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THE CATHOLIC

ALL THROUGH THE YEARS

BY

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The fifth in a series of addresses under the general title of "Hail, Holy Queen," delivered in the Catholic Hour, broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company in cooperation with the National Council of Catholic Men on May 26, 1946, by the Rev. J. Hugh O'Donnell, C.S.C., President of the University of Notre Dame. After the series has been concluded on the radio, it will be made available in one pamphlet.

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ALL THROUGH THE YEARS

It was here in Chicago, at a recent luncheon for General George C. Kenny that this incident occurred. One of the guests began to praise him for his resourceful leadership as commander of our air forces in the southwest Pacific during World War II. "Now stop that," said General Kenny, who is modest and refreshingly frank. "If you want to give credit where credit is due, throw your bouquets at that young colonel over there. I'll tell you about just one of the great deeds that he and other American boys like him performed." The colonel was Jock Henebry, and the General told his story.

"One day I sent out a reconnaissance plane because I needed information about what the Japs were doing in Borneo. The pilot soon came back saying that the weather was so bad that observations were impossible. Colonel Henebry, who was on my staff, knew that the information was indispensable. He picked a crew and got a two-engined plane ready. Although it was only a reconnaissance flight, I noticed he had four 500-pound bombs in the bays. I was going to say something, but didn't. And I'm

glad I didn't, because this is what happened.

"Colonel Henebry flew to Borneo through all that bad weather, diving down through the low ceiling to make his observations. Then he went up above the fog and headed for home. As the weather began to clear, he saw below him a Japanese merchant ship escorted by two destroyers.

" 'There really must be something in that ship when they send two destroyers along with it,' said Henebry over the intercommunications system. 'Let's go down and see if we can drop one of these bombs into it. The General doesn't like Jap ships in the neighborhood.' The plane swooped down to within fifty feet of the water and roared in at the merchant ship. The bombardier scored a perfect hit, which blew the ship up. They then sank the destroyers. Again they started for home, with one bomb left. On the way they saw a 10,000-ton tanker. Down went Henebry again to sink the tanker with his last bomb.

"By this time the plane had suffered some anti-aircraft fire, and Henebry was having trouble with one of the motors. Nevertheless, as the plane passed a Jap-held island, a machine gun-

ner spotted eight Jap planes on the ground.

“‘Hey, Colonel,’ he called, ‘the General doesn’t like Jap planes around here, either. Let me show you what I can do with some 50-mm shells.’ Henebry swerved over to the island, made a pass or two over the planes and left all eight of them and the hangers in flames. When he landed at the home base, his own plane was so battered that I ordered it to the junk heap.”

General K e n n y concluded: “Would you have any trouble judging the value of a boy who goes out on a mission like that and brings his plane and his crew back safely, although there were real difficulties?”

But the General forgot to add that on Colonel Henebry’s plane were lettered the words “Notre Dame de la Victoire”—Our Lady of Victory—and that in the cockpit was a medallion of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Only God and His Blessed Mother know how many boys had recourse to her during the war. She was their hope, their strength, and their unfailing comfort. In the light of their example, who are we to be discouraged in this troubled period? Let us derive inspiration from their faith in her and turn to **Mary, our hope, as we attack the**

problems confronting the post-war world. She is our hope, too.

True hope is based on faith in God, because the principal object of hope is happiness, not in this world, but in the next; that is, in seeing God in the Beatific Vision for all eternity. That is why in our earthly struggle for existence we should raise our sights heavenward. But too many of us isolate this faith and put religion in one tiny compartment of our lives, instead of letting it permeate our whole lives. Perhaps we think of religion in the morning and evening, but for the rest of the day, and of the week as well, it is muted—except for an hour on Sunday. I do not suggest that we wear our religion on our coat lapels as we go into the market place, or to the bridge table, because that is the way of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

But we should try to integrate our religion with our daily lives so that we may keep the first and greatest commandment, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” as we strive to fulfill the second of the great commandments, to love “thy neighbor as thyself” (*Luke 10:27*). This means that we should be considerate, kindly, forgiving and forbearing. If we practice these virtues, we shall fulfill the law and gain God’s blessing. **We shall become more**

God-minded in a world that has grown atom-minded. By occasional meditation on other-worldliness we can bomb ourselves out of concentration on this-worldliness.

This, in brief, is what faith teaches us. And from this faith flows a radiant hope that gives us a true perspective of the "glory and blessedness of the things to come." As Monsignor Ronald Knox says in *God and the Atom*: "Where there is belief in God's existence, there must be belief in His assistance as well; hope is the natural food of faith."*

The world today needs such a concept of hope based on faith. The aftermath of a great war has brought with it uncertainty the unrest. Without the steady influence of hope, nerves become frayed, phobias are multiplied, and messianic complexes develop that make one think with Hamlet that "the time is out of joint." The end is useless despair, the escape of the coward. What is needed is a touch of humor based on faith in the divine. If one has this faith, he can profitably reflect on the words of Thomas Moore:

"This world is all a passing show,

* *God and the Atom*, p. 54, Sheed and Ward

For man's illusion given,
The smiles of joy, the tears of
woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow—
There's nothing true but
Heaven."*

If we evaluate the things of this life in the light of the life to come, as faith teaches, a radiant hope will follow, a hope that will enable us to accept with a Christ-like spirit whatever this life may bring so that it will put to flight every thought of disappointment and despair. The measuring rod of this hope is eternity. And we turn to Mary, our hope glorified, for the necessary help and strength.

A beautiful illustration of hope based on faith is the story of St. Monica and her son St. Augustine who, after a youth of license and heresy, became one of the Fathers of the Church. St. Augustine tells us that "my mother ceased not in all the hours of her prayers to bewail me in God's sight."† After almost nine years her prayers were answered, and shortly before her last illness and death, mother and son talked together of happiness in the next life. Monica said: "Son, for my part, there is noth-

* "This World is All a Passing Show"

† *Confessions of St. Augustine*, Book 3, Chap. 11

ing now in this life that gives me any delight. . . . One thing there was for which I did desire to stay a little longer in this life, which was that I might see thee a Christian Catholic before I died. And my God hath granted me this more abundantly, in that I see thee now despising all earthly felicity, entirely devoted to His service. What have I now to do here?"§ Such is hope based on faith—that "hope which is the natural food of faith."

What an inspiration St. Monica's faith is, and how richly it was rewarded! And what a consolation the story of her life should be for all of us, especially for the fathers and mothers whose sons and daughters, somewhat bemused by the temper of the times, are inclined to be wayward. When St. Monica interceded for her son, the Blessed Mother heard her prayers. She hears the prayers of other mothers who have recourse to her and ask her to enfold their children within her protecting mantle.

Mary, who is the Mother of Sorrows, is also the hope of all who are in pain, of all who have known suffering. Mary is the hope of the war veterans who still lie in the hospitals. Truly,

gentlemen, you have your Goggotha, as Our Savior and His Blessed Mother had theirs. But remember that the same Mary who stood at the foot of the Cross on Calvary will help you to bear your cross. Your future may be spiritually rich if you look beyond earth to your true home in heaven, to life eternal. In the rosary of the years that lie ahead, Mary is your hope.

Mary is the hope of youth, and youth is the hope of the world. If I might offer just a word of advice to young men and women whose lives are before them, it would be this: Do not let anybody tell you that you are part of a lost generation. That catch phrase is nonsense. It is defeatist; as a matter of fact, it is pagan. No generation has ever been lost since Christ redeemed man on Calvary—unless its members made up their minds that they wanted to be lost.

There is hope for the world, now torn by a basic conflict between the forces of God and the forces of anti-God. On the one side are those who believe in God the Creator. They accept the natural law which has its source in God the Supreme Lawgiver. They recognize as flowing from that law the natural rights of persons; and they acknowledge

§ Confessions of St. Augustine, Book 9, Chap. 10

the inherent dignity and integrity of the human person because of God-given rights. On the other side are the forces of materialism which see man as an animal knowing neither God nor basic morality. Materialism builds a bleak world of totalitarianism in which man exists for the state, and not the state for man as man's agent for the protection of God's gifts of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is the world of state-ism — the world of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Communist Russia.

But there is hope for Russia, and the hope is Mary who at Fatima, in Portugal, in 1917, asked for the consecration to her Immaculate Heart and for Communion of reparation on the first Saturday of each month. "If my requests are heard," said Our Lady of Fatima, "Russia will be converted and there will be peace; otherwise, great errors will spread through the world, causing wars and persecutions against the Church; the good will suffer martyrdom, and the Holy Father will have to suffer much. Different nations will be destroyed, but in the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me and she shall be

converted, and an era of peace will be granted to humanity."*

There is hope for all the people of the world. Already there are signs that a purely sensate culture has run its course, as larger and larger numbers of men and women, having found within man-made ideologies nothing but frustration and despair, turn from the worship of the things of the world to the all-important things of the spirit. Basically, the return to religion may be attributed in no small measure to the need of a nation and the people who constitute it, to have an anchor. Or, as St. Augustine put it sixteen centuries ago, "Our heart is restless, O God, until it finds peace in Thee." And Mary, our help through the years, can lead us to the Source of peace and contentment, providing we seek her help and intercession.

So America, to your knees to pray that the spiritual awakening which has begun may become in the fullest sense a spiritual renaissance.

America, to your knees to pray through the medium of the family rosary that Mary will bring us closer to the imperative need of God in our daily lives.

America, to your knees that

* **Fatima, Hope of the World, McGrath**

with the recognition of God, His anger may be stayed, and that through fidelity to His moral law, this restless, confused world may have a cessation from pain, strife, and international wars.

We weave all our hopes into the mantle of Mary, as it was so beautifully expressed by G. K. Chesterton in his inspiring poem,

The Arena:

"I have seen, where a strange
country
Opened its secret plains about me
One great golden dome stands
lonely with its golden image,
one
Seen afar, in strange fulfillment,

Through the sunlit Indian summer

That Apocalyptic portent that
has clothed her with the sun . .

"Queen of Death and Life Un-
dying

Those about to live salute thee
Not the crawlers with the cattle;
looking deathward with the
swine,

But the shout upon the moun-
tains

Of the men that live forever
Who are free of all things living
but a Child; and He was
thine."

Mary is our hope, all through
the years.

THE CATHOLIC HOUR

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The nationwide Catholic Hour was inaugurated on March 2, 1930, by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company and its associated stations. Radio facilities are provided by NBC and the stations associated with it; the program is arranged and produced by NCCM.

The Catholic Hour was begun on a network of 22 stations, and now carries its message of Catholic truth on each Sunday of the year through a number of stations varying from 90 to 110, situated in 40 states, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii. Consisting usually of an address, mainly expository, by one or another of America's leading Catholic preachers—though sometimes of talks by laymen, sometimes of dramatizations—and of sacred music provided by a volunteer choir, the Catholic Hour has distinguished itself as one of the most popular and extensive religious broadcasts in the world. An average of 100,000 audience letters a year, about twenty per cent of which come from listeners of other faiths, gives some indication of its popularity and influence.

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