

Prayers.

Rodney Shaghnessy, an alumnus, lost his father recently. Second requests for prayers for their sick mothers have come from Charlie O'Connell and the Grinager boys, four of whom have been students at Notre Dame. A Student asks prayers for the success of an operation which he is to undergo next week. Three sick persons and three special intentions are recommended.

Novena for Vocations.

Although the word vocation refers to any state of life, custom has restricted its use somewhat to the priesthood and the religious life. During the Novena for Vocations we pray primarily for guidance in the choice of a state of life and grace to fulfill our choice, and secondarily for the needs of the Church.

What are the needs of the Church? Our Lord said to His disciples on one occasion: "Behold the fields white for the harvest. Pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest that He send forth laborers into the harvest."

Although the obligation of spreading the faith belongs to all, whether lay or cleric, the burden of the work must always fall upon those whom God has chosen and set apart "for the ministry of His word." The priesthood is a consecrated life; the priest is the minister of the Sacraments, the principal channels through which grace flows to the individual soul: it is his privilege to communicate to the faithful the abundant fruits of the Redemption. "No man putting his hand to the plow and turning back is worthy of Me," said Our Blessed Lord; and the priest must lead a life apart from the pleasures of the world. In this he has three motives, which follow in the order named: 1. the honor and glory of God; 2. the salvation of his own soul; 3. the good of his neighbor.

Without the priesthood this would be a desolate world. Can you conceive the depths of wickedness to which the world would descend were it not for the Mass and the Sacraments? What would Notre Dame be, for instance, without the Blessed Sacrament? You have only to look about you for the moral force outside the Catholic Church opposed to the dishonesty and licentiousness of the present age to see how necessary is the priesthood.

The priesthood is of divine institution. Christ ordained the Apostles to say Mass when they made their First Communion at the Last Supper: He added these words: "Do this in commemoration of Me." He ordained them to hear confessions when He said, after His resurrection: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

While there has been a great deal of controversy at one time or another about what constitutes a "vocation," or a call to the priestly life, Pope Pius X gave us an assurance in his approval of Pere LaHitton's book on vocation that no one need wait for any internal call from the Holy Ghost if he has the necessary requisites for this state. These requisites are three: 1. Physical and mental fitness, or the mind and body to undertake the studies and the life necessary; 2. moral fitness, or a reasonable assurance of avoidance of mortal sin; 3. the desire to be a priest. When these requisites are present, the call of the bishop to ordination is sufficient evidence of the will of God in the matter.

In the Religious Survey for 1924-25 on pages 81-84 you will find a number of reasons why students have lost the idea of studying for the priesthood. Some of these are perfectly valid reasons; some of the others may be based on misconceptions. Some of the latter will be treated in succeeding numbers of the Bulletin. The editor will be glad to receive, in addition, questions on vocation to be answered during these days.