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# The Waters of Science and the Oil of Faith . . .

MOST REVEREND JOHN B. GRELLINGER, D.D.

THERE ARE TIMES when a speaker profits more from an occasion than his hearers. What with the inspiration of this White Mass which has brought so many important and busy members of the medical and nursing professions together before the altar this morning, I feel that I am in this happy circumstance. Besides, I have made an unexpected friend.

When Father Bisenius did me the honor to invite me to speak to you, I felt that I should read myself somewhat at least into the medical mind. A friend lent me Sir William Osler's book of addresses given at Johns Hopkins and elsewhere to medical audiences. By such a chance happening, I discovered the delightful mind of Sir William,—a cultured and expansive mind, enriched through a wide acquaintance with the classics, an adroit mind filled with happy references to the literary heritage of the West. Corresponding to this mind was a heart, compassionate, kind, brimming over with a frothy humor at human foibles. Altogether a good spirit to have as a friend, particularly on a dark day, even though Sir Wil-

liam departed this life some forty years ago.

But as I went on reading, Scriptural quotations notwithstanding, and notwithstanding the curious advice that one should hold to some faith, however unconventional, even though "the waters of science and the oil of faith do not mix," a suspicion began to take form in my mind that Sir William was not a Christian at all, but a mere humanitarian. With that came the thought that I might speak with advantage on the difference between Humanitarianism and Christianity, which for me means Catholicism. I know, of course, from personal experience that many physicians and nurses lead admirable Christian lives. Still, the medical type on stage and screen is the scoffer with the heart of gold who often seems to be more Christian than the professed Christians around him. And surely, of all professions, those mostly concerned with the alleviation of human suffering are likely to blur the distinction. May I ask you, therefore, to breathe a prayer that this odd form of sermon by which I hope to clarify the distinction will be eternally profitable for all of us.

We begin, then, to compare two ways of life, the Humanitarian and the Christian. The focus will be

Most Reverend John B. Grellinger, D. D., Auxiliary to the Bishop of Green Bay, gave this sermon on the occasion of the White Mass at St. John's Cathedral in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on October 15, 1960.

sharper if we concentrate on the idea of holiness. Who is a saint among the Humanitarians? He is a saint who has dedicated himself completely to the service of his fellow man. You may find him in research work to which he gives himself, often at great sacrifice, so that the world will be a little wiser or more comfortable for his having passed this way. You may find him in the jungle painstakingly seeking ways to teach the natives to read so that they may enjoy the benefits of civilization. You may find him in the legislatures and other public offices the burdens of which he bears chiefly so that his life may be useful to others. Wherever he is, he is marked by a full-hearted dedication to the progress of mankind. He may at times speak of God, but it is characteristic of him to regard his service as a service, not of God, but of his fellow man. This is the Humanitarian saint.

With a vision limited largely to this earth, and with an interest centering on the elimination of the ills of the human condition, the Humanitarian makes no distinction between the good man and the saint. The good man is the saint. Holiness is ethical, and for the most part social. It is achieved by one's own powers directed towards harmonizing one's conduct with certain social standards. Realizing that such standards involve some ultimate questions, and finding no agreement among men on the ultimates, the Humanitarian takes the position that certitude on such matters is beyond human reach.

It becomes all the more urgent, therefore, that men learn to be forbearing and kind. Kindness becomes the great virtue of the Humanitarian and the Golden Rule the ultimate standard of right living: "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you."

Since the kind man is the good man, and the good man is the saint, holiness is to be measured by the depth of one's kindness. To deepen oneself in sanctity, one must have a mind cultured and penetrating enough to see through the differences which divide men from each other so that one can come to the common core of their humanity. We must be able to abstract from the individuating marks which time and place and race and color and a hundred other influences have left upon us. When we have divested ourselves and our fellow men of all this, we shall see ourselves united in a common humanity. We shall come to the full experience of the fellowship of our kind. The heart will not remain unmoved by this vision of our common core. Out of it will spring the sentiment of kindness to match the vision. We shall have realized that we are all in the same human condition, moved by the same hopes, harassed by the same imperfections, and that; being in the same boat, we would do well to pull on the oars together. This is how the Humanitarian saint is born.

But since it is not easy to arrive at an abstract notion of man in a world bustling with individuals who are often cantankerous, the Humanitarian proposes as his gos-

pel of salvation a common system of education where children under the same influences can learn from childhood to divest themselves of their differences and come to the knowledge of their essential oneness. From the study of the classics, those works which rise above the limitations of the here and now, we can learn to distinguish between what is accidental and what is essential to the heart of man. In this way we shall foster a deeper humanity among men, and sanctity will flourish.

Humanitarianism has a great weakness at its heart. Not only does it suffer from the error of disregarding the effects of original sin and supposing that we need but educate a man to what is right to have him do it, but it is also built upon an abstraction. Men as such, divested of all their differences, simply do not exist. When men appear on the stage of reality, they are weak or strong, poor or rich, perverse or good, knowing or ignorant. What then? must one take refuge in an ivory tower to avoid disillusionment? Should one blind oneself to the contradictions between the abstract and the concrete? Would it be well to treat the concrete individual as an objective "case" outside the scope of one's personal philosophy of life? Even the great Humanitarians who "held the truth to be self-evident that all men are created equal"—even they owned slaves.

I do not wish to leave the impression that I disparage the good things in this way of life. Humanitarianism has given great leaders

to the world. Through them it has wrought great victories in the sciences and in the social order. Some of these leaders regarded themselves as Christians even though their lives lacked Christian motivation. What I am trying to point out is this,—that for all its seeming Christianity, Humanitarianism is a far cry from Christianity, and that it is impotent in itself to produce fruit for eternity even though its more limited vision has often been productive of more dramatic results upon this earth. Its root is of this earth. Its flower and its fruit are of this earth. If we are to be good Christians, we must be cognizant of the abyss which lies between it and Christianity.

What then is Christianity if it is not a system impelling us to do good to our fellow man? Let me say again, that I am using the word "Christian" as synonymous with "Catholic." I must ask you to think again of the notion of holiness. Who is the Christian saint? He is primarily a work of God, not of man. The Christian defines sanctity in terms of man's ultimate goal. Only he who is holy will enter heaven. Christian Revelation teaches us that the heaven to which men are called lies beyond the reach of every created power. In order to be related to such a heaven, the human person must be lifted above the natural order by a special act of God. God accomplishes this through Baptism, even though the Baptism be only of desire. Baptism incorporates the individual human being into Christ. Through such incorpora-

tion, the Christian saint is born. He is therefore primarily the work of God.

There is a happy analogy which helps the mind to grasp the Christian meaning of holiness. It is taken from the process of grafting. Few roses have roots hardy enough to withstand our harsh winters. They winter-kill. Some roots can survive, but they produce a poor flower. We plant the hardy roots and graft upon the stalk a shoot from a rose we wish to grow. As the shoot becomes incorporated into the stalk and begins to grow, it lives no longer by its own life, not having its own roots. It depends upon another root-stock for its life and its sustenance. By virtue of this borrowed life, it produces flowers in its own kind. So it is with the saints. As men, they have their roots on this earth. To be related to heaven, they must be grafted upon a root-stock indigenous to heaven. That root-stock is Christ. Holiness is therefore Christ living by His actions in the individual. It is Christ within us. It is a union with Christ in which, under the impulse of faith and hope and charity, we produce fruit in the same order of being in which God has constituted heaven.

When we say that a saint is primarily the work of God, we do not mean that the individual has no share in the work of his sanctification. Like the shoot which produces its own flower, but not by virtue of its own life, so we too produce our fruit, but not by virtue of the powers of our natural life. We produce our fruit for heaven

through the power of Christ, operative within us. Faith, hope, and charity are indeed gifts of God which go beyond what is natural to man. But when we use the light of Revelation to guide our choices, when we use our trust in God to persist in the good, when we use the love of God to urge us on to the doing of God's work, when we are sharing in the building of a saint. We do not say that mere goodness of life makes us holy. The good life is indeed a condition of holiness as the washing of a window is a condition without which the sun cannot illuminate a room. But as the washing does not produce the light which comes from the sun, neither does the goodness produce the sanctity which comes to us through Christ.

It is important for us to realize the central place which Christ occupies in our sanctification. The more we realize it, the more conscious we shall become of Christ's abiding presence within us. The more we are conscious of Christ's presence within us, the more we shall be impressed with Christ's presence, actual or potential, in our fellow men. The more we are conscious of His presence in others, the more deeply will we understand His wonderful statement that what we do for the least of His brethren we do for Him. Understanding this, we shall see that the great virtue of life is not kindness, but charity, the love of God, and that the ultimate rule of right living is not the Golden Rule, but the Great Commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole

soul, with all thy strength." We shall understand how the second part of the Commandment is like the first, that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. For we are all bound together in Christ.

Towards this loving union in Christ, everything in our faith is orientated: the Sacrifice which brings us together this morning, the Sacraments, the chief means by which the life of grace is made to flourish within us, the Holy Scriptures, the devotions, the fellowship of the saints, especially of Our Blessed Lady whose glorious titles tell us more of Christ than of herself, the Church, the projection of Christ into history so that each generation can hear Him speak "not as the scribes and the pharisees, but as one having authority," the good works we do in the name of Christ, — everything underlines the one and great fact of Our Savior's living presence within us.

As a consequence of all this, the tie which binds us to our fellow men is not an abstraction. It is a concrete and infinitely lovable Person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity Who became man for us. We work for and with One Who cannot disillusion us. In His spirit and power we go about our tasks hoping by His help to grow into His image. In the words of the Handbook of the Legion of Mary, "Sour looks, the sting of insult and rebuff, ridicule and adverse criticism, weariness of body and spirit, pangs from failure and from base ingratitude, the bitter cold and the driving rain, dirt and vermin and evil smells, dark pass-

ages and sordid surroundings, the laying aside of pleasures, the taking on of anxieties which come aplenty with the work, the anguish which the contemplation of irreligion and depravity brings to the sensitive soul, sorrow from sorrows wholeheartedly shared, — there is little glamour about all these things, but if sweetly borne, counted even a joy, persevered in unto the end, they will come in the final weighing up, very near to that love greater than which no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Members of the medical and nursing professions! When Henry George, of single tax fame, called upon Cardinal Manning in England, he said to his Eminence, "I loved the people, and this love brought me to Christ, their best friend and teacher." To this his Eminence replied, "I loved Christ, and so learned to love the people for whom he lived and died." These two statements sum up what I have tried to say. They do not express two approaches to the same objective. They express two ways of life. The first is the way of the Humanitarian. It is man-centered and has its roots on this earth. The other is the Christian way. It is Christ-centered and has its roots and its chief fruits in heaven. The ancient world had its Humanitarian saints before Christ's coming. If this were all God expected of man, there was no point in Christ's coming. But Christ's death upon the Cross shows that much more is expected. Christ is the bridge across the

great abyss which separates men from heaven. Only through Christ can we become Christians. Only through Christ can we become acceptable to God. Only through Christ can we work for an eternal

reward. And only in Christ will men find the love that transcends, but does not abstract from, their differences in order to bind them into a fellowship in Christ Our Lord.

### PLEA FOR MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS

Last March the Catholic Medical Center in Seoul, Korea, graduated its first class of 39 doctors. This institution founded in 1941 is the only medical college under Catholic auspices on the entire continent of Asia. During this past year Father Peter Ryang, Director, received 2,400 applications for the 70 openings in its Freeman PreMed class. The entire student body totals 390.

The great aim at present is to build up medical standards in this hospital and school, which has a decisive influence on medical standards throughout the country. Right now there is a special need for several well qualified American doctors, lab technicians, a dietitian and a dentist who could spare from 6 months to two years to update staff doctors and nurses on latest medical techniques and drugs.

Any qualified person, with the time and generosity to help this epochal venture, may learn full details by writing to:

FATHER PETER RYANG  
CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTER  
MYONG-DONG  
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