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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND YOUTH

by

John F. O'Hara, C. S. C.



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The Catholic Church and Youth

by

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A series of five addresses delivered in the Catholic Hour,
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(On Sundays from September 6 to October 4, 1936)

- I. A Program.
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- III. Justice.
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- V. Temperance and Fortitude.



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Bishop of Fort Wayne.

A PROGRAM

Address delivered on September 6, 1936

It seems to be characteristic of our civilization that moral crusades move in waves. Just now we seem to be having a wave of youth programs and youth movements. Today, reformers jump at you from behind every tree and bush with a freshly-concocted program for youth and a plan for its national or international adoption.

There is a reason, of course, for this concern. I find no statistics on the subject, but I am sure that for at least ten per cent of the population of the United States, family life does not last, on the average, as much as four years; while for another five per cent, ten years would be a high average. Homes broken by divorce cause serious social problems. Again, the home as an institution is not what it was thirty years ago, particularly for city dwellers. Tenements, flats, and apartments have made impossible the social visiting of a generation ago; hostesses take their guests to a restaurant or a night club; automobiles, dance halls, taverns, gambling establishments, as well as more innocent places of amusement, lure young people from their homes.

There is, then, a problem that youth programs strive to meet. And I find, usually, behind such programs, a well-intentioned desire to correct or offset certain new environmental influences that threaten youth. But I find also in the vast majority of such programs a lack of attention to the parents who create many of the problems of their own children; and little or no appreciation of the fact that the young people themselves have an intellect and a free will, through which their Creator expects them to

work out their own destiny. There is, in a word, too much regimentation, and too little individual discipline, either of soul or body.

I propose to present, during the next few weeks, certain phases of an ancient program for youth, a program that has been tried for centuries and has not been found wanting. I shall assume that the young people who hear my voice are endowed with intelligence and free will, that they are capable of choosing for themselves between right and wrong; I shall even assume that when virtue is presented to them in a clear light, they will usually choose virtue. I believe that I am fully aware of all the mistakes of which young people are capable, and of the sins they commit; and yet I am an optimist regarding the fundamental desire of most of them to do the right thing.

I submit for their consideration certain phases of a Catholic program for youth. The fact that it is equally suited to old age is beside the point; its applications will be made to young people. And lest the program appear too formidable or mystical, in particularizing on life I shall confine my considerations largely to four virtues which were analyzed for us by the ancient Greeks. If, in the presentation of the program, I offer points that are offered by other religious organizations, I make no claim that they are the exclusive possession of the Catholic Church. My only claim is that all of these points are offered by the Catholic Church; that some points are offered only by the Catholic Church; and that the whole program is offered by that agency alone.

First of all, I should remind the children of Catholic parents that the Church has already done much

for them before they are asked to choose between good and evil—which they must do, in accordance with their lights, when they reach the age of reason. Before that time the Church has conferred upon them great benefits, among which I call attention to the following:

1. *Life itself.* These children have been born into this world because their parents were willing to undergo the sacrifices necessary to their existence and care. The Church has told these parents that abortion and birth prevention are crimes that provoke God's judgments on selfish men and women, and although bad Catholics may resist this teaching and follow the way of the world, good Catholic parents, humbly obedient to the natural law whose herald the Church is, give new meaning to the paradox of Christ, "The meek shall inherit the land".

2. *A permanent home.* The Church tells the Catholic father and mother, "what therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder". While there are Catholics who disregard the Church's teaching on divorce, broken homes, which figure so prominently in the stories of juvenile crime, are still relatively rare among Catholics. The child born into a Catholic home in this country has by far the best chance of growing up under the watchful care of both father and mother. If in the Providence of God it falls to the lot of that child in its early years to lose father or mother or both, the Church does what it can to supply for the parents' place. It teaches relatives and neighbors the blessedness of caring for widows and orphans, and it provides schools, according to its means, where those

children may be taught how to make a living in this life and save their souls for the next.

3. *Baptism.* Mindful of Our Divine Saviour's words to Nicodemus, "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the kingdom of God", the Church demands that parents fulfill without delay their obligation to have conferred this most necessary Sacrament, which introduces the child to the supernatural life, infuses the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and gives a right to many other graces.

4. *Ideals.* As the child advances in age, the Church is at pains to see that he advances in wisdom and grace as well. It teaches ideals, it instills virtues, it corrects incipient vices. It provides ideals in a sophisticated world that struggles to hold men down to realities, especially sordid realities. To show the practicality of her ideals, the Church points to very real models. If the Church honors the Saints, she does so not only because they are friends of God, but to remind us that by imitating their virtues and sacrifices we can also attain to that friendship. Above all, the Church places before the child as his model the Divine Infant, Who was subject to Joseph and Mary although their Lord and Master, Who suffered privations without complaint, Who "advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."

So much for the child in his Catholic home. What has the Church to offer to all youth? Briefly, she proposes:

First, a definite set of truths as the background of conduct. She asks us to accept, not on her word, not on God's word, but on the evidence we can

discover for ourselves, the following truths of religion: The existence of God and of a divine revelation; the reality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the fact that Jesus Christ claimed to be God and proved His claim by miracles, the chief of which was His own resurrection; the fact that Our Lord established a Church, to which He gave His own teaching power and infallibility, and to which all men must submit, once her divine authority is sufficiently proposed to their minds.

Secondly, she offers a clear-cut code of laws covering our relations with God, with our fellow-men, and with ourselves, in whatever state of life we may choose to embrace. As sanction for these laws, she offers an eternity of bliss or of woe, in which alone all justice can be fulfilled and mercy fully satisfied.

Thirdly, for souls of exceptional courage, the Church offers certain higher states of life, in which these souls may adorn civilization by following more closely the Divine Model, Jesus Christ.

Finally, the Church offers to both sinner and saint the assistance of divine grace, to place the soul in the supernatural life and maintain it there. And while grace is a free gift, God has established certain channels through which it flows most freely. These are prayers and good works on the one hand, and the Seven Sacraments on the other.

It is especially in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church that the sinner finds his strength and comfort. In the twenty years of my priesthood I have heard hundreds of thousands of young men's confessions and have distributed more than a million Holy Communions to young men. I need no angel to

tell me of the strength and consolation these two Sacraments, Penance and Holy Eucharist, hold for youth. I know the problems of youth, and I know of only one universal solvent of these problems. Vocational guidance may help a boy make a living, but it cannot mend a broken heart. Recreation centers may lessen certain temptations a boy may have to throw his life away, but they can hardly be expected to inspire a young man to give his life for a principle. From the tears of boys that have stained my purple stole, and from the unearthly joy I have seen on the faces of boys at Holy Communion, I have come to feel that the greatest harm that could be done to civilization, to the hopes and aspirations of mankind, would be the abolition of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. St. Peter probably thought that he was generous when he asked if he should forgive his brother "till seven times", but Our Lord told him, "till seventy times seven times". Youth can be generous while it has hope; ambition can flame when the heart is serene. The Catholic Church offers youth the Cross of Christ; she gives youth at the same time, the strength and the ambition to follow Him—even to Calvary, if need be.

PRUDENCE

Address delivered on September 13, 1936

A few years ago a conference was held at a mid-western university to discuss the place of religion in education. Perhaps that conference is now forgotten, although it received considerable attention at the time. From the papers read at the meeting I wish to quote two extracts, one from the address of Professor A. who represented a prominent university on the Atlantic coast, and one from Professor B, who represented a no less prominent university on the Pacific coast.

In the newspaper accounts of the proceedings, Dr. A was quoted as saying: "I have seen no evidence of moral decline in young people, but there is great confusion in current standards. The young people are thinking more about problems of conduct than ever before. The standards of yesterday do not fit the young people of today. A new code needs to be developed. This necessity is made more poignant by the fact that there is knowledge of good and evil everywhere in the land that was not available to our forefathers."

Again from the published accounts of the conference, we learn that Professor B "pointed out that the present day educational policy aims to look after the needs of the learners, and not follow the whims of the professors. He told of a professor who spent many hours trying to discover what the needs of the learners were. Finally, someone suggested that the pupils themselves, as the learners, could tell best what their needs were. A canvass was insti-

tuted, and the educational world was startled by the composite answer."

"Education," according to a summary of the answers of these students, "must develop an understanding, first, of self; second, of nature and the physical world; third, of organized society; and fourth, of the force of law and love—God and religion—working in the world. Character results from the adjustments of the individual to his understanding and appreciation of these four elements."

Before proceeding to analyze the findings of these professors let us go back to pick up the thread of last Sunday's discourse. Last week we saw in broad outline what the Church offers young men and women to assist them in solving the problems of life. I said that in particularizing on this program, I would confine my considerations largely to four virtues which were analyzed for us by the ancient Greeks. Such an approach is positive. The approach through vice is negative. Both forms of approach are good; both are necessary. In dealing with young men, however, I have always felt that I was dealing with optimists; and I have never wanted to tear down without furnishing the materials to build up again.

The Greeks listed four virtues as cardinal, or principal: Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude. They considered these virtues in relation to the natural man and his temporal welfare; the Catholic Church studies them, not only in this relationship, but also with reference to the supernatural man and his eternal destiny. In Justice, for instance, the Catholic Church tells us to be square and to pay our debts, not only that we may

be good citizens and useful members of society, not only that the trust so essential to community happiness may be maintained, but also, and principally, because the law of God demands that we do unto others, for the love of God, as we would have them do unto us. The Church tells us to be honest, not because "honesty is the best policy", and not merely because honesty is the mark of the good citizen, but because dishonesty is a defilement of the image of God.

Prudence is the first of these cardinal virtues. The ancient Greeks thought of Prudence as "right reason applied to action in view of an end sought." The Church accepts this definition, but makes the desired final end the eternity of bliss which God has promised to His creatures who fulfill His law. The Church does not miss the point that man has a temporal as well as an eternal end. She recognizes that you have your health to consider, your means of livelihood, your selection of friends, your choice of a state of life—most probably, the establishment of a home, and the acceptance of the responsibility of married life. The Church tells you that prudence is the virtue that you must bring to these selections if you would have happiness and peace in this life and at the same time place no obstacle to the eternal happiness to which God has called you.

And now, what shall we say of the findings of the professors on the problems of youth? When Professor A finds no moral decline among young people, we long to ask him what he means by moral and what he means by decline. If there are no fixed standards of conduct, it is rash to speak of either decline or improvement—one never knows

whether he is going up or down. Professor A suggests that a new code needs to be developed, that the standards of yesterday do not fit the young people of today.

I wonder why he concludes that there should be standards. Men still have the same physical constitution they had thirty years ago; they still have the same fundamental instincts and aspirations; they still have relations with their neighbors, they are not the creatures of any new God. And we know of no universal decree that has changed their last end. Why, then, should there be a new set of standards? Why should it not still be wrong to lie, to steal, to commit adultery, to murder, to disobey authority, to dishonor God?

When Professor B objects to professors following their whims, we quite agree with him, but we long to point out to him that professors should have something more solid than whims in their educational repertoire. But when he finds sense in a hierarchy of understandings that places self first, the physical world second, organized society third, and God last, we regret that he is in a position to confirm young minds in the blindness. If there is one best way to promote moral anarchy in the world, it is to upset the divinely established order of placing the knowledge and love of God first in man's duties. Newspaper scandals are but the stories of men and women who placed self first.

I have defined Prudence as right reason applied to action in view of man's temporal and eternal end. If no end is in view, action is haphazard, not reasonable. If a false end is in view, action is still unreasonable. Pleasure, riches, and power are false ends if proposed as final ends or if accepted as

opposed to man's true final end. That they are so proposed and accepted is a commonplace, and the world is sick as a result.

Prudence proposes that man, to understand self, must first determine whence he comes and whither he goes. No one can understand a machine unless he knows, either by testimony, experience, or reasoning, what was in the mind of its inventor. Man can understand self only to the degree to which he understands what was in the mind of his Creator. By reason, by experience, and by testimony, he can learn much about what was in the mind of his Creator. The prudent young man begins with God to understand self; and right reason then orders his life to its final destiny with his Creator.

To aid youth to acquire Prudence, the Church offers her counsel, her wise rule, and especially her Sacraments.

The chief agency she employs to counsel youth is the Catholic school. Having in mind the moral as well as the intellectual and physical nature of man, the Catholic Church has, by a voluntary system of double taxation, built up in this country a complete educational system, from kindergarten to university, in which upwards of three million children receive their training. The underlying principle of the Catholic educational system was set down by Our Lord when He said: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" The Church is not opposed to the public school system, but Catholics support Catholic schools in addition to paying the public school taxes, because they want their children to be instructed in morality and religion at

the same time that they are preparing for citizenship and social life.

But more vital than the Catholic school as an agency of counsel is the Sacrament of Penance. Within the sacred precincts of the confessional, and under the protection of sacramental secrecy, the troubled youth can open his heart to receive guidance in his own particular problems. From the pulpit and the rostrum the child may receive general lessons on how to keep spiritually well, just as lectures on health and hygiene may give general guidance on physical health. But just as a man who is sick consults a physician and accepts treatment for a particular malady, so the soul that is sick acts prudently when it seeks out a spiritual physician.

The second agency the Church employs to instill Prudence is her code of laws. Her law-making power was conferred by her Divine Founder when He said: "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." In addition to teaching and interpreting the Ten Commandments and other precepts given by Divine Revelation, the Church adds her own precepts whenever she finds these necessary for safeguarding the law of God or protecting society or the individual.

I have already mentioned the third agency the Church uses to instill the virtue of prudence—the ministry of the Sacraments. By way of generalization I may add that every time a Catholic goes to confession with sincere sorrow for his sins and a firm purpose of amendment, every time in these circumstances a priest pronounces over him the

words of forgiveness, he not only receives grace to take up again the burdens of his state of life, but he is reminded once more of his eternal end and of his primary ambition—to save his soul. Likewise, every time he kneels at the altar rail and receives the Body of Christ in Holy Communion, he dedicates himself anew to the task of loving God with his whole heart, and receives, in the Author of Grace, the abundant aids he needs to carry out his good resolutions.

In this country where one marriage in every six ends in divorce, where the falling birthrate is a national menace as well as a grievous shame, where juvenile crime is on a dangerous increase, where a contract is too often only a scrap of paper, it would seem well that there be greater cultivation of the virtue of prudence. It is to be feared that our natural virtue of prudence has remained too largely natural, and has been directed too exclusively to problems of health, of business, of power, to problems that may be good in themselves, but which appear trifling to the man whose gaze is fixed on eternity. It is even good business to place eternity first in all our considerations, for thus we brush away the pettiness of passion and prejudice that disturbs our consideration of business problems. But good business or not from the world's point of view, it is bad business, perhaps irretrievably bad business, to brush aside the business of salvation. "Better is a man that hath less wisdom," says the Scripture, "and wanteth understanding, with the fear of God, than he that aboundeth in understanding, and transgresseth the law of the Most High."

JUSTICE

Address delivered on September 20, 1936

Several years ago I was asked one day to commend a group of college graduates for employment. The man stated the qualifications briefly: "Average intelligence will do, and a moderate amount of courage—but they must be absolutely truthful. I can watch a thief," he added, "but I can't watch a liar. I don't want a thief, of course, but the damage done by the average thief is quickly repaired; a liar can ruin my business."

Justice is the virtue, the habit of good, that inclines us to give every one his due. A liar sins against justice; so does a thief; so does an adulterer; so does a blasphemer; so do the calumniator, the backbiter, the perjurer. Society is built upon mutual trust. The virtue of justice should protect that trust, should incline every man to give to every other man what is his due. To the extent to which that virtue is absent, we must have police, we must have courts, we must have jails and executioners, we must have armies and navies and military preparedness, for the protection of our rights.

You see, then, how important is the virtue of justice. Like the other three virtues we are studying these Sundays, it is a natural virtue, that is, it is based on our nature. Unlike the other three virtues, however, it is primarily a social virtue; it takes into account the rights of others, and requires others to take our rights into account. Selfishness would take all, or would take all the best; justice draws the line between my rights and yours. Because of individual selfishness, men or-

ganize governments to distinguish between mine and thine in case of conflict; and they organize courts to adjudicate individual differences.

The Church, as the guardian and interpreter of the natural law, has much to say about the virtue of justice. Her appeal, as ever, is to conscience, but she recognizes the right and the duty of the state to clarify rights and adjudicate conflicts, and she reminds executives, legislators, and judges that they must follow conscience and the natural law in the determination and protection of individual rights.

There is in modern times no clearer example of the Church's role in defining rights than in the famous encyclical of Leo XIII on the Rights of Labor, and the equally famous letter of Pope Pius XI on Reconstructing the Social Order. These two Popes pointed out that every man has a right to life, has a right to the things that are necessary to live in comfort, has a right, in other words, to a living wage that will enable him to sustain himself properly in his own station in life and to raise a family. Those employers who have paid less than a living wage can accept their share of the blame for the depression, inasmuch as they took out of the market such potential customers as they deprived of the means of ordinary comfortable living. Those employers who have paid starvation wages must accept their share of the blame for the spread of Communism, for though the originators and propagandists of this violent philosophy of government may themselves have been well-fed, they have found their readiest recruits among the half-starved.

In the Catholic teaching on Justice, our duties

to God come first. God has rights. He is our Creator, we are His creatures. We once were not, but now we are, and we did not bring ourselves into being. We owe God worship, we owe Him thanksgiving; He has a right to our apology if we offend Him; He has a right to our petitions for help. This sort of Justice is called the virtue of Religion. And if we pay God His due in all humility, there is a better chance that we will have more respect for the rights of our fellow-men.

The Communists understand this perhaps better than we do, and they direct their first attack against religion, which they call "the opiate of the people".

Having given God His due, the Catholic must proceed to give to his neighbor, to every man, that which is his. By the Canon Law, by particular decrees, by decisions of the ecclesiastical courts, and especially by the teachings of approved theologians, the Church solves problems of justice and rights and thus instructs the conscience of the individual. As sanction for her decisions she wields the spiritual power of refusing absolution to the sinner who has culpably violated the strict right of his neighbor and refuses to make good the damage done.

Unhappily for the peace of society, the moral codes followed generally by the world have allowed the Catholic Church too much of a monopoly in her teaching on restitution. Property rights would be far better observed, the home would be more sacred, reputations would suffer less, life would be more secure, were every conscience in the world imbued with the notion that where wilful damage

is done to another, restitution is necessary to the forgiveness of the sin.

No Catholic can steal with impunity; he knows that he must restore if he would have his sin forgiven. No Catholic employer can with an easy conscience defraud laborers of their wages, for he knows that this sin cries to heaven for vengeance, and that the pennies he steals in this way will salt him with fire for all eternity if he dies without making an effort to restore his ill-gotten gain. No Catholic worker who receives a good day's pay can do less than a good day's work for his employer, and the worker knows further that he has an obligation of restitution if wilfully or through culpable negligence he destroys or wastes the goods of his employer. Every Catholic knows that if he damages the reputation of his neighbor, whether by wilful lies or by making known hidden faults, he must repair that harm to the best of his ability. Every Catholic knows that if he injures his neighbor's health or shortens his life, he is bound to render proportionate support to the dependents who have been deprived of their source of livelihood.

Does this mean that Catholics are the only just people in the world? Or that all Catholics are paragons of justice? Such an inference would be, of course, absurd. Outside the Catholic Church there are millions of good people who are just in their dealings with their fellow-men, and millions who are at great pains to repair any unjust damage they may have done. And, since our Lord came to call "not the just, but sinners to repentance," it is to be expected that within the fold of the Catholic Church there will be sinners—sinners against Jus-

tice and against all the virtues. The Church prays for them and urges them to repentance—to the full repentance that necessarily includes restitution for every culpable violation of the strict right of our neighbor. The individual Catholic may be at fault—he may be a bad Catholic—but the Church does not fail in her teachings and in her use of all spiritual means in her power to aid Catholics to practice full justice, no matter what its cost.

For the guidance of Catholic professional men she lays down certain special rules. The Catholic judge, for instance, she reminds that the law of restitution obliges him if through malice, or through culpable ignorance or neglect, his decisions inflict unjust damage. She tells him that he must have sufficient knowledge to perform the duties of his office, that he must have competent jurisdiction, and that his judgments must rise above personal considerations, passions and prejudices; that he must reject alike bribes and undue influence; that he must fulfill his duties with diligence and justice, respecting alike the laws of the land and the divine law; that, finally, he must be willing to give up his office rather than enforce a civil law that runs counter to the law of God.

Similarly, the Church reminds the Catholic lawyer that in accepting a case he enters into a contract which gives his client the right to able, honest, and diligent representation before the law. In civil causes, she tells the Catholic lawyer that he cannot accept a case that is certainly unjust, and that if in the course of a doubtful case he becomes convinced of its injustice, he must drop it. Since the law presumes the criminal innocent until his guilt is proved, she allows the Catholic lawyer

to undertake the legitimate defense of a criminal, but in both civil and criminal cases, the Church insists that the lawyer abstain from all fraud, false testimony, forged documents, and everything that may in any way offend against honesty or justice. Finally, she reminds him that his fees must be just.

Who pays your grocery bill? If you do not pay, the grocer must increase his charges on the rest of his customers or go out of business. Who does your work? If you are slack, other workmen are forced to exert extra effort or more workmen must be hired, if the job is to be done. Who pays for the protection you receive from your government? If you evade your legitimate taxes, the burden of those must fall on others. A great deal of the increased cost of government in modern times can be traced directly to the fact that disregard for the rights of others has been widespread, and that with the loss in effectiveness of the appeal to conscience there has been substituted an appeal to the police power for the protection of individual rights.

No student of the industrial history of the nineteenth century can deny that most outrageous injustices were committed by the capitalists of the industrial revolution. Case-hardened men built up vast fortunes in those days by exploiting the desperate need of the poor, employing men, women, and children for a pittance, working them long hours under inhuman conditions. They sowed the wind and we reap the whirlwind. The proponents of Communism would destroy all human rights and begin anew, with man the mere creature of the state. Against this unnatural philosophy, the Catholic Church finds itself too much alone in its appeal to conscience. It recognizes that govern-

ment must act to protect human rights, but it would prefer to have these rights safeguarded by an active sense of justice in every human heart.

St. Luke in his gospel relates the beautiful story of Zacheus and the visit of Our Lord to his home. Zacheus was of the notoriously dishonest class of the publicans, or tax-gatherers—in fact, he was chief of the publicans. Zacheus was short of stature, and when he heard that Our Lord was coming down the road in the midst of a crowd of people, he climbed a sycamore tree, in order that he might have a view of this prophet. His simple faith touched Our Lord, Who invited him down and asked to be entertained by him. In the midst of the feast, poor Zacheus was overcome with emotion, and standing, he said to the Lord: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold.” Jesus said to him: “This day is salvation come to this house.”

Suppose the spirit of Zacheus were to sweep the world today! A four-hundred per cent dividend paid voluntarily to the victims of injustice from ill-gotten gains, and a further fifty per cent dividend to the poor from honest wealth, would go far towards a solution of our so-called economic problem (which is essentially a moral problem). The inspiration to do this came to Zacheus when he entertained Our Lord in his house. Justice to God was followed quickly by justice to mankind.

And that is the program of justice the Catholic Church proposes to youth. Justice to God must come first. It is not the easy path, and the world will have none of it, but as I have said before, what the Catholic Church offers youth is the Cross of

her Founder—and the grace and courage to bear the cross.

TEMPERANCE

Address delivered on September 27, 1936

The philosophers of the appetites are as numerous as the sands of the sea-shore. The reason for this is not far to seek. Every man has it in his nature to seek a reason, if not an excuse, for everything that he does. The two most fundamental impulses in our nature, the two strongest, are those that refer to the preservation of the individual and the preservaton of the race. Rebellion, either physical or mental, sooner or later rebukes excess in the indulgence of these appetites, and common sense, individual and collective, seeks a golden mean that will fix limits to this indulgence. When the individual conscience conflicts with the social conscience, whether expressed in a philosophy or in a code to regulate the use of these instincts, a new philosopher of the appetites is born. He may be content to philosophize for himself alone; or he may become a crusader for his own particular views. Those who rationalize against their better judgment; those, that is, who sin, and then seek an excuse for their sin, are most likely to become active crusaders for a false philosophy. They seek to quiet, by force of numbers, the inner voice of conscience. It is because of the activities of this particular kind of men that it has been said that "every false philosophy is an excuse for somebody's sin."

For the past three weeks we have considered what the Catholic Church offers to youth. We have seen a general program, and we have considered in particular the individual virtue of Prudence and

the social virtue of Justice. Today we turn our attention again to the individual, and take up the virtue of Temperance.

It would be a mistake to follow the popular conception of Temperance and regard it as coterminous with sobriety. Temperance is a virtue, or habit of good, which restrains the appetites and directs them, in proper moderation, to their proper end. In the strict sense, it applies only to the physical appetites; in the broader sense, it applies equally well to the spiritual appetites, the urge for fame, glory, power, and riches. We will consider this virtue today only with respect to the physical appetites.

Since the philosophers of the appetites have been so numerous, it is to be expected that the false philosophies of the appetites should be numerous. The conflict between the urgency of physical impulses and the Commandments of God, as well as the higher counsels of perfection, St. Paul described as "the warfare between the flesh and the spirit." Two extreme schools of thought on the use of God's creatures for the welfare of man have existed from the beginning. One group has erred by excess, the other by defect. For one group, the appetites have stood as essentially evil, and to be restrained at all cost; for the other group, the appetites represent the most urgent promptings of nature, and their restraint is fraught with danger. The Catholic reasoning, aided by divine revelation, lies between these two extremes. Puritanism, or Manicheism, which regards the appetites as essentially evil, has little hearing now; hedonism, the other extreme, is having its day. Against this popular philosophy, Cardinal Newman argues the

Catholic teaching in his eloquent sermon on "Nature and Grace".

"In truth the world," says the Cardinal, "does not know of the existence of grace. . . It sees that nature has a number of tendencies, inclinations, and passions; and because they are in nature, it thinks that each of them may be indulged for its own sake . . . It does not understand, it will not admit, that impulses and propensities, which are found in nature, as God created it, may yet, if allowed, become sins on the ground that He has subjected them to higher principles, whether in our nature, or superadded to our nature . . . Because the wild emotions of wrath, hatred, desire, greediness, cruelty, are no sin in the brute creation, which has neither the means nor the command to repress them, therefore they are no sins in a being who has a diviner sense and a controlling power. Concupiscence may be indulged, because it is natural. . . . The Church is built upon the doctrine that impurity is hateful to God, and that concupiscence is its root; . . . whereas the corrupt world defends, nay, I may even say sanctifies that very concupiscence which is its corruption. Its bolder and more consistent teachers make the laws of the physical creation so supreme, as to disbelieve the existence of miracles, as being an interruption of them; . . . in like manner, it deifies and worships human nature and its impulses, and denies the power and the grant of grace. . . Like the proud spirit in the beginning, it wishes to find its supreme good in its own nature, and nothing above it; it undertakes to be sufficient for its own happiness; it has no desire for the supernatural, and therefore does not believe

in it. And as nature cannot rise above nature, it will not believe that the narrow way is possible." (Discourses to Mixed Congregations).

Allow me to apply this teaching to particular situations that confront youth. What about the use of liquor? Is all use of intoxicants a sin? Is drink an evil in itself? If not, is total abstinence from intoxicants a sin, as opposed to natural appetites?

In the Catholic teaching on the virtue of Temperance only that is sinful which is opposed to the end for which an appetite is given. For the preservation of the individual, God has instilled the appetites of hunger and thirst, which overcome indifference, laziness, whatever might interfere with the orderly processes of necessary and regular nourishment. To eat foods that are harmful, to eat to excess, to drink what is injurious to health or life, to disturb reason by excessive potations—all such disorders are opposed to the end for which God gave these physical appetites. The virtue of Temperance rules their satisfaction. Total abstinence from all food and drink is normally a sin against the virtue of Temperance, if it is so prolonged that it imperils the health or life of the individual. Total abstinence from certain forms of food or drink does not offend against Temperance, provided the primary purpose of the appetites is served; and if such total abstinence is undertaken from a worthy motive, such as penance for sin, or training of the will, it goes beyond the virtue of Temperance and enters the higher field of the counsels of perfection. St. John the Baptist gave us a needed example of the counsel of abstinence; Our Lord, on the other hand,

did what all of us may do—and critics condemned both of them. “John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and you say: He hath a devil. The Son of man is coming eating and drinking, and you say: Behold a man that is a glutton and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners.”

So much for the appetite for the preservation of the individual; what of the impulse for the preservation of the race? Here again, in the Catholic teaching, there is a virtue of Temperance, and a higher counsel of total abstinence. The virtue of Temperance obliges all; the higher counsel only those who voluntarily assume it. The Catholic teaching may be presented thus:

God could have created all people at once, or He could have created bodies successively as He does souls; but God created man “in His own image and likeness,” and as part of the likeness He gave man a share in His creative power, which is the power we find most awe-inspiring when we contemplate God in His works. It is the great desire of God that heaven be peopled with Saints; yet He makes the creation of a soul depend upon the will of a man and a woman.

Marriage is therefore a partnership, not merely between a man and a woman, but between a man and a woman and God. “God is not mocked.” A terrible judgment awaits the man or the woman who tries to cheat God out of His share in the partnership.

Grave cares and responsibilities attend the use of this creative power. Whoever assumes responsibility for the life of a child must give the child a

two-fold education, material and spiritual; the child must be put in a position to make a living and gain heaven. Sacrifice by the parents begins with the life of the child and ends only with death. Selfish men and women who foresee these pains and cares and disappointments are tempted strongly to forego parenthood; God knows these temptations and supplies motives to offset them—the instinct of fatherhood and motherhood, the love of children, the desire to have the companionship and solicitous care of one's own in life's declining years, and so forth. The strongest present incentive to the act by which God's plan of creation is carried on is the pleasure, both mental and physical, contained in the act itself.

This pleasure is not evil in itself; it is good when it is used as a means to the end God intended it to serve, in lawful marriage (the stability of which insures to the child the care of both father and mother in education). But it is an abominable evil, hateful alike to God and man, to seek this pleasure for itself without regard to the end for which God intended it. If the procuring or voluntary acceptance of this pleasure outside of its lawful end were not a mortal sin, many selfish people would shun the burdens of married life, and God's plan of creation would be frustrated. It is evident, therefore, that any thought, word, desire, reading, conversation or act that produces such pleasure is forbidden under pain of mortal sin, when it is admitted voluntarily and without necessity; and if such pleasure arises accidentally from some necessary pursuit, the will must be set steadfastly against the pleasure.

Is such teaching too hard for youth? The experience of nineteen hundred years has not caused

the Catholic Church to regret such teaching or to modify it; she could not change it if she would, for it is the teaching of her Divine Founder. No, the Catholic Church is an optimist with regard to youth, and her experience has confirmed her optimism.

She points out to youth that purity is a virtue so noble, so elevating, so manly, so strong, that even libertines stand in awe of it. Rakes and profligates rail at it and sneer, calling it an impossibility, denying its existence; but bring them into the presence of purity and their foul tongues are silenced. "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" silenced the traducers of Our Divine Saviour. It is only under the influence of strong drink, which maddens reason, that a profligate loses his awe in the presence of purity. The pure man cannot be a coward; he has fought too many fights . . . and usually without the inspiration of applause from onlookers; he cannot be base; his love of God has elevated him above baseness; he cannot be a traitor; fidelity has burned into his soul. Purity is an indispensable virtue for *men*.

TEMPERANCE AND FORTITUDE

Address delivered on October 4, 1936.

In our study last Sunday of the virtue of Temperance, we dwelt only on the restraint it exercises on our physical appetites. Before turning our attention to the fourth cardinal virtue, Fortitude, we can profitably consider Temperance as the moderator of our spiritual appetites of anger and worldly ambition, since these affect youth so intimately.

“Blessed are the meek”, said Our Blessed Lord, “for they shall possess the land”. Does this mean that the impulse to anger is essentially evil? No. “Be angry and sin not”, said St. Paul; and Our Divine Saviour gave us an example of righteous indignation when with a whip He drove the buyers and sellers from the Temple. No, a temper may be a very good thing . . . provided it is kept in control, always subject to reason. It can supply the force of character that gives initiative, that repels evil suggestions, that drives men to heroic heights of virtue. Like all the gifts of God, it is a good thing, and only rejection of reason brings it into disrepute.

What of ambition? What of the thirst for honors, fame, riches, power? Again the Catholic Church appeals to the eternal principle that every creature of God is good, and only the unreasonable use of God’s creatures is evil. To turn away from God as our last end in order to seek these creatures for themselves is a grave deordination of God’s purpose in giving them to us; and it is essentially such evil choice that constitutes the rebellion which we call mortal sin. To seek honors honestly and in all

humility for the good we may accomplish through them; to regard worldly goods as a trust through which we may alleviate suffering and diffuse happiness; to accept fame that it may shine as a light before men and “glorify your Father who is in heaven”—these are proper manifestations of the virtue of Temperance. That they demand great prudence goes without saying; but we have already warned that there is no virtue without prudence. Perhaps our Catholic people in this country have sinned more by defect than by excess of ambition in seeking the worldly goods and worldly honors through which to glorify God and exercise love of neighbor. In all justice it must be said that many Catholics of wealth and power have followed very literally the scriptural injunction, “when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth”; but it is equally true that too many Catholics in this country have followed the shameful example of the servant who wrapped his talent in a napkin. Be it understood, then, that the Catholic Church encourages the honest ambitions of youth, but warns youth that these must never imperil the eternal welfare of the soul. To one and all she repeats the warning of her Divine Founder: “Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

The Catholic Church, then, does not crush the honest aspirations of youth. On the contrary, it welcomes the enthusiasm of youth and seeks only to save it from the pitfalls that have destroyed others. She imposes Prudence in the selection of the best means to reach the proper ends of life; she demands justice, first to God and then to our neighbor,

in our necessary relations with others; she insists that Temperance rule our lower passions that they be our servants and not our masters; while the higher passions, impetuosity on the one hand and timidity on the other, she entrusts to the virtue of Fortitude.

That a special virtue is necessary for strengthening the soul in difficult situations is glaringly evident from the mediocrity that characterizes the vast majority of men. There are many good men in the world, but there are not many who are both great and good. The power to dare, and dare calmly and reasonably, in the face of the gravest danger, is rare; still less common is the power to endure. It is said that the best defense is a good attack, and this is partly true because the virtue of patience, which is a part of fortitude, is so difficult to attain.

Fortitude may be defined in the broad sense as firmness of soul in pursuing an honest end. More strictly, it is a moral virtue which strengthens a man in difficulties, especially in sustaining or repelling the danger of death. In its highest special form it is called martyrdom. The Christian martyrs were not insensible to the fear of death. The records show that they were neither fanatics nor dullards; on the contrary, many of them were of a high order of intelligence, as evidenced by their answers to the judges; and when their executioners lost their tempers, the martyrs remained calm. No, they were clear-headed men and women, girls and boys, whose faith in God had led them to the conviction that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come", and they willingly gave their lives for a principle.

While Christian martyrdom in its original form is nowadays extremely rare, there is still abundant opportunity to die for principle, and there is dire need for the cultivation of fortitude to meet the difficult situations of public and private life. The soldier who endangers his life in battle needs fortitude to die for principle; far greater courage is required of the woman who, alone on her bed of pain, must decide that she will risk death rather than consent to the murder of her unborn child. Just as great may be the sacrifice demanded of that woman's husband, for the temptation comes to him that his decision is a cowardly one, since he is deciding not on his own life, but on the life of the one nearest and dearest to him. Be it said to the glory of Catholic womanhood, the right decision is not rare in these days of self-indulgence. There are many mothers who have given their lives rather than consent to the murder of an innocent babe; and there are many more who, in the Providence of God, have offered freely and have then been restored to health, to the happy confusion of medical science.

What of the physician himself? The medical profession is not for the coward. Every morning's sun brings to the physician the possibility that he may be called upon to perform some act that is contrary to the law of God and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Only by a habit of fortitude can he resist the promises of financial reward, the social pressure, the threats that would swerve him from the path of duty. The medical profession constitutes a noble vocation, and practitioners of medicine should be noble men. The conscientious Catholic doctor will act from principle and not from expedi-

ency, and the patient will know in advance what to expect of him in given situations. And conscientious Catholic doctors have to their credit many souls whose deathbed return to God they counselled. There are many conscientious physicians outside the Catholic Church—their number, thank God, is legion—but the final and complete source of the medical ethics followed even by these physicians is in the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

What of the public servant, the governor, the mayor, the judge? Here, again, the virtue of fortitude must prevail if the service rendered is to be in keeping with the oath of office. It is easy to follow the line of least resistance; bribery and political expediency are common enough to be seldom noticed, favoritism seems to be expected. It requires a courageous will to rule with impartial justice; and it requires the stoutest heart to repel some of the suggestions that fall to the lot of the ruler. Nominal adherence to the Catholic Church or to Catholic practices is no guarantee that a candidate for office has the fortitude, even if he has the wisdom, to rule as a Catholic should; and Catholics themselves are derelict in their duty if they do not oppose the candidacy of men who, in their honest judgment are not worthy of the trust they seek. But Catholic principles properly exemplified in a wise and virtuous ruler, be he constable or president, can come as close as is humanly possible to producing an ideal government.

What of the Catholic teacher, of the Catholic editor and publisher? Again, there must be Fortitude, strong courage, as well as Prudence, Justice, and Temperance, and above all, there must be an

abundance of Christian charity, if the representatives of these professions are to be true to the high duties they assume. The teacher accepts a sacred trust when he steps into the classroom. His influence, for good or evil, will leave a stamp on the plastic minds he has before him. Should he abuse the confidence he thus receives, there awaits him at the last judgment the curse pronounced by the gentle Saviour on the givers of scandal: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." Equally subject to this warning are the writer, the editor, and the publisher. The influence of one evil book may go on to the end of time. But just as great, or even greater, may be their influence for good. It would seem from many of the teachings and from many of the newspapers, magazines and books current at the present time, that too often nowadays these trusts are assumed lightly, and with no thought of the consequences they entail. "Am I my brother's keeper?" seems to be the current answer to protests. It seems a proper reply from a hardened conscience. We heard it first from the lips of the first murderer, who slew his brother in cold blood. It is an answer that will not be accepted at the judgment seat of God, where the intellectual authors of crimes will be finally—and irretrievably—exposed.

Prudence, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude—these, then, are four cornerstones which the Catholic Church offers to youth for the shaping of life. They do not contain all the fullness of Catholic life; it has not been suggested that they should. I have

chosen them because we have them in common with the pagans of ancient Greece, with the man in the street today who has no formal affiliation with Christianity. With this man in the street they are natural virtues; the Catholic accepts them as such and supernaturalizes them. The Catholic has in addition the great theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity; he has further the divine counsels of perfection; he has the Sacraments, the great sources of divine help; he has the full teaching authority of the Church to rule his life and aid him to the highest perfection to which man may aspire.

I have chosen to present only the groundwork of the moral life, for the invitation to security it offers the troubled mind of youth. If that invitation is heeded by any of my youthful hearers, the grace of God can lead them on to know the fullness of the riches of God.

CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from his address at the inaugural program 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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Coast-to-Coast on NBC every Sunday at six o'clock New York Time

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