

RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

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THE APOSTOLATE OF COLLEGE GRADUATES



College graduates are, in the eyes of a large number of priests, "the most unco-operative people in the parish." Because of their noninvolvement in the parish apostolate, and for other reasons, college graduates are, in many ways, "the most neglected people in the Church in America." These men are daily exercised in a business-like and professional approach to problems. All things being equal, therefore, they can make a larger contribution to the Church-and-the-world apostolate.

...Thanks to the many excellent labor schools in this country, to the Young Christian Workers movement, and to such programs as the St. Joseph's Retreat League in Boston, "even the working classes" are today in a position to learn. Now some sociologists are asking how best to educate more Catholics, "even our college and university graduates." The vast majority

of them live exemplary individual and family lives, but only a slim minority give evidence of really understanding the social mission of the Church as it is theirs to carry out. They seem to forget that after our Lord had told His followers to satisfy their obligations to their Creator, He told them to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Each one should make his proportionate contribution to the well-being of the society to which he belongs.

The key word here is proportionate, i.e., proportioned to each one's talents, training and, to some extent, tastes. Many college graduates who now answer the demands of charity toward individuals and groups could do much more to serve society itself. How? By participating in a "collective, enlightened, methodical enterprise," as Pius XII suggested, they can "modify the mentality of their environment, influence the ways of thinking and acting, and obtain a reformation in the established patterns of behavior, so that not only individuals but society itself becomes what it should be according to principles of social order and Christian morality." This is the social apostolate, or social mission of the Church...

Why do so few Catholic laymen make their proportionate contribution to society? We submit here only two explanations.

First, except in the case of the saint or genius, it is morally im-

possible for an individual to change the structures of society when he works alone. The social apostolate is like "bucking city hall." The man who endeavors by himself to change, for the better, an accepted pattern of behavior runs the risk of disheartening disappointment. Frustrated in his efforts, such a man will either give up or push on. If he quits, he will be disappointed all his life, sour sometimes, even anticlerical. If he pushes on, undaunted, he may become deaf to helpful criticism. And those whom he hopes most to influence will shy away from him as a "reformer." The social mission of the Church had best be undertaken by groups -- small groups rather than large ones, for reasons that, we trust, are obvious.

N.D. Students to Spruce Up Six Institutions Saturday

About a hundred students from the University of Notre Dame and St. Mary's College will perform spring chores at six area institutions Saturday.

The collegians will wash windows, rake leaves, clean gutters and tackle a variety of jobs to spruce up the premises of the health and welfare facilities.

Student groups will work from noon to 5 p.m. at Healthwin Hospital, the Northern Indiana Children's Hospital, the Circle of Mercy Day Nursery, the Family and Children's Center, the St. Joseph County Council for Retarded Children, and the St. Joseph County Assn. for Mental Health.

The annual event, designated "Help Week" when it was inaugurated 10 years ago, is sponsored and co-ordinated by Notre Dame's Blue Circle Honor Society. Pat Whalen is chairman for Saturday's activities.

It's not too late to give your name to the Blue Circle representative whose name is on the poster on your hall bulletin board. The busses leave the circle at 12:45 p.m.

Secondly, laymen will not be adequately prepared for a mission that is supernatural in character and very, very demanding unless they live thoroughly supernatural lives with a daily program of spiritual exercises to sustain them. Laboring in this corner of the Lord's vineyard is a real vocation and must be accepted with a real sense of commitment.

Occasionally, laymen undertake some action in this area because of human experience with a situation they do not like; often, they lose interest when observable results are not immediately forthcoming: their motive power fails them. Mention the mind of the Church and the need of Catholic reading, and you find they are too busy -- although they read Time, Life and National Review every week and belong to the Book-of-the-Month Club. Mention weekly meetings with a training program and closely co-ordinated prayer-study-action plans, and they don't have time. However, many do get out one night a week for bowling. Mention spiritual direction, and they look at you as if you were anticipating a decision of the Vatican Council and wanted to make them married deacons. Mention daily mental prayer, and, like the learned men Paul met on the Areopagus, they reply: "We will hear thee about this some other time."

Small wonder, then, that there are so few teams of laymen working as partners with priests to bring the Christian message into the world of legislative assemblies, Hollywood, Broadway, editorial offices, the State Department and -- last, but not least -- the Club House.

Edward J. Stanton, S.J.
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In Your Charity

Please pray for the following. Deceased: Wayne Lippard; wife of Dr. Eugene Pyziur, formerly of the Political Science Department; grandmother of Jim Coglianese of Lyons. Ill: friend of Joe Hruschak of Lyons; sister of Jo Gerwisch of the Service Department; cousin of Tim Mulheim of Lyons; William R. Carey, '52.