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Are You Well Informed?  
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One day Pope St. Pius X, while chatting with some Cardinals, asked what they thought was most necessary for the salvation of society. They gave various answers: more schools, more churches, more priests -- all wrong. "The most necessary element is to have in each parish," replied the saint, "a group of enlightened laymen, virtuous, resolute, and true apostles." At the time, he stood on the threshold of the 20th Century. His words have been repeated by every pope since his day.

Observe the tactics of Communists. Invariably they first seek to make converts of the intellectuals, because one intellectual is worth more to Communism than ten manual laborers. It is the intellectual who will carry the seeds of Communism into circles of influence. Communists hold intellectuals in both fear and reverence; and wherever it has failed to convert the intellectuals of a country, it has sought to exterminate them.

Don't get the idea that in the eyes of God the laborer, or peasant, is inferior to the intellectual. But as far as the apostolate is concerned, the more enlightened the Catholic layman is, the deeper his grasp of Catholic theology, the fuller his participation in the intellectual as well as the liturgical life of the Church, the more effective will he be as a Christian voice in the contemporary world. The laborer is important in the eyes of God, all right; but his influence on others is obviously less.

You belong to the favored few who have been handed the opportunity of a Catholic university education. To those who have been given much -- much is expected. The Gospel tells of the master giving five talents to one servant, and later exacting an account of the five talents. Hence, where else can the Church turn for such enlightened laymen if not to you? Remember: your opportunities also beget obligations.

But I lead a good life; isn't that enough? Isn't my good example something?

Yes, it's something. But to keep one's self unspotted from the world is a mere negative ideal, and though necessary is not enough for the lay apostle. Why? Because the job of the Church, and of Christianity is to transform the world in order to redeem it. And the Church needs lay apostles precisely because they are living in the world. You are all called to be apostles. And the vocation of the lay apostle is to transform, not some imaginary world in which he might prefer to live, but the real world in which he finds himself in this 20th Century.

You do this best by becoming an intelligent Catholic, alive to your Catholic religion, and alive to the world in which you live. This is the kind of layman the saint, Pius X, maintained, is the greatest need of the Church.

Are you able to enunciate the Catholic position on current problems? Can you answer the religious queries of your non-Catholic neighbors? Do you take the pains to search out an answer when you are requested to do so?

In Dillon, Howard, and Cavanaugh halls there are pamphlet racks stuffed with all sorts of clear, quick treatments of the Church's position and teaching on numerous topics of the hour. Be sure you make use of the literature at your disposal. You may not be a walking encyclopedia; but you can always get the correct information to the inquirer. Never mind the costs -- take whatever you need as an apostle. Take whatever you need to keep well informed. Send a pamphlet to whoever needs one.