

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin

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An Answer For Joe.

A letter of request has come to the Prefect of Religion from a Notre Dame naval student. The letter was prompted by a circular sent to the Catholics in the V-12 unit announcing an informal talk on the saints. To attract the men to the talk, a few remarks were made about the saints. One line read: "The saints were lovable, approachable people." And then to sum their qualities in G.I. language, it was said that the saints were "real Joes."

Now the request comes, "Please define a 'real Joe'." When an immediate answer did not come through the BULLETIN, because of an already planned schedule, a second letter was received saying, "Don't chicken out. You started it. What is a 'real Joe'?" During the necessary delay ammunition was being stored up for this article. Here it comes.

Our Blessed Lord Himself seems to have foreseen such a question. So He gave us a picture of a "real Joe." The essential quality of this man is charitableness towards his neighbor. The story Christ told to illustrate His point is rather vivid. It concerns a man who came before the Judgment Seat of God. Christ informed him that he saved his soul: "Receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then Christ told this just man, as Scripture call him, WHY he deserved Heaven: "When I was thirsty you gave me to drink, hungry you fed me, naked you clothed me." Charity, charity, charity.

The good fellow was flabbergasted. He thought Our Lord had made a mistake. Imagine his honesty. Here he had Heaven in his hands, and he questions the correctness of Christ's judgment. It seems to him a mistake had been made. He very humbly tells Christ that he cannot recall ever administering kindness to Him. Then Christ set down the second quality of a "real Joe," namely, he does every thing for Christ's sake, to please Him: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to Me."

Briefly, the key to Heaven has two ends. At one is acts of charity, at the other is the "For the love of Our Lord." Every saint had to possess that key. This war has brought many G.I. Joes to Heaven. Some are there because they died trying to bring back a wounded man under fire, all for the love of Christ. Heaven is certainly filled with mothers, because of the many sacrifices they made for their children, because they felt Christ wanted it that way.

Many men are called "real Joes," but they will never get to Heaven, not with the life of sin they are leading. The pickup has her "real Joes," those men, young and old, who spend their money foolishly on her and perhaps satisfy her sexual desires. The dissolute young fellow considers a "real Joe" any companion who has a record of promiscuity, who takes his liquor regularly and plentifully in the atmosphere of indecent conversation. A sixty second trip into hell is helpful in correcting their false notions.

So if you are looking for a description of a real man, don't listen to the Devil's bosom friends. Go to Christ.

In closing, be a "real Joe" according to the rules set down by Our Lord. And don't forget the fellow who sleeps in the sack below you, he's your neighbor, and so is the fellow next door, and your girl, and your kid brother and the C.O. Kindness, thoughtfulness, patience and helpfulness directed toward them is your ticket to Heaven. And when you get there, don't be surprised if Christ calls you "Joe."

PRAYERS: (deceased) Father Ambrose Smith, O.P., brother of Father George Smith, O.P.
(Engineering Dept.)