

Faherty, William B.

ADPO616

What a Single Girl can do for Christ



by
W. B. FAHERTY
S. J.

A QUEEN'S WORK
PAMPHLET

What a
SINGLE GIRL
Can Do for
CHRIST

by

WILLIAM B. FAHERTY, S.J.

THE QUEEN'S WORK

3115 So. Grand Blvd.

St. Louis 18, Missouri



Imprimi potest:

Daniel H. Conway, S.J.

Provincial, Missouri Province

Imprimatur:

✠ Joseph E. Ritter

Archbishop of St. Louis

September 7, 1955

ANY FINANCIAL PROFIT *made by*
The Queen's Work will be used for
the advancement of the Sodality
Movement and the cause of Catho-
lic Action.

Copyright 1956

THE QUEEN'S WORK

Declassified

WHAT A SINGLE GIRL CAN DO FOR CHRIST

By William B. Faherty, S.J.

WHEN I first heard the expression: 'The only difference between a married and an unmarried woman is a husband,' I thought the author was trying to be flippant."

The priest paused a moment as John Tamburell threw a fresh pine log on the fire. Outside Timberlodge, and the ski chapel which adjoined it, a powder-sugar snow sifted down from the Continental Divide. Skiing had been good that day, but members of the Cathedral Young People's Club expected even better snow conditions the next day. Tired, but relaxed, they relished the possibility of sitting around the congenial fire and listening to Father Danforth. His talks were becoming a ritual.

"The full pressure of current advertising," the priest continued, "tries to convince us that some facial application, or odoriferous concoction means glamor and thus romance. 'She's lovely, she's engaged, she uses——,' has been pointed out as the most unabashed example.

"Yet the truth often shows us that some attractive women remain unmarried while their less glamorous sisters change their names."

The girls in the audience sat attentive but silent. It was Jim Langton who broke in: "Three of the least glamorous girls in my graduating class at Cathedral High were married before the summer was out. While of the two most popular, one did not marry until she was 28 and the other's a Maryknoller in Hawaii." A faint touch of nostalgia colored Jim's last remark.

"So that's why you're still a bachelor?" John suggested.

"And by the way, Jim," asked June Hiatt, the first girl to break the silence, "how old does that make you?"

The group around the fire chuckled quietly and relaxed in the warmth and the resinous aroma of the burning pine logs.

"Some young women don't marry because of the limited number of young men they meet in their small community," the priest continued; "yet others with even fewer possibilities, find a husband.

"No, there is little explanation for the strange flights of cupid's arrows."

John passed around warm glasses of Tyrolean wine—another skier's ritual.

"The hard fact faces us in today's world," the priest continued, "that many people will remain unmarried. And this in spite of the Church's insistence on the high dignity of the married state, and our efforts such as this ski club to bring our young people together."

"Just last week, Father, in my sociology class," Marguerite Blake broke in, "we studied the statistics on the unmarried in this country. I think I can recall them."

"By all means, Marguerite," the priest encouraged, as all nodded agreement.

"Seven million, I believe—" she said, "—yes, 7 million Americans over 30 are unmarried. Further, there are 2½ million more women than men over 14 years of age. The number of unmarried women in America seems destined to rise, the professor told us."

"Thank you, Marguerite," the priest went on. "I'm sure all of you realize this rise in the number of unmarried women is not entirely good. In some instances, of course, it can be providential, as the Holy Father suggested. But by and large it opens many problems.

HOPE SPRINGS

"The unmarried generally fall into two groups," he resumed. "Those who have abandoned hope of trying the challenging but uncharted ski run of matrimony and those who definitely have not.

"Though these remarks are mainly intended for the first group, here's a brief word for the latter.

"No woman should deceive herself. If her chances of marriage are about equal to a first-year skier's chance of beating Andrea Mead Lawrence in the slalom, she should pray for the humility to reconcile herself to the unmarried state. She should learn to live in it. Wishful thinking will get her nowhere.

“If some chances still remain, a young woman could ask herself a few questions.

“First and foremost, is she a good conversationalist? Once in my Sodality I had an outstanding officer—bright, spirited, cooperative, intelligent, virtuous, good looking. The boys danced but once with her, then looked elsewhere.

“‘And why?’ I asked them. They all remarked on their difficulty of striking up a conversation with her.

“Secondly, a girl should ask herself: ‘Am I a good dancing partner?’ Arthur Murray may not have the answer to all problems, but he definitely can help some people.

“Last year an outstanding married couple addressed my nurses’ Sodality on preparation for marriage. The wife wondered if any had thought of enrolling in a charm course. ‘All could profit by this move,’ she insisted. She asked if they really knew what clothes best suited them. Perhaps an individual’s hair-do may look like a cross between the wig of President John Adams and an inverted floor mop.”

“I bet her hair looked that bad,” broke in June.

The priest chuckled a denial, and then continued. “I do not want to seem to reverse my earlier denial of the ‘charm equals marriage’ point of view. Advertising oversells external charm, but it still can help.

“Beauty may not be possible for every young woman. But an attractive presence is as open to everyone as the ski hill.

“Sometimes, too, girls simply do not follow the smarter social course. Long association with a cluster of girls, for instance, may cause one to stick to the ‘security’ of the group.

“Few boys will venture alone to four girls sitting together in the corner at a dance and single out one. Yet those same girls will complain next day that the boys simply would not ask them to dance.

“Why is it so easy to meet people while skiing? It is not only the friendly atmosphere that prevails, but the simple mechanical fact that the T-bar lift goes best with a pair of riders. Unless you have a partner already, you will be thrown with new skiers regularly.

“Big-city girls are quite often a little more sure of themselves socially, a little more ‘chic’ perhaps than their little-city cousins. They are, however, sometimes less efficient in those skills which keep the bills down. Too many girls simply cannot manage a household. They are nice companions on a date but hardly the life partner with whom to undertake the building of a home and family. And these latter considerations loom large as the Rockies to a young man in his mid-twenties and anxious for marriage.

“And let’s remember no real contradiction exists between social acceptability and the housewifely virtues.”

The priest paused, expecting comment. The girls were a little chastened, and the boys held back the kidding in which many were prone to indulge.

TRY A NEW SKI TRAIL

A card game noiselessly broke up in the adjoining room. The foursome joined the intent group at the fire, reassuring the priest who had begun to fear that the once informal discussion might be changing into a dull monologue.

“A little less worry about finding ‘the right man’,” Father Danforth resumed, “should be joined with a little more concern about making herself the right kind of young woman. Then that ‘right man’ will find her more easily.

“Sometimes, too, wrong attitudes hold young women back from marriage. Too many cling to the ancestral home and mother’s cooking far too long! Breaking away for two or three years after college or in their early twenties might help some girls reach emotional maturity at a reasonable age.

“Some, however, don’t reach it until their thirties. They become engaged unofficially many times but fear always retards them. They never get over some girlhood fright.

“They’re like those beginning skiers who think the T-bar is a pre-historic sabre-tooth tiger ready to devour them and so spend all day walking up and gliding down the beginners’ slope.

“Then, too, some otherwise well-educated young women fail to attain a complete view of marriage. They seem to look upon it as a prolonged afternoon tea or an evening at the Top-of-the-Mark. They want to have a husband without being a wife.

“Thank God, such attitudes are on the decline. Far more girls simply have not encountered the right young fellow.

“If a young woman finds no desirable companion among her present associates, why doesn't she seek a new place of employment? or join a new club? or take a course at a local college or university?—always a source of intellectual stimulation and new companions—or move to a new residence?—especially out here in the West where the men outnumber the the women.

“Why, in this little parish served by our ski chapel we have no young women of marriageable age—and four young men—two ski instructors and two ranchers.”

As usual Jim Langton was the man with examples at his fingertips. “Do you remember Conat? He was transferred to Cheyenne where he met a girl who had just moved in from Chicago. Both of them had about given up. John and I drove up to Wyoming for the wedding.”

At the mention of his name John Tamburell offered a suggestion. “Marguerite looks as if she has more sociological statistics in that adding machine mind of hers.”

"No one who works in the city assessor's office should berate adding machines or adding-machine minds," Marguerite shot back at John. And then pleadingly to the group, "We did have an interesting section on population statistics in last week's chapter."

Without waiting for an answer, she confidently went on. "In the age group 18 to 35 men outnumber the women in the small towns and country places, since there are so few jobs for girls. The reverse is true in the city, however, because of the heavy influx of these girls from the small towns.

"The only factor which lessens this great disparity in sex ratio is the immigrant. Immigrants are mostly unmarried men and they go to the urban centers. A heavy percentage of immigrants today comes from the eastern part of Europe, very many of whom are Catholic.

"Thus an American girl living in a large city may well marry a newcomer or a first generation American with the name of Boleslaus or Alexander."

"Betty Murphy went to Pittsburgh and married a Ukrainian fellow in a church of an Eastern rite." The voice was Jim Langton's. "It was a most interesting ceremony. I had never attended a Ukrainian Mass before."

"Do you make a habit of attending weddings everywhere, Jim?" Marguerite came back. And then turning to the rest, "By the way, shouldn't we let Father get in a few words again?"

"Thank you, Marguerite," the priest said softly, "after all, you're our sociological statistician, and Jim reminds me of the author of a spiritual guide who constantly confirms his message by 'sundry examples.'

"So often a priest meets young women who cannot seem to find the right young men. And Young Prince Valiants still trying to find their Aleta of the Misty Isles. If only they could meet. . . .

"But the main thread of this discussion has gotten a little tangled. My purpose was not so much to renew hope in those who feel their chances are low. Rather it was to counsel those who have freely chosen the single state or who have reconciled themselves to it and wish to find a sense of well-being as they serve God therein.

LOOKING OVER THE TRAIL

"When you get to the top of the skitow, you look over the possible runs you might take. Right below the sun-deck, Bradford's Bash drops sharply and directly to the bottom of the tow. At a right angle to this is Monahan's Mile, as most of you experienced skiers know, a much more intriguing but not too difficult run. And, lastly, swinging in a wide arc through the woods is the pleasant but not too challenging, and sometimes lonely Meandering Molly."

The group relaxed willingly, as the conversation changed to a conference.

"I've often thought," continued Father Danforth, "that these three ski-runs are like the three vocations in life: Bradford's is the sharp steep course of the religious life; Monahan's the more in-and-out, up-and-down married state; and the Molly somewhat similar to the more placid but often less interesting single state.

"Before they go down Monahan's, most people take a look at Bradford's. Now many girls who hoped for a partner to ski with down Monahan's, but must reluctantly try the Molly, might ask themselves again: 'Why didn't I try Bradford's Bash in the first place?'

"Yes, when a girl has finally come to decide that the married state has eluded her grasp, she might look back for a moment and explore her previous attitude toward the religious life.

"The 10 or 12 years which intervened since high school might have changed certain factors which made her put aside the idea of a religious vocation at that time. Perhaps her health is better. Perhaps a dependent relative has departed. Perhaps she did not have a clear-cut notion of the religious life in the first place. Or maybe she did not know of the wide variety of sisterhoods and the many types of work possible in a congregation.

"If she still decides that the religious life is not for her, then she should accept fully the single state before her. Sighing for another state means only frustration, 'nerves,' and constant discontent. She should recognize the others as good states,

but not for her. She should acknowledge not only their joys, but their heartbreaks, too.

“When she starts skiing down the Molly, she must not try to cross through the spruce underbrush and the deep snow to another run; she should not indulge in wistful consideration of how nice it would be on Monahan’s or the Bash. The Molly is her run, and she should make the most of it.”

MARKED BY THE MAKER

Father Danforth paused a long time. Only the crackle of burning logs broke the silence as the thoughts on the “Meandering Molly” pressed their way home.

“Would any of you admit you could be happy living in a region where skiing was not possible?” Father Danforth asked, but did not wait for an answer which was not necessary.

“Just as it is the nature of a skier to ski; so it is the nature of the creature to want to fill the role the Creator designed for him. Doing the will of God suits a person as a ski boot fits a ski-binding, as a pine cone fits a pine tree. Perhaps the born skier, hyperbole or not, is inclined to think there is no happiness for the skier away from the ski area. Certainly there is no real happiness for the creature without a feeling that he is doing God’s will, that he is accepting God’s call in life. It is this realization—whether you accept the ‘born-skier’ notion or not—and not a mere immersion in activities, that is the foundation of a sense of well-being for the unmarried woman.

“Religious and the married see their vocation clearly. The unmarried, unfortunately, rarely get that feeling of having a call from God. They think life and life’s purpose have by-passed them. Too often they waste time in self-pity.

“True, the vocation of the unmarried lacks some clear-cut qualities of the other two. The Holy Father himself indicated that it was a mysterious vocation.

“I memorized his exact words on the subject: ‘The young Catholic girl, who remains unmarried perforce, trusting nonetheless the providence of our Heavenly Father, recognizes in the vicissitudes of life the call of the Master. . . . In the exclusion of Matrimony she recognizes her vocation.’

“The vicissitudes of life, the little unexpected changes, the unpredictable ups-and-downs, the missed train connection, the casual visit of an inspiring person—it is through these things that God speaks, rather than through lightning and thunder and angelic handwriting on marble walls.

“As the Holy Father’s messages piled one on another, the negative, almost reluctant, aspect of this first message gave way to a more complete picture in his approval of the lay institutes. The culminating touch came in his masterful encyclical, *Sacra Virginitas*.

“A vast apostolate lay challenging, beyond the possibility of those in the religious and married states. The number of unmarried women mounted daily. The

Holy Father saw in the juxtaposition of these two facts the Hand of Divine Providence.

“Most women look for security to a man with whom they will walk to the altar. The unmarried can establish their own sense of security in recognizing the call of a loving Master who dwells on that altar.”

No one broke the silence as Father Danforth paused momentarily. And tired though they were, no one fell asleep.

“It may be relatively easy for the individual unmarried woman to become aware of her vocation. She may know she is doing God’s will. Too frequently, however, she is not helped by those around her. Her married friends try their tactful best to conceal their feelings that she did not quite measure up to the demands of catching a husband. If she is an outstanding Catholic, religious often cannot hide their insistence that ‘she should be in the convent.’

“This last attitude hurts deeply when the young woman has deliberately chosen the unmarried state to do a specific work which only unmarried lay folk can do.

“It may be well to remember that though the various states in life can be classified as good, better, best, it may be preferable for an individual to excel in the good than to be mediocre in the best. Every priest recognizes the superior virtue of individuals in his flock. That superior virtue does not necessarily mean they

would have made good priests, brothers, or sisters.

“When people once come to recognize the dignity of the vocation of the unmarried, another desired result may come. Young women may get over the ‘marriage-at-any-cost’ attitude, which prompts them to try *any* marriage rather than remain single.

“Then, too, when a young woman has seen her vocation in the single state, she might think about joining a lay institute. Our Holy Father has given repeated approval and encouragement to these organizations in recent years. Many a young woman can better work out her salvation as a member of such a group.

THE VALUE OF VIRGINITY

“Even if a sense of the single vocation might come easily to many young women, an appreciation of virginity is no easy task in these days. The entire outlook of modern society works against such an appreciation.

“In the past virginity was honored, while sexual lapses on the part of women were reasons for severe reproach. Modern secularist society, however, generally accepts the fact that an occasional ‘career girl’ will take ‘free love’ where she can find it, while it hardly conceives of the possibility of a happy, satisfying life for the virgin.

“At best virginity is thought of as a deprivation of natural function, a failure of life. The virgin is on an abandoned

side road at least, if not on a dead-end street. An avalanche of writings by would-be psychologists asserts that a virginal life is abnormal, unhealthy, certain to lead to harmful frustrations.

“Quite naturally it is hard to escape the attitude prevailing in our environment. Yet counteract it we must, if we want to think as Christ thought. . . .”

The mood of Father Danforth and his hearers grew more contemplative.

“Virginity, we must remember first,” he took up again, “is not an *antinatural* life; it is a *supernatural* life. It requires the help of God to be pursued successfully. Its supernatural nature, however, does not make it easy. The Church has never attempted to deceive itself or its members on that score—or any score. ‘Virginity is a difficult virtue’ are the Holy Father’s own straight-hitting words. Difficult, yes, but glorious, as he hastens to tell us.

“A careful reading of the Holy Father’s letter to the whole Church on this virtue shows us that it is not any type of virginity which soars high among states in life. It must be virginity joined with dedication to God. Some people, the Holy Father recalls, can attempt a life of virginity for inferior purposes, such as exaggerated self-interest or wrong notions of the married state.

“True Christian virginity, as the Pope termed it, has for its primary purpose to aim only at the divine, to turn toward God in everything, to consecrate body and soul to Him without reserve.”

The priest paused a long time as his words dug deep as spruce roots in the souls of his hearers.

“The virgin is like a chalice set aside for the worship of God. Even the picture of a beautifully-wrought chalice on an ordination card will lift our minds to the sublime act of the worship of God. Similarly the mere presence of consecrated virginity in these sense-surfeited times recalls to men’s minds their destiny beyond this life.

“And if virginity is an inspiration to others, it is also, and much more, a great help toward one’s own personal sanctification. The virgin is set apart for God. She is liberated from temporal cares. She can more readily devote herself to the external apostolate of zeal and charity.

“This age of mass production, to advance a step farther, tends to reduce the person to the status of a push-button. Society has become a vast Spartan Army in which the submerged individual is merely a medium-sized helmet in the long line which forms a unit.

“In this day of mass amalgamation virginity proclaims the transcendent worth of the individual person.

“Pagan societies valued woman only insofar as she was available for man’s uses. The Christian virgin has always been a living testimony of the value of woman in herself. Thus her contribution to the uplift of all women has been tremendous. This is one of the deepest

meanings of the Holy Father's momentous phrase: 'Virginity is the triumph of civilization.'

"High up near the top of the mountains are crevices and banks of snow, like St. Mary's Glacier, which never feel the sun's rays during the entire year. They stand as symbols of untouched freshness, cooling the distant viewers during the long dry summer months by their appearance alone. So is the consecrated virgin a source of inspiration to those struggling through life's valleys below.

"Above timberline, too, bloom flowers rarely seen by men. They never form a corsage for a prom queen; they never brighten a sickroom or commemorate an anniversary. But they fulfill their destiny as creatures of God. So, it has often been pointed out, does the virgin dedicated to her Creator.

"Thus at one and the same time the virgin remains aloof from mankind, consecrated solely to God; yet by that very aloof example of dedication, she helps to lift others to the goal for which they were made.

NURTURE OR EXPLOIT

"Once she has recognized her vocation, and the high value of virginity, the unmarried woman must ask herself if she really recognizes her nature. If her answer is 'Yes,' she can proceed to the next question: 'Do I follow out the logical conclusions which stem from this recognition?'

“Many writers have offered help in this matter—Janet Kalven of Grailville, the psychiatrist Dr. Marynia Farnham, as well as Bishop Sheen, and the Holy Father.

“All of these said much the same thing, but used different terminology. Miss Kalven’s beautiful words were: ‘Woman is interested in persons and in bringing persons to God.’ Dr. Farnham used the term ‘nurture,’ in opposition to the male sphere of ‘exploit.’ The Holy Father said that woman’s sphere is motherhood, which can be understood in either the physical or strictly spiritual sense. Bishop Sheen employed the term ‘sacrifice.’ ‘The unalterable fact is,’ I remember his words on television, ‘that no woman is happy unless she has someone for whom she can sacrifice herself—not in a servile way, but in the way of love.’

“When she applies this test to the work she does in life, the young woman reaches a turning point. The remunerative occupations in which women engage, fall psychologically into one of two classes: those which are mother-substitutes, and those which are not.

“The fortunate ladies in the first class are the nurses, directors of children’s plays, writers of children’s books, prefects of day nurseries, teachers, social workers, and the like. Chief among the other group are typists, saleswomen, factory workers, launderers, and waitresses. Yet in these uncreative and usually unsatisfying tasks are engaged the vast majority of America’s 20 million women workers.

“True, many women may be happier in the latter work than some of their sisters in the former area. But those are individual cases; and such happiness ordinarily stems from personal attitude, rather than from the work itself. Sometimes, too, a person employed in one of these latter occupations may find a great deal of womanly satisfaction in her work because of its participation in some challenging enterprise. The typist in the office of an influential Catholic magazine might in this way derive far more joy from her work than her sister who types records for the producer of Oneblow Meatcleavers.”

A FEW FOR INSTANCES

Now that the most serious parts of the subject were passed, Father Danforth began to revert to the more relaxed manner of the earlier part of the evening.

“Lay people have undertaken a number of projects in recent years with sensational good results. To mention one with which we are familiar, you recall the unforgettable story of Friendship House which we heard last year. I, myself, visited Grailville two summers ago, just before several lay women embarked for an East African Mission.

“More and more individuals are looking to such organized projects as a temporary or a lifetime apostolate.

“Such projects naturally appeal to a few. Most young women, however, have to go through life in less select ventures.

"If their present occupation fails to satisfy their psychological needs and religious ideals, some might transfer at the first possible opportunity to those occupations which are mother-substitutes, even if it means financial loss.

"I'm sure some of you have friends who have done just this." Father Danforth's inflection welcomed examples.

"Monica Braun is one," broke in Alice Weber, who had hitherto sat silently in the corner. "Monica had the responsibility of supporting her mother until she was almost thirty. Only then did she have an opportunity to begin nurses' training at St. John's. She's like a big sister to all the students there, and getting along splendidly."

"I think all of us know Monica," Father Danforth came back. "She certainly is a first-rate example of what I was suggesting.

"Not too many young women, however, can change their type of work. But many can change to a more satisfying firm. I recall a young lady who detested her job in a loan shark office. She found similar work in a credit union and became a most enthusiastic apostle of the movement in all the parishes in the city."

"During the retreat at El Pomar one year," Marguerite Blake joined in, "a friend of mine, Gertrude Roget, decided to give up her high-paying position as secretary of a prominent divorce lawyer. She was too immersed in sordid divorce details.

“It took her a long while to find a position she liked. And she took a big drop in pay. But this new lawyer she works for at least has some ideals, even if he doesn’t have many cases.”

“Most women,” Father Danforth admitted, “are not as fortunate as Gertrude or the girl I mentioned. A few might reappraise the work they are doing and find new possibilities of positive good influence therein. But most must look to creatively purposeful use of their leisure time. Some give a night or two a week to the furthering of an apostolic venture.

“The last evening I visited the offices of the Sacred Heart Radio and Television Program, 25 volunteer helpers were handling the vast correspondence connected with this world-wide venture. Actually the work they do is the same humdrum work they do during the day. But by spending only two hours once a week in this folding and mailing bee, these women feel the thrill of participating in a gigantic project for the spread of the Faith.”

“Most of you know Celina Murrow,” Alice interposed. “In her free time she edits the random notes of a missionary in the Marshalls. Then she mimeographs them and sends the bulletin to all his friends and mission supporters.”

“Speaking of the missionaries,” June Hiatt broke in, “our little group adopted a missionary among the Maya Indians in Central America. We sponsor an occa-

sional benefit for his mission; and his letters in turn lift us out of our walled-in outlook and make us feel a part of something big."

"I've often wondered, Father," broke in Alice Weber again, "why we can't have an organization like the Viewmont Christian Church's Professional and Business Women's Society. It is organizationally 'tops.' All our parish societies either omit the unmarried women or lump them into some other group in which they feel like a third skier on a T-bar."

"The very name adds something, it seems to me," Father Danforth agreed. "Cathedral Parish Professional and Business Women's Society—it has a distinctive and challenging note.

"Such a society could concentrate on community leadership—an area impossible for married women with young children. It needs the training the professional and business woman has.

"How often an organization for social welfare will include several outstanding non-Catholic women. I can think of the community organizations with which I am personally familiar—the migrant labor council, the committee for improving local government, the council on human relations—it is always the same one outstanding lady who is our lone Catholic female participant.

"Yet local Catholic organizations, made up principally of zealous but preoccupied married ladies, are always passing resolu-

tions for action along these particular lines.

“I’m sure it is an over-simplification, but sometimes it looks as if our women’s societies meet at times when only married women can attend; and make resolutions which only the unmarried can possibly carry out.

“Leadership in labor unions and business associations, too, beckons the clear-thinking, well-trained Catholic unmarried women.

“Lastly, the area of politics offers women an opportunity for leadership hardly known since the days of Blanche of Castile and Eleanor of Aquitaine, the great queens of the Middle Ages.

“Our Holy Father has spoken of the providential presence of these unmarried women, and of the variety of good works they could do. We have to get the women to the works—or the works to the women.”

FROM PROJECTS TO PERSONS

Swerving his thoughts down a new path, Father Danforth continued: “Let’s turn a moment from projects to persons. Since it is woman’s nature to be concerned with persons rather than with things, a vast field lies open among the neglected children in the orphanages of our cities.

“True, the bona fide orphan is a rarity. These rarities are more fortunate, however, than their fellows, the unwanted youngsters of broken families. Here stands an opportunity and a challenge.

“These children are recipients of a great amount of organized good will. Lodges will take them to football games, circuses, and baseball parks. Popcorn will overflow many a paper bag. Attendance prizes will abound. The youngsters will shout and cheer and thank the kind organizers of the trip—and remain lonely.

“Such efforts are fine. But by themselves the results hardly equate the effort, except for the religious or lay custodians of the home who have a few hours respite.

“What these children need is not more institutionalized charity—remember, they live in institutions—but more personal interest.

“They need someone to call them by their name, to share their interests, to help them through the difficult period of growing up, to advise them in all problems, to guide their transition from the ordered institution to the disordered world. They need to mature in the shade of a strong spruce.

These children can be God’s gift to the love-hungry victim of the circumstance that she is unmarried.

“Most orphanages have an outing day and a visiting day once a month. Two days in thirty can never be a burden. And soon life has new meaning, because someone depends on the hitherto unwanted single woman.

“Perhaps, you believe, your budget forbids this venture. Good—that your budget is low. Institutionalized children receive

too much miscellaneous 'stuff'—trinkets and candy—from people beyond the walls of the orphanage. They can easily derive a false picture of the prosperity of the average family outside."

Father Danforth was preaching now. "It is a valuable lesson for them to learn that most families are on a long hard cross-country jaunt, not coasting down a pleasant hill. Let them share a poor day with you. Let them help with the meager fare; let them set the clinking tableware; let them wash dishes while you dry. It will be a \$64 lesson.

"*'All well and good,'* I know many of you are thinking. *'But how does one go about "big-sistering" an orphan?'*

"Now I don't want to tell institutions to institutionalize something else. But the meeting of 'orphans' and prospective 'big-sisters' could be simplified by establishing certain procedures and announcing them in the diocesan paper.

"A general visiting day could be set up during which young women anxious to participate (and approved by their pastor for this project) could mingle freely with the children during their play periods. Several young women could take a group of orphans on a picnic to the park. In this way, spontaneous friendships might arise—the prelude to a successful big-sister relationship.

"One young woman musician gives her free time to all the youngsters rather than to a specific individual. She trains

the children in music and handles all the musical chores connected with the annual orphanage play. A full life? Hers is overflowing. Some young women might organize a charm course for orphan youngsters.

“A teacher in a high school that is a real Manhattan Island of races began to investigate scholarship possibilities of her more outstanding minority group students. She has become a refreshing inspiration to otherwise easily discouraged youngsters.

“Hobbies form another source of satisfaction. One woman, who sews beautifully, prepares vestments for the missions—not simply routine garments, but works of art. Another supplies a whole mission with rosaries. But having the hobby is not enough. She should encourage others to pursue the hobby. She should teach it to the young.

“Folk singing became the interest of one unmarried woman. She has classes at the library for little children, specializing in songs of their respective national backgrounds, but also inculcating an appreciation of the culture of other groups.

“Another woman took a course in hat-making in the Adult Educational Program. She, in turn, began a class at the Holy Spirit Youth Center. Her best pupil proved to be a little Mexican boy. At the annual bazaar of the parish, she has organized a hat re-making booth. The ladies bring their discarded glories of the past, and for a slight fee, she removes last year's frills and adds a few new ones.

“Others have turned to ceramics, textiles, flower-making, and numbers of similar hobbies. Here is enjoyment and life enrichment. Anyone can ask herself: ‘Have I a hidden talent?’

“Somehow or other it seems that the people who think of these things are constantly invited to participate in other projects; while those who have loads of time and little to do, get no invitations.

“There is the great need, let me repeat, to bring the work to those who have time, or to bring them to the projects.

HELPFUL HINTS AS TO HOW

“It would be a half-done work to conclude this discussion on what to do, without a little, on how to do it. First a few natural ‘Hows’—and then the supernatural.

“Priests are repeatedly telling young women: Don’t go out with divorced men! Don’t go out with divorced men! Don’t—

“Unmarried women who have reconciled themselves to their state—as well as those who freely chose it—insist with equal vehemence: ‘Be very careful of the men you meet.’

“One after another single woman will speak of the man she dates in some such way: ‘He thinks he is doing you a favor,’ even when that favor consists principally of suggesting ventures into the unexplored area of sex.

“All this goes on, while the biological urge within the young woman grows stronger.

“The total adds up to the wise realization that she should bend over backward to be careful. Social life with such men is simply avalanche territory—out of bounds for sensible people.

“She should seek association with women similarly situated and similarly *ideal-conscious*. She can develop an inner sanctum of sympathy with her fellow employees, while still being careful not to cross the bridge between business and social dealings with her married employer, or other male business associates.

“At the same time she should avoid staying in the same tracks—choosing the same place at table, ordering the same food, arriving at exactly the same moment. She should vary her routine regularly. She should stay mentally alert.

“Next, what spiritual helps are recommended? The unmarried lay woman, like the priest and nun, needs an intense, integrated spiritual life. An amalgamation of nine-day devotion is not enough. She must follow the systematic approach to God of one of the great religious founders.

“Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, has repeatedly insisted on this. Just the other day, for instance, I was instructing my nurse Sodalists on his Apostolic Constitution, *Bis Saeculari*. His very words apply here. He recommends that single persons with their specific vocation need ‘training according to the ascetic norms and exercises of piety’ proposed as, for example, in the Rules of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, ‘so that they can

be held up as models to their companions of Christian life and apostolic endeavor.'

"We who live in high altitudes are more conscious than our sea-level friends of the need of oxygen. And skiers who romp around above timberline are even more conscious of this.

"So the young woman following her vocation in the lay state must be doubly aware of the need of daily mental prayer—the oxygen of our spiritual breathing. A few minutes mental prayer every day is better than a long period once a week, or an even longer period once a month.

"I hardly need insist on Holy Mass, attended daily if at all possible, with the missal in evidence and use. Some follow the fine practice of using the prayers of the Mass for a few minutes of end-of-the-day meditation the evening before.

"Spiritual direction should be sought both individually and in groups which are forming in various dioceses under the guidance of a trained spiritual counselor. These groups of single women function in a way somewhat similar to the Cana Conferences for married couples. They should be thought of as an ordinary part of the spiritual progress of single persons, and not simply for those with specific 'problems.'

"And lastly the annual closed retreat must never be omitted.

“So the full life for the unmarried woman will combine spiritual helps and natural means, a sense of vocation, an appreciation of virginity, and a work or hobby which will allow her to dedicate herself to others, and to obtain the feeling of being needed by someone.

“It is a way that means an interesting rather than a dull life, a purposeful rather than a frustrated one. It can be a path to sanctity.”

DYING EMBERS

The fire was a fading sunset of the earlier blaze. The group sat quietly, still savoring the words of Father Danforth. They were too peaceful, too contented, almost too tired to move.

It was John Tamburell, practical president of the club, who broke the spell. “Well, I guess that’s ‘taps’ for tonight, Father. The talk was splendid.”

And then as expressions of thanks tumbled over each other, like mountain waters after an early thaw, the group began to leave. The voice of Johnny came again, “We’ll be back for the eight c’clock Mass tomorrow, Father. Jim and I will serve.”

“Good night,” were Father Danforth’s final words. “God bless you, and safe skiing always.”

790088

THE QUEEN'S WORK
3115 South Grand Boulevard
St. Louis 18, Missouri

**PRINTED
IN
U.S.A.**