that is, the Son took on human nature by His birth from Mary.

In Christ the Catholic faith sees one person — the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. Mary as Mother of Christ, is Mother of that Person. Therefore her true title in Christian faith is Mother of God, in the sense explained. This doctrine expressed in the

New Testament by Luke, John and Paul, and the other writers, was formally declared a doctrine of Catholic Faith at the Council of Ephesus in 431. That is why the Catholic Church honors Mary, because it believes that God has honored her first as no other human has ever been honored. You cannot believe in a divine Christ and ignore His Mother!

But, you may say, Catholics believe many other things about Mary, and that is quite true. They believe in the Immaculate Conception of Mary, for example. Let me explain this doctrine. There is a common misunderstanding outside the Catholic Church that this means Mary was born in a miraculous way. That is not so. Mary was born of man and woman just as you and I. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception concerns her soul, not her body. Catholics believe that man is composed of body and soul, and that all men's souls are conceived with the stain of original sin upon them because of Adam's sin. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception holds that Mary was an exception to this fact, that her soul was immaculate, that is, without stain in her conception. The reason for this grace was because she was to be the Mother of the Divine Christ and even momentary defilement would seem unbecoming to one so close to Jesus. It is the belief of the

Church that Mary was redeemed as is every human by the blood of Christ, but that her redemption was preventive; God kept her from all sin, including original sin because she was to be the Mother of His Son. To come back to Luke's Gospel. The theologians of the Church see this doctrine suggested in the words of Gabriel to Mary, "Hail, full of grace," They understand those words absolutely, that is, at no time was Mary without grace, even at the moment of conception.

The Church also believes that Mary was the Virgin-Mother of Jesus. The basis for this belief is found in St. Luke's Gospel. When Gabriel told Mary that she was to become the mother of the Messiah, she asked, "How shall this happen, since I do not know man" (1:34). In biblical language the expression: "to know man" means to have marital relations with a man. Now it seems absurd to suppose that Mary would ask this question if she were to enter marriage and live in the normal manner of married people. Her question, therefore, from the earliest times has been taken to mean that she had made a promise or a vow of virginity. Gabriel answered her question by declaring how the birth would take place. Here is his answer as Luke reports it:

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow

thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God" (1:35). Matthew also relates the virginal conception of Jesus in his Gospel. He says that Mary "was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit," (1:18) and he adds, "This came to pass that there might be fulfilled what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet (Isaias), saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel (God with us)'" (1:22f).

The Gospel evidence for the virgin-birth of Jesus is altogether decisive, and the great traditional forms of the Christian faith accept it. Some modern Christians consider it mythological, and see in the Gospels the myth of Jesus rather than the mystery of Jesus. Theirs is not a philosophy of faith, but a psychology of doubt. Many conservative Christians admit the virgin-birth of Jesus, but hold that Mary had other children after Jesus who were born in the natural way. This also was the position taken by the Jewish writer Sholem Asch in his book called "Mary." I think the position is untenable.

The argument that is most often adduced to support this position is that the Gospels speak of the brethren of the Lord. Now you know that in all languages the word "brother" is used in a strict or broad

meaning. For example, I might have started this talk by addressing you, "My dear brethren." But you may not know that the Aramaic language, the language Jesus spoke, has no word for cousin. Consequently, to express this relationship, they used the word *ah*, brother, or the expression "son of uncle" or "Son of the brother of the mother." From this it follows that "brethren of the Lord" in Aramaic does not necessarily mean blood brothers of Jesus, or sons of Mary.

As a matter of fact although certain ones in the Gospels are called "brethren" of Jesus, they are never once called sons of Mary. It would be more than passing strange that Jesus on the Cross should commit His Mother to the care of the Apostle John, if she had other sons to take care of her. The Gospel everywhere gives the impression that there were only three in the Holy Family. There are only three at Bethlehem, only three on the flight into Egypt, only three at Nazareth, only three on the pilgrimage to the Temple. There is little wonder then that the earliest tradition of the Church held that Mary was a perpetual virgin. St. Jerome, the great Scriptures scholar, defended this doctrinal in the fourth century by appealing to the testimony of Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Justin Martyr, men who take us back to Apostolic times.

I have time to touch upon another aspect of Catholic devotion to Mary that sometimes disturbs those outside the Church of Rome, namely, our belief in Mary's intercessory power. The question is often put this way: "Why do Catholics pray to Mary." I should like to point out the Scriptural foundation for this Catholic practice. You will remember that in the second chapter of his Gospel, St. John tells us of the marriage feast at Cana. Mary was there, and Jesus also and His disciples. The wine failed and Mary said to Jesus, "They have no wine." In the tone of her voice there was the suggestion that He might do something about it. The reply of Jesus was cryptic and not easy to understand completely. He said, "What wouldst thou have me do, woman? My hour has not yet come." I wish to make one thing clear right away. There is nothing belittling in the use of the word "woman." In English it sounds so, but not in Aramaic. In Aramaic and Greek it is a title of honor. It seems clear also that the words of Jesus convey a sort of refusal to Mary's implied request. The reason given by Jesus for this refusal seems to mean that a time was appointed for the manifestation of His power; and that time was not yet. In any event Mary said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

You know the rest of the story, how Jesus worked His first miracle, and changed the water into wine. Catholic piety has always seen in this beautiful story an example of Mary's power of intercession with Jesus, the power of the mother with her Son, who is Our Lord and Redeemer.

We believe that as Mary interceded with Jesus on behalf of the embarrassed hosts she will intercede with Him in heaven for us her troubled children. Because of our union with Christ through faith and graces we feel a spiritual kinship with His Mother. We pay her great honor and give her great love, but we do not worship her. Worship is for God alone. We do not deify her and make her a goddess, but we believe that God made her the purest and loveliest of His creatures.

The most recent reproach to Catholics in this matter has

come from the direction of psychoanalysis. The Virgin in the Church is now explained in terms of the "feminine archetype," that surges up from the collective unconscious and assumes all her ritualistic disguises, or devotion to Mary is explained in terms of a subconscious compensation of a celibate clergy. And what shall I say to that? Only this: it reveals much more about the critics than it does about Mary.

It reveals an inadequate idea of the nature of man, an unhappy facility of seeing only part of reality, and the regrettable oversight of the old and true adage, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." The old tradition has nothing to fear from the new knowledge, but all knowledge old and new has need to fear without faith. Mary is the shining symbol of that faith, for she was the first, the very first, to believe in Christ.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from the address of the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes at the inaugural program of the Catholic Hour in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930.)

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country . . .

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

With good will, with kindness and with Christ-like sympathy for all, this work is inaugurated. So may it continue. So may it be fulfilled. This word of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven; a strength, and a power divine through Christ; pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our searching and questioning hearts.

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