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The Church and the Child

by

Reverend Paul Hanly Furfey, Ph. D.

Six addresses delivered on the Catholic Hour,
sponsored by the National Council of Catholic
Men, with the co-operation of the National
Broadcasting Company and its Asso-
ciated Stations.

(On Sundays from April 23 to May 28, 1933)

- I. The Divine Example.
- II. Saint Elizabeth and the Children
of the Poor.
- III. Saint John Baptist De La Salle
and His Free Schools.
- IV. Mother Elizabeth Anne Seton and
the Sisters of Charity.
- V. Don Bosco and the Boys' Leisure
Time.
- VI. Thomas Maurice Mulry and
Organized Child Care.



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INTRODUCTION

The lot of the child has changed immeasurably in the last twenty centuries. Two thousand years ago there was no organized child care. The child had few, if any, legal rights. The community was almost utterly lacking in a feeling of responsibility towards youth.

Today all this is changed. We point with pride to our child-welfare legislation, our children's hospitals, our child-caring institutions, our playgrounds, our juvenile courts. The community has definitely recognized the fact that childhood is a precious responsibility.

The change is due largely to the influence of the Catholic Church. Down through the centuries she has pleaded for the rights of the child, following in this the example of her Divine Founder. In this series of radio addresses the author has tried to present some of the important epochs in the struggle which the Church has carried on in behalf of oppressed childhood—a struggle which began with the life of Jesus Christ and which continues to our own day.

DEDICATION

To those who during the ages have labored for the sacred cause of child welfare and to those who are today carrying on the same glorious tradition.

THE DIVINE EXAMPLE

Address delivered on April 23, 1933

We are accustomed to regard childhood with a certain deferential tenderness. The light of children's eyes sweetens the monotony of a mother's days and gives a father added strength for his toil. We gladly appropriate money that every child may have the necessary education, that sick children may be nursed back into health, that destitute children may be properly housed.

We take it for granted that childhood deserves a special consideration; but this truth has not always been accepted. The great peoples of pagan antiquity were not generous towards childhood—not even Greece and Rome, the most highly civilized nations of the ancient world.

The Greeks crowned the glory of their art with the white marble of the Parthenon gleaming upon the Acropolis at Athens; it was a splendid monument to the goddess of abstract wisdom; but the Greeks left no memorials of a love of the oppressed, no refuges for abandoned children, no free schools, no hospitals for the sick children of the poor. We praise the calm impartiality of the Roman law which once ruled the world; but when a newborn infant's appearance did not please the father's fancy, then Roman law and Roman justice gave that father the right to tear the child from the arms of its protesting mother and to put it to death.

Oh, the injustice of it! That men could place their selfish whims above the rights of little children! Oh, the hardness of the human heart! That



men could grow rich in useless luxury while little children were starving to death! What power was there that could kindle the fires of charity and compassion in those cold breasts?

Only the power of a great love—a love strong, compelling, passionate, a love more powerful than death, a love perfect in its selflessness, unbounded in its hot intensity. And such a love was born into this world on the first Christmas day. It was the love of Jesus Christ and that alone which has worn down the selfishness of our selfish souls, which has imparted to us something of that gracious tenderness, that sweet, understanding compassion with which Christ Himself loved the innocence of childhood.

No one ever knew the children of the poor as Jesus Christ knew them. Down to the end of time no human heart can guess the all-embracing vastness of that love. For Jesus Christ deliberately chose to be of the children of the poor. He chose a poor working woman for His mother. He chose to be born as paupers are born, in the chance shelter of a stable. He chose to eat the rough unwholesome food of the poor, to wear their shabby clothing, to share their daily round of uninteresting toil. He chose to lose himself among the ragged, sweaty multitude of the nameless poor. His heart was with them. They were His people. He would have felt lost and homesick away from them.

Jesus Christ did not learn to know poverty with the cold detachment of those who read in books. He learned it with the vivid suffering of experience. In His own life He told over, one by one, the little tragedies of the children of the poor.

He knew the proud man's contumely because rich boys from the village sometimes made fun of His cheap, ill-fitting clothing or excluded Him from their games with an ill-natured jest. A sudden pain bit at His filial heart when over-dressed women rudely elbowed aside His Blessed Mother in the market place. He suffered when rude, rich men drove hard bargains with His gentle foster father, Joseph.

He knew the bitterness of unemployment because there were periods when there was no one to hire St. Joseph's honest toil. He had seen the haunting look of care in that fine old man's eyes, had heard him pacing the floor during sleepless nights of worry.

He knew the degradation which sometimes creeps into the hearts of a poverty-stricken people. He had seen fathers grow sour and surly under the strain of care and toil, had seen them beat their children and quarrel pettishly with their wives. He knew the gradual disintegration of family life which leads to divorce with all its pitiful consequences. He had seen poor men demoralized by drink or driven by hunger to rash deeds of violence.

He knew the simple bereavements of the poor—little columns of tired men and women creeping along the dusty road out to the cemetery to lay their dead away. One day it was His own family which was visited by death. St. Joseph, worn by toil, had met death with the same unprotesting simplicity with which he had lived. They laid him to rest in an obscure grave and an emptiness pos-

sessed the little home, a lack of his familiar presence which made it always somehow different.

Long years of continued living with the suffering poor wrought deeply on the compassionate heart of Jesus Christ. Love for the pale children, sympathy for their broken parents, ate into His soul and became a part of His very Being. He saw the long horror of human selfishness from the selfishness of Cain down to the last page of history. He saw it and grew sick at heart. He felt the injustice of it as an injustice against Himself. They were His people who were suffering and He suffered with them.

What could He do to help them? Human prudence would have dictated an armed revolt. The times were ripe for it. Oppression had bred a surly discontent among the poor. It would have been easy to fan their smouldering defiance into a hot fury, to lead the mob, mad with hate, against their oppressors, to plunder the rich and divide the spoils, to overthrow the whole economic and social order in a mad hysteria of revolution.

It would have been easy to do this; but it was not Christ's way. He had a weapon sharper than tempered steel—His unfailing gentleness. He had a power stronger than armies of angry men—the power of love. He would fight cruelty with tenderness, hatred with compassion. He would besiege the oppressor's strength with the patience of His kindness. He would lay them low with the strength of His love.

First He would plead with them; and so, for the three years of His public life, He wandered through Judea and Galilee, preaching His new

Gospel of love. He preached to all who would listen to Him, to toiling peasants in the fields, to self-satisfied Pharisees in the temple, to the purse-proud wealthy in the market place, to weary laborers in the busy industrial town of Capharnaum. He preached in language that all could understand, not in the stilted, artificial jargon of the schools but in the straightforward idiom of daily life.

He preached the surpassing dignity of the human soul. All men are children of the Divine Father. Every soul is a reflection of the splendor of the Divinity. It is no longer possible to despise a slave, an idiot, a sick child, a broken old man, without by that very act despising God Himself. "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

He preached that the great ones of the earth have themselves a Master in Heaven. The possession of riches is a stewardship, a power to be administered as God desires it to be administered, not an opportunity for selfish indulgence. Wealth is a responsibility and the rich man is called upon to spend it with a chivalrous disregard for self, to spend it on God's poor.

Christ thought of His humble home in Nazareth where, in bygone years, the bitterness of poverty had been sweetened by love and forbearance. He thought of it and He preached that all homes must approach that ideal. Marriage must no longer be an excuse for mere sensuous indulgence. Christ raised it to the dignity of a sacrament. He made it a holy thing, dissoluble only by death. By mutual self-sacrifice husband and wife would teach

their children to be unselfish. In this atmosphere children would grow up tender and true and generous, as God intended them to be.

And so for three years Christ preached His new doctrine. But preaching was **not enough**. Not even the magic of His divine voice could permanently convert the hearts of selfish men. They stared coldly into His deep, compassionate eyes. They turned away from the tenderness of His smile. They hardened their hearts against the pleading of His sacred voice.

Eloquence alone would not save the world, even the divine eloquence of the God-man. Only love would do it, a love so hot and compelling that the accumulated weight of man's ancient selfishness could not block its path, a love infinite, eternal, such as no human heart could bear, no human mind understand, a love older than the laws of nature, more extensive than space itself, more intense than the fiery sun, such a love was necessary and such a love burned with unquenchable fury in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

It was a love that drove Him on and on to the ultimate sacrifice which even His wisdom could invent. He would die for sinful man. For more than thirty years He had borne the suffering of the poor; now He would crown His work of love by sharing with so many of the poor the shame of a public execution. For more than thirty years He had borne the selfish indifference of the rich; now He would atone for their injustice and meet their hardness by the supreme sacrifice. He, God and man, would gather together the sin of the world and destroy it in the fire of His love.

And so Jesus Christ died His lonely death on Calvary, one dark day, nineteen hundred years ago. He died and selfish men thought that His work was done. They imagined that His golden voice was forever stilled. They believed that the glory of His name was forever dimmed. They comforted themselves with the thought that the fight He waged against human selfishness was forever lost.

Fools! The fight was *won* on Calvary! Christ reigned a king on the wood of the cross! The glory of His suffering was a glory which would not be concealed. It burst forth in irrepressible effulgence on the first Easter morning.

A new spirit had been born into the world. Slowly the hard heart of man yielded to the power of the cross. Men began to catch something of the tenderness with which Christ had loved little children. They began to lose their contempt for that poverty which Christ had sanctified by His life. Leaders arose to plead for the rights of the oppressed and these leaders found ready followers. The tenderness of Christian charity gradually permeated public and private life.

My friends, the subsequent sermons of this series will tell you something about the great heroes of Christian charity who have fought for the rights of childhood down through centuries. But in a higher sense the story is already told. The good fight was won on Calvary and later ages have merely applied to the problems of their day the fruits of the great victory which was won on the Cross.

ST. ELIZABETH AND THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR

Address delivered on April 30, 1933

The first, the most fundamental right of childhood is the right to be loved. The child comes into the world, alone, defenceless, without resource. Only love can stand between his infant helplessness and the savagery of a harsh world. Only love can assure him the constant care of a mother's tenderness or the rugged protection of a father's strength. Only love can secure him his place in the blessed life of the home in which, as in its proper atmosphere, his young life unfolds and expands and waxes into its proper perfection.

What is true of the family circle is equally true of the larger life of the state. When the leaders of civic life, the rich, the gifted, the powerful, feel a human compassion for the sufferings of childhood, then, and only then, will those sufferings be relieved. When leaders of civic life have in their hearts a sympathy for unfortunate children, for the sick, the handicapped, and the wretched children of the poor, then and only then will the needs of these children find relief. This is the only solution for the social problems of childhood. There is no other answer.

These things are true today; they were equally true seven hundred years ago, when good Count Louis and his wife, Elizabeth of Hungary, ruled over Thuringia in the German land. The love of Louis and Elizabeth was one of the great romances

of history. Their marriage was a perfect thing, blessed with happy children. Husband and wife seemed to have been created for each other.

Count Louis, still in his early twenties, was already one of the outstanding public figures of his age. Sage beyond his years in counsel, huge in his massive physical strength, utterly fearless in danger, he was yet as tender as a woman towards the unfortunate. Added to these qualities was an unfailing courtesy and an ever-ready sense of humor which made him a perfect example of knighthood in the age of knighthood's greatest perfection.

Elizabeth, his slender, dark-haired wife, was the daughter of the king of Hungary. Noble by right of the royal blood which coursed in her veins, she was yet more noble by her piety, her gentleness, and by the great and blameless love she bore her husband.

The old chroniclers are fond of recounting tales of the love of Louis and Elizabeth. They tell how during the absence of her husband, Elizabeth would lose interest in the busy life about her, how she would clothe herself in garments of mourning, how she would expand with trembling joy at the first word of his return, how she would run forth to meet him and plant a thousand kisses on his lips—kisses of which she, a saint of God, was unashamed, for they were the seals of a sacramental compact, chaste witnesses of a plighted troth which God Himself had blessed.

Elizabeth was a loving loyal wife. She was a natural happy girl. But she was something more than that. She was one of those great rare natures which bend the course of destiny. She had within

herself that divine spark of greatness which sets one apart. She had that intensity of character which leaves an indelible imprint on the pages of history. For this girl Elizabeth was destined to rouse her age to a new consciousness of its duty towards the poor.

She had grown up in the splendor of one of the most splendid courts of Europe; but her heart went out for the suffering of the oppressed. The noble knights and proud ladies of the court paid little heed to the misery of the wretched multitude of the poor. But to Elizabeth it was an ever-present horror.

Daily she visited the hovels of the peasants who lived around her castle. With her own hands she sewed baptismal garments for their tiny infants. Children flocked around her and loved to call her "mother". She had herself borne children and she knew their childish ways. She visited the sick and dressed their wounds. She shared her wealth with the hungry multitude. In time of famine she emptied her treasury, a noble generosity which her husband fully approved.

The sufferings of the poor haunted her night and day. It was a thought she could not drive from her mind. She thought of the wan children, their pale hungry mothers, and she pushed aside uneaten the rich food of her castle table. She thought of small children shivering in their filthy rags and she blushed to think of the rich clothes she was herself wearing. She thought of the mean huts in which her beloved poor were housed and she wearied of the wide castle in which she dwelt. Gradually she began to put aside the luxury in which she was born to share a voluntary poverty. She forced herself to be con-

tent with rough food and simple clothes because that made her more like the poor.

Elizabeth was only twenty when the great tragedy of her life occurred. Louis died on his way to a Crusade. Now all Elizabeth's strength was concentrated, even more intensely than before, on the service of the poor. Now, too, she began to learn the hardness of the human heart. Deprived of her husband's strong protection she began to feel the enmity of the nobility. Her generosity was a constant rebuke to their selfishness. Her charity threw into relief the meanness of their self-love. The rich nobles began to whisper against her. Cowards began to insult her who would not have dared to do so when Louis was alive.

At length Elizabeth was forced to leave the Wartburg, the castle where she and Louis had shared the blessed years of their married life. In leaving those halls she was leaving behind all she had on earth to remind her of her dear dead husband; and yet she left with a certain sense of relief. All her life she had loved the poor. All her life she had felt uneasy amid the luxury of her rich castle halls. Now, released from the responsibilities of position, she could be literally poor—as she had always been poor in spirit.

Elizabeth sold everything she had. She gave great bounty to the poor and then, a few months later, she carried out a project which had long been a cherished hope. She built at Marburg a little humble hospital for the sick poor. Then she renounced the world and received the habit of a Franciscan nun.

She threw herself into the new work with the

burning intensity of her ardent nature. The pleasant days with Louis on the Wartburg now seemed far away. They took on the unreality of a dream. The din of the great busy world seldom penetrated the quietness of her retreat. Only two things were real to her now—God and her poor.

Renunciation bred a new tenderness in her. Never before had she been so understanding with the children, so patient with the sick. Never before had her love for the unfortunate children of the poor burned with so bright a flame. But it was the beginning of the end. Her frail body could not endure the strain which her eager soul imposed upon it. In the year 1231, at the age of twenty-four, Elizabeth died.

The life that had begun so auspiciously in the royal court of Hungary ended in a little mud-thatched building in Marburg. She who had lived familiarly with the great ones of her time died forgotten except by a handful of beggars. She who had been one of the greatest ladies of Europe died poor, alone, forgotten, her strength exhausted by hard work, her young beauty marred by lines of care and toil, disowned by her own class, loved only by a few of the faithful poor. What an ending for a life so gloriously begun!

My friends, I read recently a life of St. Elizabeth written by an unbeliever. The good professor weighs the facts of her life minutely and with a great show of learning. He examines her with the cold impartiality of a scientist studying a biological specimen. And the conclusion reached by the good man is this, that St. Elizabeth was—well—not quite normal, a little insane, a little mad.

Yes, my friends, St. Elizabeth *was* mad—in the eyes of the world. The world calls it madness to love the unattractive poor. The world calls it madness to go hungry that a sick child may eat. The world calls it madness to strip a cloak off one's own back to warm a ragged child. The world calls it madness to love one's neighbor more than oneself. In the eyes of the world Christian charity is sheer madness, insanity, folly. Yes, folly! But it is the folly of the Cross. And the folly of the Cross is wiser than the wisdom of this world. And the weakness of the Cross is stronger than the strength of this world.

So it proved to be in the case of St. Elizabeth. Judged even by the world's own selfish standards her life was a triumphant success. It was a success because her example has been an inspiration to subsequent generations. Since she lived seven centuries have learned generosity from her life. A score of successive generations have been moved by her heroism to great deeds of charity.

The principles for which she lived are just as true in the twentieth century as they were in the thirteenth. She proved that only the example of an unrestrained generosity can soften the hard hearts of selfish men, only love can solve the problems of the children of the poor. This is an eternal, undying truth. And so St. Elizabeth lives on in her works. The marching years cannot tread her down. The jealous centuries cannot steal her glory. Death itself cannot triumph over her. She lives! She lives! She lives! "One of the few, immortal names that were not born to die."

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AND HIS FREE SCHOOLS

Address delivered on May 7, 1933

Everyone knows that education or training of some sort is necessary for success in life. The skilled artisan, carpenter, machinist or stone mason, must learn his trade through a long apprenticeship. No one can qualify as a licensed aviator until he has gone through a proper training course under experienced fliers. The successful physician must spend long years of exacting preparation in the medical school before he can practice his profession.

Of course education alone does not **guarantee** success. Many other things are necessary. And yet the fact remains that education spells the difference between success and failure in the life of many a man.

People do not always realize that these things are equally true of the greatest and most important job of all—the job of saving one's own immortal soul. Yet this is a most certain fact. Left to himself the child will not learn the goodness of God, the beauty and majesty of the Christian revelation, the tender charm of the Sermon on the Mount, nor the powerful love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. Without guidance and supervision the child will almost inevitably fall into moral errors. These things are proved facts. Every thoughtful man will recognize their truth.

Moral education should begin at the mother's knee. It is the mother's duty to give the child his

first knowledge of God. It is the mother's duty to introduce the child to the moral law. It is the mother's duty to teach childish lips to lisp their first prayers to Jesus Christ who loved children so much. It is the mother's duty, by means of wise guidance and salutary correction to guide wavering childish footsteps along the narrow path of virtue.

Thus the first stages of moral growth are taken in the blessed atmosphere of home life. Some may ask why moral education should not be completed, as well as begun, at home. Why may not the mother be the child's final moral teacher, as well as his first? Is not home training sufficient? Why need religious and moral education be introduced into the ordinary school curriculum?

The answer is the same answer that one would give if it were asked, why not let the mother teach the child to read and write? We all know the reason. Parents may be very well educated and yet be unable to teach their children efficiently the common school subjects. Similarly, parents may be very good and virtuous without being able to supervise efficiently, the entire moral and religious training of their children.

We go to a great deal of trouble and expense to assure ourselves that there shall be competent teachers available to instruct our children in reading, in arithmetic, in spelling, in history, writing and geography. We do not leave these things to chance. Now if we are really earnest in our desire that children shall receive the proper religious and moral education, then we shall take care that well-trained and competent teachers are available to teach these subjects too. We shall not leave the matter to chance.

This is the secret of the great interest of the Church in moral and religious education.

The history of Catholic education is an interesting and romantic one. I would like to tell you, this afternoon, something about one of the great heroes of the movement—a man who believed so thoroughly in the need of moral and religious training that he spent his life on the cause with an unmatched heroism.

Two hundred and fifty years ago the kingdom of France was divided rather sharply into two classes of people. On the one hand were the rich nobles. They formed an elegant, cultured, witty society. They spent their time in a gay and very selfish social life. On the other hand were the poor peasants, laborers, paupers. These people had to work hard all the time. They had to pay heavy taxes, that the rich nobles might have plenty of money to maintain their gay social life. They lived in very poor and crowded houses. Their children had very little chance to be educated; for there were practically no free schools. Only the rich and the moderately well-to-do could afford to send their children to school.

The poverty and want of the lower classes was pitiable enough; but their moral condition was even worse. They were like sheep without a shepherd. Their most brutal passions were unrestrained by systematic moral and religious education. Poor boys were growing up without any deep knowledge of the moral law. They wandered about in marauding gangs uncontrolled by the restraining influence of religion.

The rich nobles looked with contempt on the uneducated multitude. To the wealthy and educated

upper class, the hungry throngs of the poor seemed scarcely human. But there was at least one rich and noble gentleman who did not share this contempt.

John Baptist de la Salle had inherited a large fortune from his father. He had increased his wealth by prudent management; for he had what we would call a "good head for business." Moreover he commanded that respect which seventeenth-century France yielded to men of noble birth. He had become a priest and had been appointed to the honorable position of a canon in the Cathedral of Rheims.

John Baptist de la Salle was noble by right of birth; but he was nobler far by his warm, wide-reaching charity, by the breadth of his human understanding, and by his devotion to the cause of the poor. Other gentlemen looked on the poor with a contempt not unmixed with fear. De la Salle looked on them as brothers, pitifully in need of understanding and sympathy and help. De la Salle understood that the dehumanizing effects of our modern complicated civilization could best be thwarted by systematic religious training. He met poor boys on the street and he was not repelled by their ragged clothes and uncouth manners. He saw deeper. He saw beneath their shabby exterior, eager young human hearts, human hearts which yearned for understanding and help and guidance in the complicated life which they faced with the bewilderment of uneducated youth.

And so John Baptist de la Salle reached a great decision. He would devote his life to the education of poor boys. He would devote himself not with the moderate generosity of ordinary men but the unlimited generosity which makes saints. He was not

the man to do things by halves. He could not bear to remain in possession of his great wealth and to direct his work from a distance. He wanted to be poor himself, to experience cold and hunger and contempt. He felt that then and only then could he really be a brother to the poor boys he sought to educate.

De la Salle sold everything he possessed and gave the proceeds to the poor. Now at last a poor man himself he devoted his time to his great life work of founding free schools for poor boys. He gathered other generous men around himself and founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a society devoted to education, particularly to the education of poor boys in the elementary grades.

John Baptist de la Salle lived a hard life. He faced difficulties of every sort—poverty and want, misunderstanding on the part of the good, jealousy on the part of the selfish. When he died a prematurely old and broken man in the year 1719 his success appeared very moderate. His little society was founded; a few schools were established, but very little impression had been made on the ignorance of his age.

The world might have regarded his life as a failure; but the faithful poor knew better. As the worn out body of John Baptist de la Salle lay in state in the church of Saint Yon in Rouen, strange words were passed from lip to lip. "The Saint is dead". Thus John Baptist de la Salle was canonized by the voice of the people, years before he was raised to sainthood by the official voice of the Catholic Church.

The people were right. John Baptist de la Salle *was* a saint; and that is his chief claim to greatness.

He was also a great educator, a genius whose methods influence, directly or indirectly, the work of every school teacher today. He was great as an educator but greater as a saint. He had a saint's clear vision, a saint's courage, a saint's supernatural influence over human souls.

The world needs religious education today—more perhaps than ever before. In our complicated mechanical civilization, we need to be reminded of the things of the soul. In an age when moral values are being questioned as never before we need a clear vision of the eternal truths. We need skilled educators to train the minds of the young. We need courageous men and women to devote themselves generously to the cause of education. But, above all, we need saints. We need guides for the young with the devotion, the spiritual insight, the moral fiber of St. John Baptist de la Salle. The message of his life is an eternal truth, as valid for twentieth-century America as for seventeenth-century France. The only bulwark against the moral breakdown of the young, is the devotion of skilled, unselfish, patient, saintly educators—men and women who have caught something of the spirit of St. John Baptist de la Salle.

MOTHER ELIZABETH SETON AND THE SISTERS OF CHARITY

Address delivered on May 14, 1933.

Today is Mother's Day—a sacred time which humanity gratefully sets aside to acknowledge publicly its debt to motherhood. For to motherhood we owe our very physical existence, a hundred thousands acts of care and tenderness which surrounded our earliest years, that essential early guidance which directed our childish footsteps along the path of righteousness. The very name of "mother" evokes a thousand secret, tender memories which tear at our hearts. If the marching years have not made us the men and women which our mother prayed we should be, then the fault is ours, not hers.

It is appropriate that we, as a community, should set aside a day to honor motherhood. For the mother is the center around whom home life is formed; and home life is the very essence of sound community life. It is impossible to build a sound state, except upon the solid foundation of sound family life.

It is fitting that on a day like today we should turn our thoughts to those unfortunate children who have been deprived, by some unhappy circumstances, of a normal home life. The tragic plight of the orphan touches the heart of every normal person. No less unfortunate is the child whose home has been disrupted by divorce or separation, or the child whose parents, because of illness or mental defect, are unable to provide him with a normal home. Too often the life of the homeless child is stark tragedy.

The normal boy or girl grows up in the blessed security of home life. Whatever sorrows later life may hold, at least his childhood years are guarded by a father's protection and a mother's love. There is always someone to be concerned with his minor illnesses, his petty sorrows. There is always someone to comfort him in his childish doubts and fears. At every point he is guarded and encouraged and sustained by the blessed strength of a mother's love.

How different is the plight of the homeless child! His young heart has no secure resting place. All too frequently he must suffer from physical neglect—lack of adequate food and clothing and shelter. All too frequently he finds the door of opportunity closed to him through lack of sufficient education. Even if he is fortunate enough to be well housed and clothed and fed, even if he is fortunate enough to be adequately educated, he is likely to feel alone and unwanted in contrast to the happier children who live in normal homes.

The tragic difference is likely to be still more striking when we consider the things of the soul. It is the mother's sacred duty to give the young child his first moral and religious training. An old true saying tells us that the tree is bent as the twig is inclined. The training of the child in his earliest years can easily give his life a character which later years cannot modify. The truth of this statement has been evident to the wise and observant of all times. Recent years have witnessed great improvement in the organized care of the homeless child. Modern methods of child care have almost eliminated some of the hardships which the destitute child was once forced to undergo. The heartless exploita-

tion of the homeless child's labor, which once existed, has now practically ceased. The homeless child is now able to get, in nearly all cases, at least a common-school education. It probably rarely happens now that a homeless child dies through sheer lack of the physical necessities of life.

These things represent progress! And yet I wonder whether we have much cause for self-congratulation? Have we succeeded in giving the homeless child something like the care he would receive from his mother? The answer probably is, that we have given the homeless child something like the physical care which a mother would give him, but we have only too often failed to give the more subtle forms of tenderness and love, the solicitous moral and religious care which forms the very essence of that sacredness which associates itself with the name of "mother."

Perhaps we can all learn something in this regard from the life of a great American woman who lived in the early days of our republic. Few women have more richly deserved the title "mother" than Elizabeth Ann Seton. She was a mother in the literal sense of the word because she bore and reared five children of her own. She was a mother, too, because she founded the Sisters of Charity in America and ruled over them with a mother's solicitude for many years. Finally, she was a mother by right of the fact that she herself and her followers have devoted themselves with maternal love to the service of needy childhood.

Elizabeth Ann Bayley, the future Mother Seton, was born in New York in 1774, the year of the First Continental Congress. She represented that type of

Colonial woman which played so important a part in giving character to the infant republic. At the age of twenty she married William Magee Seton, a young New York merchant. For nine years the young couple enjoyed a happy married life, during which time two sons and three daughters were born. Then, after a long illness, Mr. Seton died.

Mrs. Seton was staggered by the blow; for she had loved her husband with all the intensity of her deep and loving nature. Moreover the family's financial resources had been exhausted during her husband's illness. Mrs. Seton and her five small children faced the world almost without resource.

Some natures weaken and break down under suffering; others grow strong and intense under trial. Elizabeth Ann Seton was a person of the latter type. In the tragic years which followed her husband's death she seemed to gain both strength and tenderness. Her nature became more gentle and intense.

It was during this trying time that Mrs. Seton became a Catholic. She accepted the Catholic religion with characteristic whole-heartedness. Having resolved that her soul's salvation was for her the most important thing in the world she proceeded to act in accordance with that belief. As her children grew older she felt free to give herself more and more thoroughly to the practice of religion. Her life took on that fiery intensity that marks the great saints.

There are two kinds of saints. There are some whose holiness draws them constantly more and more away from the world, saints like St. John the Evangelist, whose lives gradually melt into a mystic union with the Divinity until they seem to belong

already to the next world. These are the great contemplative saints who love to flee the world and spend their lives in a cloistered solitude.

Then there are other saints whose holiness seems only to make them ever more human, men like St. Francis of Assisi or the Apostle Paul, whose sanctity seems only to intensify and deepen the human bonds of friendship and love, saints whose holiness finds its most characteristic expression in a self-sacrificing devotion to the physical and moral well-being of their fellow man.

The holiness of Elizabeth Ann Seton was of the second sort. Her love of God found its deepest expression in a deep and burning charity. She would offer herself to the service of the afflicted. That was the dearest present she could offer to the God Who had Himself loved afflicted humanity so much.

Mother Seton, as we may now call her, gathered together a few followers and opened a school for poor girls in Baltimore. Later the establishment was moved to Emmitsburg, Maryland. There Mother Seton set herself with indomitable courage to the completion of her work.

The hardships of the early years at Emmitsburg were cruel hardships. But the little band faced them with the courage of pioneer women. They were too poor to buy proper food. Winter found them without proper fuel to warm the poorly constructed log cabins in which they lived. One by one the little band began to break under the strain. Two sisters-in-law of Mother Seton came to join her in the work. Both died from the rigors of the life. Her two daughters joined her. They, too, succumbed to the demands of the suicidal work.

Mother Seton's loving heart was broken; but there was no thought of turning back. Does a good soldier turn back when he sees his companions in arms dropping by his side? There was no fanaticism in Mother Seton's resolve. She had counted the cost and she would pay it. It would cost her life, but that was a small matter. The great thing was that the work should go on. Mother Seton faced the hardships with the courage of a pioneer woman. There was to be no turning back. At length she too fell a victim to the killing rigors of the life. She died January fourth, 1821, aged forty-six years.

Courage like that of Mother Seton's is seldom if ever lost. Her daring initiative had established the Sisters of Charity in America. Schools for poor girls had been opened. She had sent her sisters to distant cities to care for homeless children in special institutions. Her work has grown and developed until now there is scarcely a corner of this republic where Mother Seton's daughters are not serving the afflicted.

I have said that the courage of Mother Seton should teach us how to care for the homeless child. There are at least two things which we can learn from the heroism of her example.

One is the example of tenderness. It is not enough that the homeless child be given food and clothing and shelter. He needs something else even more than he needs these things. He needs love. He needs the personal, intimate enlightened interest of someone who is really devoted to him. We can learn this from Mother Seton. With her, Christian charity was not a cold philanthropy. She loved her work well enough to give her life to it. Her life

bears the mark of that devoted unselfishness which we associate with the very name of "mother."

Finally, Mother Seton's example teaches us the care of the homeless child must be impregnated with religion. What does it profit us to save a child's body, if that child shall lose his immortal soul? What, indeed, does it profit society if the homeless child is saved merely to become a menace to society? Mother Seton shows us the way. Let us entrust the care of homeless children to persons who have some of the devotion, the unselfishness, the holiness of Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton. It is then and only then that we shall have done our full duty to the homeless child.

DON BOSCO AND THE BOYS' LEISURE TIME

Address delivered on May 21, 1933.

My friends, I wonder how many of you have ever asked yourselves this question: Why do some boys become criminals? Why is the innocence of youth sometimes succeeded by an adulthood of dishonesty and crime? There is something so fine about the average boy! His young eyes look out upon the world with such a splendid hope! He is so frank and genuine, so loyal and true! What curse is it that can turn him, in the space of a few years, into a selfish and surly criminal?

This question is a very pertinent one for us today. For we all know how serious is our modern American crime problem. We know what a tragic waste it represents—not only in terms of dollars and cents but in the loss of human souls—a vastly more important consideration.

We know moreover that the crime problem is a problem of youth. The typical American criminal is a young man. If we could preserve the youth of America from delinquency, then there would be little adult crime. If this country's boyhood could be saved from contamination, then the crime problem would disappear.

But how may this be done? What is the answer to the boy problem? Perhaps the life of Don Bosco can give us a clue to the solution. This very great man began his life work in Turin, Italy, less than a

hundred years ago. He belongs, therefore, neither to our century nor to our country. Yet the principles of Don Bosco's work have a very immediate application to modern American conditions. For he was, in the best sense, a very modern and progressive man. He was very much alive to the complicated problems of our industrialized city life. If we want a solution to the boy problem in America today, there is no one to whom we may better turn than to Don Bosco.

The city of Turin, in Don Bosco's day, had much in common with the average modern American city. The times were characterized by a vague social and economic unrest. The country was seething with half-realized political aspirations. Old ideas were being abandoned. New ideas were eagerly seized, only to be themselves abandoned for yet newer ideas. The city of Turin was growing rapidly. It teemed with a new life.

All this had an unfortunate effect on youth. Boyhood needs a firm, sure guidance. In that day of unrest and uncertainty there was no one to give such direction. Boys flocked to Turin in search of employment or merely in search of adventure. The city became filled with idle youth. Boys formed themselves into predatory gangs and lived by violence. The gangs and gangsters of Turin remind one very much of the gangs and gangsters of many a modern American city.

The city fathers agreed that something should be done; but they were frankly at a loss as to the exact solution. While they hemmed and hawed a young priest from the country proceeded to work a near-miracle under their very eyes. Without money,

without influential friends, without previous experience, he established himself in Valdocco, the toughest and most infamous section of Turin. When he died forty-three years later he had not only reformed Valdocco but he had established a religious society which was repeating his triumph not only in Italy but in foreign countries as well. Surely this was a remarkable life-work! What was the secret of Don Bosco's success?

The answer is this: Don Bosco was among the first modern men to realize the overwhelming importance of the boy's leisure time. He was among the first to grasp the fact that the first seeds of a criminal career are often sown during the hours of play.

This fact may appear surprising at first; but it is, after all, merely common sense. For where else can the first signs of delinquency appear except during play? The boy is not likely to go wrong at home. There are good homes and poor homes. There are honest parents and dishonest parents. But even the worst parents do not usually lead their children deliberately into crime. Even the most unworthy parents generally feel a certain respect towards childhood. Though they may be criminals themselves, they usually hope to see their children grow up decent citizens.

Nor can we blame the school. It may be true, as many believe, that the school is not making the most of its opportunity. It may be true that there are teachers who have a more or less passive attitude toward their pupils' character. Yet even the worst schools do not deliberately corrupt character. By

and large, schools and school teachers are a vast influence for good.

No, my friends, boyhood is not corrupted at home nor in the class-room. It is the time spent by the boy outside the home and school which forms the really crucial problem. When he is free from the supervision of parents and teachers, then he is free to be really himself. Then he is free to choose his own companions for better or for worse. Then he is free to put himself under good or bad leadership. It is then that his real character comes to the surface.

The parent and teacher may do their best to instill into the boy's soul the principles of right conduct; but it usually happens that the boy gathers his real principles from the other boys with whom he associates. The standards of his own gang are the important thing to him. If the boy's companions boast of their thefts, if gangsters and racketeers are heroes in their eyes, then the admonitions of parent and teacher will fall on deaf ears. On the other hand, if the boy spends his hours of leisure in wholesome play with wholesome companions, then the moral lessons of home and school will be strengthened and reinforced.

The heart of youth demands recreation and recreation it will have! Under the artificial conditions of our modern city the boy is too often deprived of his right to healthy play. The result is most unfortunate. Instead of finding excitement in the healthy physical activity of the baseball diamond or basketball court he finds it in the morbid and clandestine stimulation of forbidden acts. The leisure hours of

the boy often spell the difference between fine character and a life of crime.

Now Don Bosco realized all these facts. Moreover, he was able to deal with them in practice with conspicuous success. He made boys' play the important business of his life and reformed the city of Turin by doing so. He joined boys in their games and incidentally saved their souls. He guessed the tremendous seriousness of boys' play and this secret was the secret of his success.

Don Bosco seemed to have been born to be a boys' hero. He had everything that youth admires—magnificent athletic prowess, dauntless physical courage, an ever-ready sense of humor, an unflinching patience, a sympathetic understanding of the heart of youth.

One day Don Bosco was preaching in his little chapel when a would-be assassin appeared at the window and fired a revolver point-blank at the priest. The bullet passed between his arm and his body, tearing his clothes. "What a pity!" said Don Bosco, "that was my best cassock." Then he continued his sermon. Is it any wonder that boys idolized such a man?

Don Bosco seemed to possess a magic power of winning hearts. One day he was held up in a lonely street by a youth who demanded his money or his life. An hour later Don Bosco was hearing the boy's confession. Another time a gang of ruffians made fun of the priest as he walked along a lonely street. An hour later the entire group was seated with Don Bosco around a table in a near-by inn, enjoying what was perhaps their first acquaintance with a decent citizen.

The life of Don Bosco was filled with dramatic

incidents of this sort. But these things, after all, represent merely a superficial view of his life. To understand the man thoroughly we would have to understand the inner life of God's saints. Whatever busy duties occupied Don Bosco externally his inner life was a life of prayer, a life of constant mystic union with God. In this life of prayer he found the strange power which seemed to open to him the secrets of all hearts and to bring the most obstinate sinners to their knees. In virtue of this fact he succeeded not merely in making good citizens of the boys with whom he came in contact, but in communicating to them a spark of his own deep religious fervor. To live under Don Bosco was a deep spiritual experience.

The lessons of Don Bosco's life are just as true in 1933 as they were in 1888 when he died. The problems which he faced are just as actual in a modern American city as they were in Turin. For we too face the demoralization of youth under the stress of our quickly growing and artificial city life. The only sure methods of meeting the problems of modern American boyhood are the same methods which Don Bosco used so successfully in Turin two generations ago.

First, we must bring to the problems of youth the same sympathetic understanding which was so conspicuously present in Don Bosco. We must not view boyhood coldly, with the unfeeling detachment of age. We must learn to understand boys; and that insight must spring from a genuine fellow feeling.

Next, we must concern ourselves seriously with the leisure-time problem. We must realize as Don Bosco did the outstanding importance of play in the

boy's life. We must, as he did, provide the boy with the necessary opportunity for plenty of wholesome play, so that he may not be forced by lack of such opportunity, into undesirable forms of recreation.

Finally, we must realize that the boy's play life, like every other part of his life, must feel the blessed influence of religion. It would be a fatal mistake to imagine that religion is necessary in the home and school, but not at play. By this statement we do not mean, of course, that the child must constantly interrupt his play hours to attend religious exercises. But we do mean that the spirit of play should be a wholesome, worthy, healthy thing like the happy play of the boy Christ at Nazareth.

It is a blessed thing that our present age is gradually awakening to the importance of play. It is a blessed thing that such movements as the playground movement, the camping movement, the Boy Scouts of America, the Catholic Boys' Brigade, the boys' club movement, are finding such a ready response in the generosity of our citizens.

For the boy problem is the key to the future. When the present generation shall have relinquished the work of the world out of their dead hands, then it is the coming generation which must take up the task. The future is theirs. The youth of today is the only hope we have for the continued greatness of our country. The youth of today is our only hope for the moral salvation of generations to come. The youth of today is the world's only bulwark against ruin. Civilization itself rests in their hands. If we are faithful in our duties towards the youth of our day we need have no fear for the future.

THOMAS MAURICE MULRY AND ORGANIZED CHILD CARE

Address delivered on May 28, 1933

It is characteristic of all living things that they constantly grow and develop and adapt themselves to changing circumstances. Now Christian charity, which is itself a living thing, is no exception to this rule. It changes constantly. It takes a different form today than it did in the time of St. Elizabeth in the thirteenth century; and the charity of the thirteenth century was different from that of the fourth century when St. Basil preached his stirring appeals in behalf of persecuted childhood.

Of course there is a sense in which Christian charity never changes. Its spirit does not change. Its spirit is as old as Christianity. In every century of our era the heroes of charity have been animated by that same strong love of suffering humanity which Jesus Christ brought into the world.

But there is a sense in which Christian charity does change. It changes in its methods; for each age has its own social problems and its own ways of meeting them. When St. Elizabeth of Hungary built her little mud-thatched hospital in Marburg seven hundred years ago she was doing her best to assist the sick poor of her day; but a modern physician would probably pronounce it unsanitary and crude. The times change and the methods of Christian charity change with them.

This is particularly true of philanthropic work with children. Child life is peculiarly sensitive to

social change. The altering conditions of modern life have brought about new and special problems for childhood. If today our methods of child care are intelligently up to date, the credit for that fact belongs largely to Thomas Maurice Mulry.

Mr. Mulry was born in New York City in 1855. Mr. Mulry was not born in poverty; but he had plenty of chance to see poverty about him. He saw poverty under the special conditions of a modern, rapidly-growing American city. He saw thousands of immigrants herded into unsanitary tenements in the crowded slums. He saw little children dying in the city heat for lack of adequate food and sunlight and medical care. He saw a greedy capitalism herding starved young boys and girls into hot factories. He saw youth on the city streets caught up in the maelstrom of vice and crime because they had no adequate opportunity for healthy recreation. Mr. Mulry saw all these things and his heart revolted against them. There was born in his soul a fierce hatred of this injustice. He devoted his life to a successful struggle against it.

Mr. Mulry was a boy of seventeen when he joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society in St. Bernard's parish—a body of laymen who devoted their spare time to the service of the poor. As time went on Mr. Mulry rose in the ranks of the organization. Before many years, he became the leading spirit in the St. Vincent de Paul Society of New York City.

At this time philanthropic work was facing a crisis. Such work was being carried on by volunteers. But the complications of city life were such that it was very hard for an untrained person to meet the intricate problems of the poor. Mr. Mulry

began to realize that trained social workers were needed. In 1898 he established the Catholic Home Bureau for Dependent Children and the professional social worker had entered the field of Catholic child care.

There are still a few people who find fault with the professional social workers. These good people feel that charity cannot be charity if it uses business methods. They seem to feel that Almighty God reserves a special blessing for inefficiency. Mr. Mulry never shared this viewpoint. He was himself a highly successful American business man; and he had the business man's respect for effective work. He saw the problem and he sought the most efficient legitimate means for meeting that problem. Under modern conditions the trained professional social worker represents efficiency in philanthropic work. Therefore Mr. Mulry used the weight of his authority to introduce professional social work.

In the meantime a bitter controversy had arisen about the proper method of caring for orphans and dependent children. The older method had been to put such children in orphan asylums. About the middle of the nineteenth century another system arose—the system of child placement. Instead of being put into institutions the orphans and dependent children were placed to board in private families. The meetings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction were marred by heated exchanges between the advocates of the two systems. In 1899 Mr. Mulry, as chairman of a committee appointed by that body, succeeded in putting an end to the controversy. His masterly analysis showed that each system has its merits. The problem must be

settled in the case of each individual child. Some children should be sent to institutions; others will do better if placed in private homes. This common-sense view prevailed. The report of Mr. Mulry's committee still represents the best thought on the matter.

With the turn of the century new problems opened up. People began to realize the truth of the old adage about the ounce of prevention. They began to see how short-sighted it was to spend all one's time and energy on the treatment of poverty and delinquency without much consideration of the causes of these evils. First came an attack on the health problem. Much poverty and much distress was due to ill health. By preventing disease and by giving better care to the sick much of this suffering could be prevented at its source. Mr. Mulry was eloquent in urging this view. Through his energy St. Elizabeth's Home for Convalescent Women and Girls was founded as well as St. Vincent de Paul's Summer Home for Children.

Mr. Mulry was very much alive to the problem of recreation. Like Don Bosco, he realized that much delinquency has its root in a misuse of spare time. He believed in the value of organized recreation as preventive work in the field of juvenile delinquency and he was instrumental in founding the Ozanam Association for the promotion of boys' clubs.

Perhaps Mr. Mulry's most valuable quality was his gift for bringing together people of diverse views and smoothing out those differences of opinions which often hinder the work of well-intentioned people.

It is a sad fact that the worthy enterprises of

good and sincere men are often spoiled by the opposition of other equally good and sincere men. An appalling amount of philanthropic work has been injured or destroyed by such misunderstandings. This is a tragic thing. Human misery and want represent such a stupendous problem that we need all our time and energy to battle against it. Charitable people can ill afford to waste their energy by fighting among themselves.

A generation ago this mutual suspicion was rife. There was distrust and jealousy between public and private agencies, between agencies affiliated with different religious denominations. Proponents of different methods in social work regarded each other with mutual distrust. Cooperation was lacking. Social work was not only unorganized. It was thoroughly disorganized.

There was need for leadership. There was need for an outstanding man whose own motives should be above suspicion, a man whose leadership would be accepted by people of varying views, of varying faiths, of varying interests. Such leadership was present in an outstanding degree in Thomas Maurice Mulry.

Mr. Mulry inspired respect. He had fought his way to success through the fierce competition of the business world. He was the president of a large bank, a director of important corporations, an important figure in the financial world. He was a citizen of prominence who might have achieved political fame if he had cared for it.

Mr. Mulry had all these personal qualities; yet it was not on account of these things that he secured the universal love and confidence of philanthropic

people everywhere. Men gave him their unquestioning loyalty because they knew that Mr. Mulry placed the need of the poor above every human consideration. Charity was the most important thing in his life. All his actions were subordinated to a fierce hot resolve to champion the children of the poor. In following Mr. Mulry, then, men were not following an ambitious leader. They were following a cause.

It is small wonder, then, that his leadership embraced a wide field. He was a member of the New York State Board of Charities, president of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, an officer in local and national organizations too numerous to mention here. In 1909 when President Theodore Roosevelt called the White House Conference on Dependent Children, Mr. Mulry took a leading part in the affair. Later he was able to reorganize the St. Vincent de Paul Society on a national basis and became the first president of the new national organization. Such is the power of unselfish leadership!

Mr. Mulry died in 1916. After a life of unselfish devotion to a great cause, he enjoys a well-earned rest. He is dead, but his work lives on. It lives because it was built on a firm foundation and has that quality of permanence which is the test of sound accomplishment. It lives because its spirit is one with the ageless spirit of Christian charity.

For Christian charity does not die. Men come and go. Institutions grow and decay. Social problems arise and then disappear. But charity goes on, as fresh and youthfully active in the twentieth century as in the enthusiastic days of the first century

when wondering pagans exclaimed, "See how these Christians love one another!"

Christian charity belongs to every century. It is at home in every land. It softened hard hearts in old Rome. It prompted men to build free hospitals when pestilence raged in mediaeval Europe. It led men to plead for social justice in our great modern cities.

Christian charity has been the salvation of childhood. It stopped the cruel Roman custom of abandoning unwanted children or selling them into slavery. It established asylums and maternity hospitals in the Middle Ages. Christian charity prompted men and women to dedicate themselves to the education of poor children in free schools. It was Christian charity and that alone which led men like Don Bosco to dedicate themselves to the problem of youth in the city streets.

God grant that our generation be not faithless to the glorious tradition! God grant that we be loyal to the heroic spirit of Thomas Maurice Mulry! God grant us something of his deep, wide, understanding love for suffering childhood. His spirit urges us on. We must not fail!

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CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS OF THE CATHOLIC RADIO 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. That responsibility rests upon the National Council of Catholic Men. . . .

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 country-men. 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 work 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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