

Religious Bulletin
January 19, 1931

Your Perplexed Pastor.

"I am an average priest, a pastor, a much misunderstood individual. People suspect me of being a little more than human, but continue to invite me to eat their dinners and drink their wine. If I partake of the latter, they call me a 'dear' and a 'good fellow.' If I refuse, they claim to be edified.

"They expect me to have no faults, but keep on searching for them, and having discovered a few -- OH, BOY! When I have not prepared my sermon and my mind is cloudy and my ideas chaotic, they say I am too deep; but when I have labored zealously and memorized my sermon, I am artificial. When through 'money talks' I meet my parish obligations, I am a grafter; but when I do not plead for money and the parish goes into debt, I am a poor business man.

"When my liver is out of order and I am physically ill and mentally tired, they say I look pious and saintly. When I am well and bubbling over with zeal, I am frivolous. They think I should love everyone in the parish, and when I make a fairly good bluff at doing so they call me a hypocrite; but when I admit that there are some I am not crazy about they call me a snob. My wealthy parishioners find fault with me if I do not call on them; the poor ones, if I do.

"Some people, in my presence pretend to be keenly interested in all things pertaining to religion. They minimize my intelligence and exaggerate their own histrionic ability. The stingy souls who contribute a very, very small proportion of their income to the support of the Church, pity me because I have such a hard time raising funds. Those who contribute generously think I have a very soft job.

"Some wonder what I do with all my time; others pity me because I have so much to do. They want me to be more of a layman and to represent them in civic and public activities; but they are forever praising Father So-and-so, who is 'so quiet and retiring.' 'He is such a holy man.' If I use forceful and catchy phrases in my sermons they say I am sensational; if I don't they will not come to hear me.

"My salary is \$50 a month, and I receive as much as \$5 for a baptism or a wedding (sometimes), and they wonder what I do with all my money. All stockbrokers think I am a millionaire; book-agents think I am easy -- tramp. Now I am, 'Red-caps, Pullman-car porters, and dining-car waiters think I am generous, but the conductor knows I am a cheap sport.

"NOW, I WANT TO TELL THE WORLD:

"That my Roman collar does not change my human nature; I am quite the same as other men.

"That I enjoy a good time as much as they, but like to choose my own kind of sport.

"That a long time ago I got sick of soft soap.

"That I have grown immune to criticism and knocks.

"That I appreciate honest praise and want no man's pity.

"That I am giving the best that is in me to my work, and believe God will reward me.

"That I ask no favors and seek only the opportunity to prove that I am a real man, and to try to be a real priest.

"Now, there are some who, if they knew who wrote this, would say: 'I'll bet he got the idea from some one else.' Well, I did." -- The Denver Register.