

University of Notre Dame Religious Bulletin

March 8, 1932

"Lead a Clean Life."—II.



LEAN IDEALS. "The nicest divorce I ever had," is the front-page characterization given by an American princess of the Paris decree that ended a month's debauch with an Egyptian. This sort of legalized prostitution kills everything fine in the heart and if it goes on unchecked at its present rate it will kill everything fine in the American family. No social scourge is more deadly than the frenzied licentious woman who has the approval of society and the law; flee her poisonous breath.

The Catholic Church holds up to us the Blessed Virgin as the ideal of pure womanhood and St. Joseph as the ideal of manly chastity. And to prove that these models are possible of imitation she lays before us the long roll of saints, men and women, who consecrated their chastity to God. To see that these models still have ardent imitators you have only to watch the file of rugged, healthy young men approaching the Communion rail each morning. You love the fight you see in a strong, clean eye. *"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."*

Clean Companionship. Gold and silver, even diamonds, lose their lustre when exposed to poisonous fumes. Your soul is more precious than any of these, and no less susceptible to tarnish. Can your mind stay clean and pure in the midst of sordid discussions, filthy stories, foul philosophy, scenes of beastly degradation of the temple of God? Can your conscience keep its fine edge when it trifles with temptation? Can you ask God to preserve your soul free from stain when you rush headlong into danger? Can your ideals remain untarnished when the books and papers and magazines you read are written with the sole purpose of selling by their appeal to the basest human instincts. *"Tell me with whom you go and I will tell you what you are."*

The Vow of Chastity. "The greatest religious influence in my life has been the vow of chastity made at the age of twelve," wrote a student on his questionnaire some years ago. Nothing could do more to set off the Catholic ideal in the midst of worldly corruption. The effect on the maker of the vow would be stimulating and refreshing; the effect on the spiritual life of Notre Dame, if such a vow were made by half, or even a third or a fourth of her students, would be beyond calculation.

All who practice the virtue might as well have the double merit of the vow. As said before, the vow should be made only for short periods at a time, and with your confessor's permission. It should include all thoughts, words, and actions contrary to purity; if made in marriage, it should include all infidelity to one's wife, in thought, word, or deed. What a guarantee of high ideals such a vow would bring to the marriage contract! What a pledge of God's blessing it would mean!

The Sacraments and Prayer. It was certainly by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that Pope Pius X opened the tabernacle for daily Communion when he did, for extraordinary means of grace are necessary to meet the extraordinary temptations of this licentious age. Only the state of grace and a right intention are necessary; hence even those whose struggle for purity meets with discouraging falls are not barred from the Holy Table. In addition to Holy Communion, you have at Notre Dame the advantage of daily adoration: close to God you can pour forth your heart to Him as you can nowhere else. Prayer and the Sacraments will give purity; and if one is not satisfied with the progress he is making in his quest of this virtue he should see a priest to find where the defect lies.

"As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was: I went to the Lord, and besought Him, and said with my whole heart: God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy . . . give me wisdom, that sitteth by Thy throne, and cast me not off from among Thy children."—*Wis., 8:21, 9:1, 4.*

"The corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things."—*Wis., 9:15.*