

AS A MAN OF GOD

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The twelfth in a series of addresses by prominent Catholic laymen entitled "THE ROAD AHEAD," delivered in the Catholic Hour, broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company in cooperation with the National Council of Catholic Men, on August 25, 1946 by Dr. George F. Donovan, President of Webster College, Webster Groves, Missouri. After the series has been concluded on the radio, it will be made available in one pamphlet.

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No observer needs to remind us that man is a gregarious animal living in the world, and having close relations with other men. From the beginning of time man has been interested in the affairs of his local community, in the problems of his nation, and in world issues, and, whether he himself, doubts or denies it, in a Supreme Being, the creator of all these relationships and agencies of God and of life.

It is only natural for man to look toward a Supreme Being for, during all of his life, he has seen and recognized authority in many ways including the father of a family, the mayor of a city, the governor of a state, the president of the United States, and the chief executive of a proposed world organization. Over and above these dominations there is a higher jurisdiction which man desires.

As man has definite responsibilities toward government in the political order so, too, does he have obligations to God. Some of the more important relationships are helpful and easy to understand.

The degree and the extent of participation in this relationship between man and God are many and varied. Some men deny

God. Some men openly and violently attack God. Some doubt His existence. Some pay tribute to God once or twice a year, at Christmas time and at Easter. Some show their devotion on Sundays. Some give daily allegiance. A few men and women retire from the world and devote their entire lives to God through some well-prepared and organized program in religion, education, social welfare, or some other special field.

In the last analysis man is a creature made to the image and likeness of God and created by Him. It is not difficult to understand that anything done to harm man is displeasing to God, the Creator of man. Modern industrial dangers, such as the assembly line speed-up, the absence of proper medical and hospital care leading to prolonged suffering, long periods of unemployment, bad working conditions, lack of suitable housing and care for the aged, opposition to the right to organize, the absence of a minimum wage law, the practice of some corporations in fixing prices without regard for, and consultation with, the public, the ruthless control of man's economic life by a few or the domination of his entire life by the state either under the

form of Communism or Fascism or any other dictatorship, all such threats to the life and the dignity of man are naturally, of grave concern not only to man, himself, but, also, to God.

It is only reasonable to assume, therefore, that a man who believes in God and in the dignity of man will use every effort to conquer and throw away these shackles placed on modern man. Man then, through his own efforts, yes, but largely through cooperation with other men, particularly in associations of employers, labor unions, local economic councils with representation for all groups concerned, and even through government action if necessary, will seek to acquire and protect those rights with which God has endowed him. Such rights as freedom of worship, of education, of voting, of assembly, of petition, of speech, the right to own one's home, to have a family, must be a part of man's life and man and God want these rights to be a part of the equipment of the dignity of man.

Man also has a relationship with other men through his membership in the family of human beings created by God. At the head of that human family, which at one time embraced a small unit and today takes in the whole world, is God Himself.

If the head of a family dies or is otherwise removed from the position of authority, it is only natural for the rest of the family to suffer from the loss. So, too, in the great human family of today if God is denied or removed from the deliberations of man then the human family as such will suffer. The dignity of men will be lowered. On the other hand, the presence of God encourages and directs men to practice friendly and just relationships with other men, especially in the establishment of tolerance in religion, abolition of discrimination towards races and creeds, and the construction of proper housing facilities for the family.

In this respect, an American man in the sight of God will look forward more and more to those policies which will give equal and just treatment to the Jew, the Negro, the Mexican, the Japanese, the Chinese, and other minority groups in the United States. In addition, that same American citizen must also raise his hand against those powers that dominate racial and national groups in Europe, Africa, and Asia, not only because he must be consistent in his attitude but because he is just and fair. To be called a crusader or a reformer in the expression of this policy makes no difference. It is

the principle of justice that counts.

The results of this two-fold acknowledgment on the part of man—one toward the existence of God and the other, which naturally follows, an understanding of the dignity of his fellowman—are very obvious and encouraging. The dignity of man will be strengthened and widened. Man on the political scene will place able and understanding candidates in public office, will endorse legislation for the benefit of mankind, and will invoke the law in the defense of human rights. Man will renounce legislation aimed toward the protection of the few and oppose leaders who do not have the vision and the interest of the people at heart. The dignity of man will stress economic rights such as the ownership of private property, the dignity of the worker in the factory, the mine, and on the farm, and the right of organization both for employees and employers. The emphasis on economic obligations will include a fair distribution of property, a firm and reasonable control of prices, a living wage, especially for the unorganized and unprotected workers, and the extension of social security.

Educational dignity will be seen in the full recognition of the right of a parent, according to

his conscience, to select a proper school for the education of his children, and in the education that will give a student a complete program, intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual. If necessary, government should be called upon to assist the parent in the complete education of the children, especially, in those areas where the financial ability of the population and the wealth of natural resources are not sufficient to give an adequate education to the children. No American should be denied the opportunity of a full and equal education no matter what his color, religion, race, or location may be. The dignity of man, too, will also perpetuate a stable and happy family life. Man, himself, will become better acquainted with the problems of the day and the solutions but, what is more important, he will be a better man.

There will come through this relationship, and the determination to go ahead, justice to all races and nations and permanent peace throughout the world, and a sense of happiness to the individual man, and for all these accomplishments there is no substitute. As a true gentleman of the community, as an American, and as a world citizen, he will also be a man of dignity and a man of God.

History is filled with the ac-

counts of great men who were men of dignity and men of God. Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Louis of France, and Sir Thomas More of England, were all men of God and left behind them lives that proved that divinely inspired dignity more than words will ever be able to describe.

Here in our own country there are men of dignity and men of God. A cotton picker in Mississippi, a Colorado beet worker, a garbage collector in New York City, a school teacher in Pennsylvania, a doctor in Illinois, a priest in Oklahoma, a longshoreman in Washington, a missionary in New Mexico, are men of dignity and men of God. Such men work for God but they also work for their fellowmen. They aid their fellow-citizens in following their consciences in endorsing and supporting programs which will improve the condition of their fellow-workers.

The individual man then will see God without any interference and will see man without any handicap because he has become unselfish and interested in others. Such a man will be the answer to the dangers of Communism and other menaces to our form of government and will, also, be the answer to world disunion and disaster.

In the road ahead the dignity

of the individual man in the family, in the nation, in the world, and in the sight of God, will do more than any other power to bring about that peace and justice that our American youth has lived for, fought for, and died for. May God give us the strength and the wisdom to persevere so that that great day will be near at hand.

When man rises to great heights, good luck, in the estimation of some people, smiles upon him. It is more correct and truthful to say that God, Himself, smiles upon him. When a nation is elevated to an exalted position, it is only natural to expect similar good fortune and the special guiding hand of an Eternal Father. Surely a nation like these United States of America, whose life began on July 4, 1776 with the declaration, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and whose daily public life ever since has been characterized by appeals to God for assistance and counsel, will be blessed with the prosperity, the success and the happiness that ultimately and inherently surround the dignity of man and the dignity of a nation.

On May 30th of this year, it was my privilege to attend Memorial Day exercises here in my native community of Webster Groves where the ceremonies began with a petition to Almighty God and ended with a prayer of Thanksgiving. I recall so well the sentiment of the citizens present at that time. They sincerely believed that our boys gave their lives not only in the war just completed but in all the wars of our country not for the United States alone but for God. They offered up the supreme sacrifice not for what the United States has been, or is, or will be, but for what it ought to be.

This spirit maintained through the dignity of man, here at home and abroad by the chosen representatives of our country, will more and more lead to the establishment of a lasting and just peace not only for Americans but for the entire world. Such an understanding and purpose are bound to secure the blessings of Almighty God.

Finally, in this talk, the last of four discourses over the Catholic Hour, I acknowledge with genuine gratitude the honor, but

I also realize the responsibility of addressing my remarks to the American people. It is my conviction that this message has had a definite purpose, namely, to give hope and recognition to the average man, to point out to him the way of happiness, of encouragement away from the monotony and routine of daily life, and to indicate the obligations of this age. There is probably no greater joy or happiness for man than that which is found in the effort he makes in understanding and coordinating the various relationships between him and the life about him. He assists in solving undesirable conditions in his local town. He helps in formulating the policies of the nation. He makes known his opinion on world questions. He asks God for guidance and inspiration.

It is then that the American, in the spirit of justice and of democracy, may sit back in his chair and regard himself not as a satisfied and selfish individual, but as a man of dignity because he is a gentleman of the community, an American, a citizen of the world, and a man of God.

THE CATHOLIC HOUR

1930—Seventeenth Year—1946

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.

Our Sunday Visitor Press
Huntington, Indiana

