

AFTER THE WHIRLWIND?

PART ONE.

You want a New Order, don't you? . . .

The right kind of New Order.

After the whirlwind of war and chaos you want peace, justice, order . . . It all has you thinking hard.

You want a world in which you can go about your business in peace,

in which your children can grow up

to love God and live as decent citizens,

in which there won't be slums or hate

or unemployment on a gigantic scale,

in which you can behave as a Christian

without feeling you are an old-fashioned eccentric....

Who is going to make this new world you want so much?

Are you going to leave it to the politicians? . . . You remember what they did after the last war. (But don't blame them: we elected them.)

Are you going to leave it to the pagans: the Left-Wing professors, the millionaire newspaper owners?

Are you going to leave it to the Socialists? . . . It doesn't matter which branch.

National Socialists, Fascists, State Socialists—they're all the same in the long run. . .

Do you expect the Pope to do it all for you? . . . Just one frail man in the Vatican . . . the Bishops?—after all, their job is to help you for the next life rather than the present; the priests? . . . they have more than enough to do—preaching, saying Mass, visiting, studying. Any way, the building of a New Order is your job, not theirs.

Whom have we left? Only YOU.

Yes! that's what we've come too—

If you don't start to build the Christian New Order it won't be built at all.

You're willing to do what you can? You realise that, as one who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation, you are obliged to be a "soldier of Christ" and to take up the sword when He calls on you.

But . . . "you don't see how you can do anything; you're no genius, no inspiring personality, no gifted organiser."

Nevertheless, you are prepared to do something. . . but what?

Here is a suggestion... .

THE JOB TO BE DONE.

There are two general obstacles to this ideal world we all want to create:

Our own ignorance, selfishness and laziness as individual men and women;

The environment in which we live—our habits, inborn prejudices, cravings, customs—the traditions and institutions we have inherited from our ancestors. It is impossible to separate these two.

No individual is sufficient to himself; he must live some kind of social life. He can't help influencing others; they can't help influencing him.

So any improvement in INDIVIDUALS means to some extent an improvement in the ENVIRONMENT . . . also anything that makes the environment more or less Christian will tend to make the individuals in it more or less Christian.

This is obvious enough—but most reformers shoot right or left of the target.

We have to make men better—and we have to make their environment better. And we must do both jobs together and at the same time. No use leaving one until the other is finished.

To perform this double task, the NATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF CATHOLIC ACTION have come into existence.

PART TWO.

THE EXISTING MOVEMENTS IN AUSTRALIA, 1942.

First, you want to know, "How can I tell what is Catholic Action and what is not?"

Briefly, a Catholic Action work is a work which a person does as a member of a recognised Catholic Action Organisation.

It is not merely a question of the NATURE of the work you do; it is a question of the CAPACITY in which you do it.

To say three Hail Marys for the Missions, to give sixpence to a poor man, to go to Communion at Easter, are actions which you do as a private individual.

Similarly, charity which you dispense as a member of a St. Vincent de Paul Society, missions you attend with the parish confraternity, have nothing to do with Catholic Action though these works are, of course, of the highest value in themselves.

If, however, you pray for the success of some object which your Movement has in mind; if you attend a general Communion as a member of the Movement; if you induce new members to join its ranks; if you subscribe sixpence towards its funds; if you take part in its campaigns, then you are doing Catholic Action.

The point is, then, that to do Catholic Action you must belong to a recognised Catholic Action Movement. Catholic Action is essentially an INSTITUTION, a definite THING, a body established for a definite purpose which you must JOIN. It is not something which you can do on your own.

THE LARGE SPECIALISED MOVEMENTS.

A brief word should be said about each

(1) The National Catholic Rural Movement caters for the whole of the Rural community—men and women, boys and girls. At the moment, its membership is confined mainly to men, but other sections are growing. This movement began by the setting up of a number of small rural groups, who eventually drew up a more complete programme. In February, 1940, this movement held its first National Conference at Xavier College. It was highly successful. During 1941 there was an inspiring series of Diocesan Conferences called by the Bishops at Rockhampton, Lismore, Wagga, Ballarat, Warrnambool, Wangaratta, and Adelaide. These conferences have paved the way for the official establishment, of the Movement in these Dioceses. The Rural Movement has its own popular paper, "Rural Life," and is controlled by a National Executive, presided over by the Most Rev. F. A. Henschke, D.D., Bishop of Wagga.

(2) The National Catholic Girls' Movement. Next came the turn of the girls. For years they had formed and run their own groups—usually without any official assistance—had worked on their own lines and in comparative isolation. The coming of the Ladies of the Grail introduced a new spirit and technique, and the courses they gave at the Grail Houses in Sydney and Melbourne were a fresh source of inspiration. The courage, gaiety and enthusiasm of these girl leaders quickly won for them supporters in all States.

The National Movement has now been established. Most Rev. E. Gleeson, D.D., Bishop of Maitland, is the chairman of its National Executive. It is operating in the greatest harmony with the Ladies of the Grail—whose special task is to train the leaders at the "Quest" and at the Summer Schools. It has its own Bulletin for Leaders, "The Beacon," and its popular magazine, "Torchlight." It is a movement for young girls in the cities and larger towns between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five.

(3) The Young Christian Workers' Movement is for young lads in cities and large towns aged between fourteen and twenty-five, or (where the Catholic Young Men's Society is officially established) for lads between fourteen and eighteen years. This movement has grown up spontaneously in most of the larger cities, and so great is the enthusiasm of the young lads who are being prepared for leadership, that it should not be long before their ambition is fulfilled, to have their own National Organisation.

(4) The Catholic Young Men's Society has received, in the Archdioceses of Melbourne and Adelaide, a "provisional mandate" to organise Catholic Action for young men between the ages of eighteen to thirty. There are C.Y.M.S. branches

also in other dioceses.

For many years the C.Y.M.S. performed a most valuable task in keeping young Catholic men together in a Catholic atmosphere—providing them with sport, debating, and a host of other activities. It is now beginning to move into the more vital work of the apostolate, for which it is now actively engaged in training leaders.

(5) The National Christian Workers' Movement. The Bishops have expressed the wish that an organisation should be set up for Adult Workers; those aged over thirty or married. The National Christian Workers' Movement has been started in Melbourne and other places. Its main object is to build up Catholic life in the homes of the workers, to collaborate in the Christian programme for Social Justice, and to enable workers—by mutual co-operation in Credit Unions, Co-operatives, and other organisations—to assist themselves materially and socially.

(6) Professional Groupings. There are many other smaller specialised bodies growing up for men and women in special vocations; for lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, chemists, engineers, and so on. Naturally these will develop slowly, but they are of the utmost importance.

For these people are of considerable standing in the community. Their professional training, their prestige, their wide practical experience, give them an influence which, for good or evil, must always be considerable.

They are usually more easily attracted to professional organisations, because they feel they enable them to get to grips with realities and to solve many practical problems which beset them in their daily lives.

(7) Women. Another field of effort receiving much attention is that of the married women. In many places have been formed groups of married women, who are preparing themselves to build up Catholic organisations for the great mass of women. They have a practical programme of active assistance to mothers, giving them greater opportunity for Catholic social life, helping them with advice in home management and child welfare, enabling them to voice their opinion on all the problems affecting mothers to-day.

(8) Students. Catholic Action in Australia began among University Students. Students come and go so quickly from a University that it is not easy to organise them effectively, and during their academic year they have not much time to spare from their studies. Nevertheless, at every University there is much activity and considerable planning for the future in the Catholic Student societies.

(9) Schools. Finally, Catholic Action is growing in the schools, and fresh experiments are being tried for programmes to suit school conditions. On the Continent, the Schools' Movements are a very important and a vital section of Catholic Action, and undoubtedly they will soon become equally important in Australia.

THE SPECIAL WORKS.

There are also other important works of Catholic Action which maybe described as "Special Works."

Special Works are set up when small groups of people come together to perform a job requiring ability of a highly technical nature and special concentration on one object. Examples are the Catholic Evidence Guild, which gives addresses in public on the Faith; the Therry Society, which studies the drama; the Paraclete Arts Group, for painters, musicians, writers, etc.; the Champion Society, for young men who wish to make a thorough study of History, Social Justice, and modern affairs.

The recently-formed Catholic Literature Crusade is planning the effective sale and distribution of Catholic papers and pamphlets—scientifically organised by vigorous Parish Press Units.

The leaders of these "special works" do not attempt to rally round them a large mass of people, nor is their field spread over the whole of life. They take one job and concentrate on it.

The Legion of Mary is closely associated with Catholic Action and performs most valuable work in its compact, highly-organised groups, whose members make direct contacts with individuals needing spiritual aid, or undertake tasks of peculiar difficulty. Its ideals and methods have been described in various A.C.T.S. pamphlets.

PART THREE.

Each one of these movements attempts, in its particular environment, to deal with the whole problem described at the beginning of this pamphlet.

The Problem may be stated simply: **HOW CAN WE MAKE INDIVIDUALS MORE CHRISTIAN?**

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT MORE CHRISTIAN?

Obviously there are three things needed

(1) To educate the individual so that he knows what he ought to do and knows exactly what is wrong with the world at present;

(2) To help the individual to overcome the handicaps which his environment provides and to help him to make the best use of his existing resources;

(3) To combine the efforts of those who wish to fight for the Kingship of Christ, so that they fight as an army and not as a rabble.

A little over twelve years ago a small group of priests and workers in Belgium were facing a situation which seemed quite hopeless.... The young workers-boys and girls—coming out from Catholic schools with an excellent elementary education had scarcely left the gate of the school when they fell victims to the concentrated fire of the big guns of paganism.... Slums, dirt, disease, immorality, despair and hatred were rotting their bodies, their minds and their souls. . . Every day Communism and Socialism were gaining ground, revolution seemed just around the corner....

This group of people decided that a completely new method was necessary to meet a completely new situation. Working from the hard facts of real life, taking nothing for granted, being willing to adapt any pre-conceived ideas, they evolved a technique and formed a Movement—the “J.O.C.” which achieved miracles. Pope Plus XI. did not hesitate to call it a “finished type,” a kind of blue print for everyone to copy.... He could have given it no higher praise.

From these men we can learn a great deal!

The great founders of the J.O.C. set out to make a New Order for young workers. Any organisation which wanted to do this, they maintained, had to provide three things.

“The J.O.C.,” says the great Canon Cardijn, “is a School, a Service, and a Representative Body.” How closely this fits in with what is needed here!

1. A SCHOOL.

It is the great tragedy of the modern world that, despite all the efforts of Christians to maintain their own system of schools, so many young people who have been trained with such love and care seem unable to stand up for Christ in the hurly-burly of life.

This is puzzling and annoying. The most obvious reaction is to blame our schools. That is not just. The school has done everything in its power to produce strong and active Christians.

The overwhelming disaster is that the influence of the school ceases precisely at the moment when it is most needed. It is at the point when the student enters REAL LIFE, when the young lad goes into the factory, the University student starts in his profession, the country lad goes on to the farm, that he most needs education ... but his education has ceased.

So we need a type of education that will go on for the rest of life. Not necessarily an education from books or in theories—but an education none the less. By this is meant an acquired series of ideas, of facts, of truths, which will enable YOU—the worker, or farmer, or lawyer—to see clearly the purpose of your life, of all your activities . . . to put first things first . . . to leave trifles in the background ... to get the most out of yourself and your opportunities.

OLD-FASHIONED METHODS WILL NOT DO.

It must be an education adapted to the needs of each type and class. The lawyer needs something almost entirely different both in content and method from the mechanic. The farmer has to deal with an entirely different set of practical problems from the sailor. Yet all must be catered for.

SPECIALISATION.

The older method of Catholic organisation had been to bring together people without taking into account differences in education, or in means of earning a living, lumping together rich or poor, the worker and his employer. Sooner or later this general type of organisation broke down. What was a real and vital issue to one section was of merely theoretical interest to another. Old people were sceptical of the enthusiastic ideas of the youth—and the younger members felt stifled by the fixed notions of their seniors. For these reasons the old “general” kinds of society eventually died out.

The J.O.C. made history. It confined its efforts to one special grouping: the Young Christian Workers. It refused to concern itself with anybody except working lads in the cities aged between fourteen and twenty-five.

This idea has been widely imitated and specialisation is the method laid down by the Holy Father....Let each section of the community be responsible for the salvation of its own members.

The advantages from the point of education are obvious. Each section can be given an education exactly suited to its own needs. A Farmers' Organisation does not have to bother its members about details of industrial life and can concentrate on rural problems. It can make a “study” of things about which its members already know a great deal—because they are part of their ordinary lives.

Now the usual method of Education is to proceed to establish some general principles and then to work out their consequences. This is attractive to the scholar—that is why many leaders have used it. They have relied on lectures and books and Study Clubs.

But the average man does not learn truth in this fashion. General propositions make no appeal to him unless he can see them in reality as applied to his own life. After a while people get tired of the lectures and the reading of books, because they feel that it is all impractical, and does not concern their daily lives.

ENQUIRY.

The J.O.C. tried another experiment. They **STARTED BY GETTING AT THE FACTS**. They said to their young people: “Now, before you do anything else, have a look at the world you are living in. You say you want to help the young workers. Do you know anything about the young workers? Do you know what wages they get, what conditions they work under, what holidays they receive? Do you know whether they can save for marriage, for old age, for illness? What things amuse them, what things disgust them? What qualities do they look for in their leaders? In what things do they require help? Now don't give us ready-made answers; go and find out for yourselves.”

So the leaders had to go out and talk to their comrades and gradually acquire information on all the problems that crop up in the young worker's life. When the facts had been collected, the workers came back and talked over the facts and asked themselves:

What state of affairs does this show? Is it satisfactory or not? What does the Church say about it? Why does the Church say that?”

Thus they came to study the doctrine of the Church in precise and exact relations to an actual problem, and they saw how important it is to know what the Church says, and how right the Church is on all these matters. They saw that religion touches ordinary life at every point—and that itself is surely the essence of Christian education.

From this they conclude: “Now here is a grievous situation which is imperilling the souls and bodies of our fellow-workers. What plan shall we draw up immediately to remedy it?” Then they proceed to action.

You don't have to prepare lectures or talk at them: you simply get them to talk to you. They learn to see and to judge—without strain or self-consciousness. By their own efforts they learn what is right and wrong with their environment: why there is war and disease and unemployment and unhappy home-life.

Not that the Enquiry method is the only one—or that it alone is sufficient. The Enquiry needs to be supplemented by lectures, by reading, by Retreats, by special courses. . . . What has been established is this:

“Leave Catholics alone and they can't make the effort to continue education after school, but bring them together in friendly groups, get them to realise that they alone can change the world, show them how this can be done—and they are

changed.

“They have been educated. There is the first obstacle overcome.

“Here are methods we have been looking for—methods equally useful for lawyer or mechanic, farmer or sailor, for men and women, boys and girls.”

2. SERVICES.

It is not enough, obviously, merely to show a man what ought to be done. We must show him HOW to do it. It is not enough that he should see that his environment is wrong and should be changed. We must show him how to change it.

Practically all of us have urgent material and social needs which we just cannot cope with alone. The young worker of eighteen who has lost his job and sees no prospect of another is going to find it hard to keep his religious faith. The farmer who sees the work of years thrown away by economic forces beyond his control and himself reduced to a state of semi-slavery will find it hard to practise the virtues of the Christian life. The mother of the working-class family, whose husband cannot get regular work and who has not enough to feed and clothe her growing family, can easily fall into a state of mind in which it will not be difficult to persuade her to the use of birth control devices.

There are two possible ways out of this problem of economic want. The first is the Socialist way. If the State were to take over agriculture and industry and dole out to every person sufficient for their ordinary needs, it might be possible to make the economic pressure bearable. Christians and free men, however, would never be happy under such a dictatorship.

The only alternative is for Christians faced with these problems to come together and by co-operative and mutual action try to solve them. Where there is a need they must provide some kind of Service to satisfy that need.

It is because they provided such “Services” that the J.O.C. and similar organisations in Europe were so successful. This is how you come to set up a Service.

If the Central Council of your Movement has an urgent problem brought under its notice, it does not rush into action. It says: “Let us first get the facts.” Thus it draws up a list of questions upon which exact information is required. This list is sent out to every local branch, and the leaders go about collecting the required information from their associates and acquaintances (as in the “Enquiry”).

Reports from the local branches come back to your National Headquarters, where they are gone through thoroughly, and a final report is drawn up, embodying the results. This report will show:

The extent of the evil;

The reason why this evil exists and grows—and

The suggested cure.

Your Council will then decide that a certain remedy must be applied and an organisation is set up to apply it. This may be described as the establishment of a service.

Here are some examples of economic services which have been set up by Catholic Organisations in other lands, and many of which are now being organised in Australia.

CREDIT UNIONS.

Something has to be done everywhere for the working man, or the farmer whose income is just enough for daily needs, but who, through unemployment, illness in the family or some other misfortune, may need to borrow a comparatively small sum of money. Having no security, he cannot get it from the bank, he must, therefore, normally, go to moneylenders, and pay high interest rates. Very often he is thus made a permanent debtor and utterly impoverished. In many parts of Europe, in French Canada, and in the United States magnificent work has been done by the tens of thousands of Parish Credit Unions, whereby wage-earners club together—putting their own contributions to a common fund—and are permitted to draw out loans for urgent necessities, paying only a minimum rate of interest on the loan.

SAVINGS SCHEMES.

There is a similar problem with the young working lads. Few of them ever think of saving money until the question of

marriage arises directly. At twenty-four or twenty-five years of age they have not a penny to buy furniture and equip the little home. They have to go and get these on hire-purchase or time-payment schemes, and thus put a mill-stone of debts around their necks for years.

The J.O.C. started Savings Schemes whereby the members of J.O.C. units were encouraged to contribute small amounts weekly which were put into a common fund on their behalf. When they wished to start in a business or get married they had, perhaps, a hundred or a hundred and fifty pounds to begin with.

TECHNICAL ADVICE.

Many farmers have lost past opportunities through lack of technical knowledge of modern methods of farming. They cultivate the wrong crop, or do not use the best fertilisers, or have inefficient machines. Many are sunk in conservative methods, and do not know where to ask advice. Many Catholic Organisations, like the U.C.C. in Canada, and the J.A.C. in France, have done wonderful work in providing expert instructors and special publications which could not be obtained anywhere else.

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT.

Affecting the working-class wife is the vital question of keeping the home on a very modest budget. The utmost economy is needed. Very often the young wife cannot cook, make her own dresses, or manage a household efficiently.

So the Grail and other movements for years have organised classes whereby for a few pence a week all those who desire may learn simple home cooking, simple dressmaking, and the normal handicrafts required for domestic management. These services have had an enormous influence for good.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE.

Take now some social services.

A cause of much hidden but very acute unhappiness is the lack of preparation of our youth for their future life. Young boys and girls leave school and take the first job offered to them, without any consideration of how far it is suitable. Some toil away at uncongenial work for the rest of their lives. Some find their health breaking down. Others are wasting their talents at drudgery. Others, again, get into dead-end jobs and find themselves dismissed, untrained and unfitted for anything else. From such come our criminals and our revolutionaries.

Many Catholic Action organisations meet this problem just when the children are leaving school by encouraging them to come to their Vocational Guidance Bureaux—not only give them advice about careers and show them what is offering, but also get them suitable jobs.

HOLIDAY CAMPS.

In the United States and other countries has arisen the menace of holiday camps. Young people often cannot afford the expenses of boarding houses or “conducted tours.” To have a holiday at all, they must go to a large camp. Communists and other pagan organisations made capital use of this to get young Catholics into these camps and to damage their Faith.

Now there are many Catholic organisations providing cheap and attractive holiday camps for youth, and thus fulfilling a very definite want.

There is almost no end to the number and variety of services that can be provided.

The J.O.C. have a slogan: “A Service for Every Need.” It may be to provide simple instruction and practice in ballroom dancing for youngsters who are nervous and timid about their first appearance on dance floors . . . to form Catholic Film Societies to give advice on the films worth seeing.

Catholic Dramatic Societies give an opening for those who are determined to create a new type of dramatic art on Christian lines. Some tackle, as did the Canadian Young Christian Workers, the tremendous problem of juvenile crime at its source—in the degradation of the slum home . . . or provide proper medical and legal advice for those who are too

ignorant or too careless to go to the trouble themselves . . . or run a class in Home Nursing for mothers of young families.

These organisations help the individual to overcome the inertia, the prejudice, or the hostility of the conditions by which he is surrounded. They help him to do for himself (and always with his own help) the things he could not do unaided.

It is also essential to emphasise that while Catholic Action does try by mutual self-help to improve the material conditions of its members to fit them to be more efficient at their jobs, to encourage them to take their proper part in public life, it is not to be used, and has not been used, as a means of pushing Catholics into positions by means of intrigue and improper influence.

However, the services are a most important means of showing the average person who may not be attracted from more noble motives, the practical self-help which should be a feature of true Christian charity. The services provide the modern interpretation of the old saying: "See how these Christians love one another!" They provide a first-class lesson in genuine Christian co-operation . . . because they are run by the Movement itself—are not something provided from outside by well-meaning sympathisers. Thus people, particularly young people, learn to stand on their own feet, not to run away from responsibility, and not to lean on Governments or other public bodies for everything they require.

3. A REPRESENTATIVE BODY.

The services are tremendously important, but they are, after all, mainly palliatives. They do make modern life more bearable; they are not enough in themselves.

For society to be really reconstructed something more fundamental and more widespread is necessary. We have to tackle the great social problems which affect the whole nation, and therefore can be solved by a national effort.

Thus our great Christian Movement for a New Order must remove one serious cause of Christian weakness: the isolation of individuals and the isolation of scattered organisations. The great problems of today cannot be all solved in a parish, or in a diocese, or in a State. National campaigns which unite the efforts of every organisation of the kind in Australia must be undertaken.

In most of these problems even a strong Catholic body alone cannot remedy the evil. What it must do generally is to place before the Government, or other public body, the existence of a set of facts with their underlying causes, and recommend a method of treatment. It is then for the Government or the public body to take whatever action they see necessary.

NO POLITICS.

In this way a Catholic organisation, while dealing with social affairs, can keep right apart from politics to bring about its end. IT DOES NOT RESORT TO POLITICAL PROPAGANDA to bring any political section of the community to its aid. Nor does it concern itself with the DETAILS whereby the solution is to be put into operation.

The Popes have insisted since the foundation of this Movement it must keep itself absolutely apart from politics. This warning, you remember, has been repeated dozens of times in our own country by authorities on Catholic Action, and again in emphatic terms by the Episcopal Committee in its recent Statement.

No Catholic Action leader may be a leader in a political movement. Politics may never be discussed at the meetings of Catholic Action. Nor may the support of any individual political party be used to further Catholic Action projects—or vice versa.

On the other hand, by acting as a representative body, Catholics more clearly rebut the charge of being merely "academic about physical suffering and uninterested in practical reform."

PAID HOLIDAYS.

One example of such an effort was provided by the French J.O.C. on the question of paid holidays for workers. Many millions of French workers did not get any regular holidays. It was a social evil, and yet was neglected by most public bodies as being too difficult to handle.

The J.O.C. spent a year in collecting information, showing clearly from every point of view the harm being done by the lack of proper rest. It collected statistics showing the effects on the health of the workers, the slowing down of production, the cost of medical treatment and of social services. Then it said in effect, to the Government: "Now here is the situation; we have given you some vital details which speak for themselves, and it is for you to do something about it." The Government was then forced into action: the facts were too strong; the paid holiday became the rule rather than the exception.

JUVENILE CRIME.

Another famous example is the Prisoners' Assistance Scheme of the Canadian Y.C.W. It is composed of the following departments: The Juvenile Court Service, the Police Court Service, the Higher Courts Service, the Prisoners' Aid Society, the Shelter for Destitute Youth. The services handled in the years 1937-38 some 10,000 to 15,000 cases of juvenile delinquency. On good authority it was declared that only some 2 to 10% of the young people handled could not be won from their bad habits.

No wonder that the members of the Canadian J.O.C. rose within a few years from a few score to some 50,000.

In Australia there are many great problems which can only be attacked in this manner. There is the problem of Farmers' Debts, of the drift from the country to the town, of juvenile crime, of women in industry, of the living wage itself, of race suicide, of providing a system of education which gives a true preparation for life.

If we are not ready to provide a Christian solution, there are plenty of others prepared to provide a pagan solution.

THE RIGHT SOLUTION—THROUGH CATHOLIC ACTION.

We have answered the question we asked ourselves at the start: "Where shall we find a method that will enable ordinary men and women to find out what is wrong with the world and with themselves, and how to change themselves and change the world?"

We have the method: it is the method of CATHOLIC ACTION, arrived at after a thousand experiments. It is a tested method, one working in every land, approved over and over by Popes, Bishops, clergy and experienced lay leaders.

And it's a simple method. No one of you can say: "It is too complicated or too mysterious for me," or "It requires more ability and education than I have got," or "It wouldn't work among the people I mix with."

No wonder that Pope Plus XI. with his unrivalled knowledge of world affairs and what the twentieth century needed—said of this method: "It MUST be followed."

No wonder that he said of the movement that used such methods: "Without Catholic Action it would be a miracle—a miracle one cannot ask of God—if any practical result or any true success were obtained" (in the restoration of social life.)

This helps to explain, too, why it is necessary to have a NEW organisation. The older associations were formed to meet a different sort of attack; they were not at all equipped to meet the enemy of today, with his modern armament.

PART FOUR.

METHODS OF ORGANISATION.

We have now seen what are the Catholic Action Movements. We must next ask: "How do these Movements do their work?" "How does one come to play an active part in them?"

Catholic Action is a movement which relies on GROWTH rather than on high pressure salesmanship and hustling. It can only begin when a group of laymen, realising their vocation in their own world, come together and decide that they must do something practical. They get in touch with the Headquarters of one of the Catholic Action Movements and obtain a supply of literature which sets out the objects and methods of the Movement.

PREPARATION ESSENTIAL

Then, if they are all members of the same parish, they will see the Parish Priest, ask for his permission to start work in

the parish, and request him to help in their formation. Next they must go through a period of preparation lasting for at least six months, and may then apply for affiliation with the main Movement.

Without this LIVING CELL of leaders, no further growth can come. We do not attempt to set up a large organisation anywhere until it has a trained staff ready. That is why its progress must necessarily be so SLOW. In some countries serious failures have followed the attempt to draw up and operate quickly grandiose plans which had no relation to facts, and which depended purely on the administrative abilities of one or two people at the head.

Leaders, as the Pope is always reminding us, must be FORMED, and this formation must be a complete, all-round training which fits them for every aspect of their job. In his pamphlet, "This is Catholic Action," Mr. K. Mitchell has set out the essential methods of training, and they need not be elaborated here. Further, each Movement has its own Handbooks and Programmes, in which the details of training set out may be easily discovered and followed.

All we need realise here is that insistence is laid on the proper application of two words of the greatest value. They are, "Responsibility" and "Contact."

RESPONSIBILITY.

Responsibility means that those who are to command in these Movements should realise the tremendous importance of the position they hold. Catholic Action is a lay movement. True, it cannot function without the authority of the Bishops, and without the active co-operation and guidance of the priests. But it depends for its practical success on the initiative, energy, reliability, patience of its lay leaders.

They must be made to feel that responsibility from the beginning.

It must be pointed out to young workers—"You are the saviours of your own fellow-workers. You have something of incredible value to give them. In your factories, on your play-grounds, in your homes you have dozens of opportunities daily to get at these young fellows, show them the truth, give them new hope and purpose, raise them out of the mud of paganism. If you do not do this, no one will, because you alone have the opportunities.

"And, further, you must organise this Movement yourselves. You must make the speeches, run the meetings, draw up the programmes, plan the amusements, organise the services, edit the newspapers and bulletins, run the finances. It seems a lot to ask of young workers, but it has been done so often and on such a scale by lads who have never had more than a primary school education, that no one can now doubt its realities."

CONTACT.

Side by side goes the understanding of the word "Contact." It is no use our having the knowledge and the truth unless we are in contact with others, and can pass it on to them direct. It is not enough simply to collect "the good boys of the parish" together and give them a better knowledge of the Faith. They must become APOSTLES—must pass it on to others.

Now this is not an easy task. The young leader who has not an intense personal love of Christ—together with tact, humour, patience—who has not been taught how to make the best use of his opportunities, will not be able to pass it on. If he preaches, or rants, or is not "normal," he will be looked on as a freak and his words will be ignored.

Consequently, the whole purpose of the activities of his section—its prayers, its social functions, its inquiries, its general meetings, its services—are designed to bring together the militants in touch with many scores and hundreds of their own fellow-workers.

Contact must be PERSONAL. Merely to send out circulars or publish newspapers or make mass addresses is not enough. The leaders must be personal friends of those they wish to influence, must be liked and trusted by their fellows, must constantly meet them as friends and fellow-workers.

THE LARGE SCALE ORGANISATION—THE SECTION.

When the Leaders' Group has got its training—spiritual, cultural and practical—when it knows the problems of the

neighbourhood and understands what practical remedies are needed, it forms a SECTION.

To do this it must have: (a) Contacted a number of people and got them interested; (b) Brought these people together at a General Meeting, at which the whole purpose of the Movement was explained; (c) Induced a sufficient number to become members and pay a small subscription. The Section may then apply for affiliation with the Diocesan Federation.

The Ordinary Members. For a start, no obligations are laid on them except to turn up to general meetings, to be loyal to the constitution of the Movement, and to pay a small subscription.

At the start, most ordinary members will not be in a mood to tie themselves down to regular practical action; but, if the effect of the general gatherings of the services is to make them feel the Movement is really doing something for them and is a dynamic organisation, in which they feel very much at home, they will continue to attend its functions and to seek the company of other members.

Thus the ATMOSPHERE OF THEIR LIVES will become more and more Catholic, and that is all one can expect for a start.

Very gradually their interest will grow stronger and brighter. They will see more clearly the suffering and distress of their fellows, and will be anxious to join in the attempts made by the Leaders' Group to remove the causes of such misery. Thus you will find them turning up of their own account to Retreats and Days of Recollection, joining the sporting teams, reading Catholic pamphlets, taking a willing advantage of the services. . . . The whole level of their lives is being gradually raised.

Keep very clearly in mind the distinction between LEADERS and ORDINARY MEMBERS.

If you have the necessary qualities for leadership, you must be prepared to pray hard, train carefully, and make real sacrifices. You will have to live up to a high standard.

You may, however, be unable for various reasons to be a leader. That is no reason for not joining at all. It is from your support—and that of thousands like you—that the Movement will gain its “mass-strength,” receive funds to carry on, to set up services. Your part in the Campaign can be very powerful if in your ordinary life you make use of your opportunities of spreading the ideas the Movement is putting out.

ORGANISATION IN GENERAL.

It is a first principle of Catholic Action that it is HIERARCHICAL in structure. That it consists of various “degrees”—each one rising higher than the last, and the lesser unit obeying the authority of the more important unit in all major matters.

So you have after:

- (1) The Parish Section (as described above).
- (2) The Diocesan Federation, with its own Council and Executive, which directs and supports all the parish units.
- (3.) The National Federation, which decides national policy, edits publications, bulletins and popular magazines, and draws up the National Campaigns.

The Popes have constantly insisted on the need for national unity and organisation. Consequently, for Australia and New Zealand, the Bishops have established an Episcopal Committee of Catholic Action, whose work it is to bring about such unity and co-operation. The National Secretariat of Catholic Action exists to supply advice and information to the Bishops, and to carry out the decisions of the Episcopal Committee.

PART FIVE.

THE WORK OF THE MOVEMENT.

To understand what the Movement does when it is established, we return to our first point.

Catholic Action aims at changing the environment so that the individual within the environment may lead the full Christian life.

Lead a full Catholic life!

Thus it must cater for the WHOLE of that individual's life.

Now your life—as a normal man—may be divided into four aspects:

Religious. Intellectual. Social. Material.

At every point you are entitled to ask and receive generous aid from the Movement to which you belong.

RELIGIOUS INTERESTS.

The ordinary member, who may have at first only a vague and half-hearted interest in his Faith, will receive considerable help in increasing that interest. At each General Meeting he will hear a talk from the Chaplain on some religious truth directly related to his own life as a worker or a farmer or a student, etc. Retreats are arranged on convenient terms: and these he is much more likely to attend when he sees dozens of his friends in the Movement giving him a lead. He is at all points brought under the influence of the leaders who, when properly trained, must necessarily radiate a powerful influence of genuine spirituality and Christian friendship.

INTELLECTUAL.

The average young lad or girl will not come regularly to “lectures” even by the most eminent people. Social and religious problems under these conditions remain merely academic.

But, when, at a General Meeting, one of the leaders eloquently portrays the existence of a serious problem, revealed for the first time by an “Enquiry,” and the ordinary member realises that—in the next house, in the next street, at the next bench or desk—there are fellow-workers or fellow-students in urgent need of assistance—then that social problem becomes real and living.

Distressed by these revelations, what decent lad or girl will not passionately want to get to the root of it, to understand what false ideas have caused it, to know the mind of the Church about it? So will he or she acquire an intimate and rich knowledge of Catholic Philosophy, which would never have been acquired from books or lectures.

In a Students' Movement, of course, or a Lawyers' Guild, the intellectual side would receive much greater attention, and Study Groups would be set up as “services,” where scholars could, if they wish, make a complete intellectual investigation of the history of the Church and Catholic Apologetics or Social teaching.

It is most important that people make the best use of the LEISURE conferred them by modern science. The hours of freedom, when you glance at newspaper headlines or tune into a radio play, read through a popular novel, or a cheap reprint of a tabloid “outline of world affairs” are those in which your mental outlook is formed on most topics.

People have little inclination to work out fundamental theories for themselves: but they DO like to be in the fashion.

One of the vital jobs of a Catholic Action Organisation is to continue that education that so often ceases when one leaves the shelter of the school. It must try to make the cultural and intellectual background of its members solidly Catholic. By providing interesting speakers at General Meetings, by encouraging Catholic Libraries, the sale of Catholic Truth Society pamphlets, it can achieve miracles.

Even more important is the ATMOSPHERE created by the coming together of keen, intelligent Catholics—normally and intensely interested in the things of the Faith, anxious to get the Catholic angle on everything, aware of how the love of God and a knowledge of Catholic truth must enrich and suffuse their entire being,

SOCIAL.

You hear complaints of the lack of the social virtues on the part of many Catholics. Newcomers to the parish are frequently ignored; converts are too often left to their own resources; hundreds of Catholics don't know more than a few other Catholics in the same parish or occupation. Even when they are brought together there is often only a very faint note of true Catholic joy in the functions they organise.

For young girls in industrial suburbs, for young wives, for working lads, it is even necessary to organise social life on a completely new level. Generally they have no societies or clubs for their leisure time, and are forced to spend time and

money on pleasures whose whole spirit is pagan. The Ladies of the Grail have shown us what a lovely and joyful social life can be built up for girls in the most simple and delightful manner—by its Guest Evenings, its basketball competitions, hiking groups, dances, dramatic and film groups.

If you have been to any of the social gatherings of the Grail-trained girls—listened to their joyous singing, seen their simple yet moving plays, watched their happy dances and games—you will have caught a vision of the fruit of the “full Catholic life,” as it may yet be if Catholic Action succeeds: happy, vigorous, chivalrous, purposeful. . . .

MATERIAL.

What we have said about Services and Campaigns will have shown how deeply Catholic Action concerns itself in a practical way with the material needs of every section of the community.

THESE ARE THE THINGS THE MOVEMENT CAN DO FOR YOU.

THE PRIEST.

No attempt has been made in this work to indicate either the SPIRIT which should inform the lay apostles or the part of the priest in these lay organisations. This pamphlet is concerned entirely with the question of methods of organisation.

The vital work of the priest is to FORM APOSTLES. In this field, above all, he is quite indispensable. It has always been laid down in Catholic Action in Australia that no Leaders' Group may be formed unless there is an assurance that the local parish authority will give it encouragement and assistance. All programmes drawn up assume that a priest will be present at most meetings. All leaders are recommended to discuss every matter of major policy with the parish priest or his representative.

One of the main objectives of Catholic Action is to supplement the work of the priest in the parish; to get in touch with those whom he has not time for or opportunity to meet and to bring them into closer touch with him.

YOUR SHARE IN THE WORK.

You have seen what the movement can do for you. Now, what can you do for the movement?

This is an age of total warfare.

Nations no longer go into combat with small armies of highly-trained professionals. Every man—and almost every woman—is now a combatant.

Behind and beneath this gigantic drama of nations and parties there goes on another and even more vital struggle—the struggle for the souls of men.... Here, too, it is no longer a matter of using a few picked divisions against the Church of Christ: everything is thrown into the fray.

Now the Christian offensive has begun again. The whole weight of the available resources must be thrown into the decisive struggle which will shape the history of the world for centuries. So the last Pope sent out the command to train the reserves and make of them what the Pope calls the “valiant soldiers of Christ”: to make use of the initiative, the talents, the courage, the energy of the great mass of Christian people.

So the aim of Catholic Action is precisely the aim of the Church itself: to win the world for Christ. It does not merely defend: it CONQUERS.

It has a place for you. It is not necessary that you be a very devout or very intellectual person. It is designed—as you can see—for the average man and woman. And the Pope and the Bishops WANT YOU to be in it.

Here is your OBLIGATION. . . . What can you do?

Perhaps you are so ill—or perhaps you live in such a remote area that no organisation is possible. Then at least you can PRAY for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ.

Perhaps you are “too busy”—though saying you are too busy today is like refusing to put out a fire in the kitchen because you have some important letters to write! The whole of civilised life is collapsing—are you really too busy?

Perhaps Catholic Action has not started in your parish yet. Well, you can get in touch with your parish priest or the

National Secretariat and see if a start could be made.

If you really want to join in the apostolic mission of the Church there's really nothing to prevent you beginning to work NOW for Christ in your own world. .

AFTER THE WHIRLWIND—WHAT? More whirlwinds . . . or peace, justice, order. With the grace of God you can help to decide that issue.

Nihil obstat:
F. MOYNIHAN,
Censor Deputatus.

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✠ D. MANNIX,
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