

“THE TORCH OF THE FAITH”

THE LETTERS OF A JESUIT MISSIONARY, HEINRICH DUMOULIN, S.J.

Translated from the German by J. P. Gleeson, S.J.

These letters are the personal correspondence of a Jesuit Missionary in Japan with a young friend at home whom he first knew as a small boy at school. As the years passed by the boy developed an interest in the mission life. He came in time to think that he himself might have a vocation to such a life of sacrifice and self - denial. The correspondence began when he wrote to the Jesuit Father far away on the missions and asked his advice and help.

The replies he received, which are here translated, breathe the true, burning apostolic spirit of a missionary after the heart of great St. Paul.

May they inspire the hearts of young generous Catholics to imitate the deeds of their author, and, perhaps, foster and develop vocations to the noble life they reflect.

When St. Ignatius sent St. Francis Xavier as a missionary to the East, he said. “Go, set the whole world aflame with the love of Christ.” The Torch of the Faith, which symbolises the missionary’s work, has been passed on from hand to hand since the days of St. Paul; and today Christ still calls, especially our Catholic Youth, to pass on in their turn the precious gift of their faith as real missionaries-- working for Christ either in their native country, or, like the author of these letters, in a distant pagan land

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

(I.)

Dear Jim,

When I last saw you, you were still a third form boy. I have often thought of you since those days, and indeed, often intended to write to you. And now you are asking me to do so yourself. You believe that I understand your noble aspirations and you want me to give you a little help and advice. How gladly I answer your prayer! First, then, you want to hear news of God’s kingdom on the missions, a subject that lies nearer to my heart than any other. And I greatly rejoice to think that this letter will reach you for the Feast of Christ the King. In this way my lines fall on good soil, and perhaps they may help you to a deeper penetration of the thoughts that centre round the feast. The Kingship of Christ is the great, supreme concern of the missions—it is the sublimest thought in the life of the missionary. I must try to tell you something about it. Is the expression “Kingship of Christ” only an item on the mission programme—does it not rather enkindle new life and new inspiration? At the very beginning of his Encyclical on the Feast of Christ the King, the Holy Father speaks of the great labours of the Church in the pagan world. He begins with the Vatican Mission Exhibition and observes: “It has shown us how many lands have been won for the Church by the blood and the sweat of brave and invincible missionaries. But it has also brought before the eyes of Christendom what numberless countries still remain to be conquered, to be won to the sweet yoke of our King.”

The expression, “Kingship of Christ,” is a strong one -- one of those phrases which are realities. It is a reality on the missions. It has roused a fresh spring of missionary work in the Church. The hour is heavy with responsibility and importance because it is the hour of a crisis. It has been called the hour of decision for the mission world. God leaves the fate of the peoples and the nations in the hands of His warriors. God’s Kingdom depends indeed on the labours of men. Men can extend and broaden it; men can also do it untold harm — particularly in the times of a crisis. Such is the Holy Will of God, such has history shown it to us again and again.

This time in the history of the world is truly great and of far-reaching importance. We are confident that it is an hour of grace, one of those hours in which the mighty hand of God reaches out, when His operations are made clearly manifest. Already we are hearing of new and important successes from the mission fields and of a rapid expansion of their work. The numerous missionaries who have travelled to pagan lands since the last Great War and who have erected many new Bishoprics, Vicariates, Prefectures and Parishes, are the first fruits of this newly awakened mission spirit and love of

missionary work. The three Catholic universities which throw their beacon light of truth over the dark night of Eastern Asia and the six native Bishops whom the Holy Father recently consecrated for the Church in China, are the spring flowers that promise the coming of a rich harvest time.

We ought to rejoice from the bottom of our hearts at the great things which are happening on the mission fields. Perhaps they indicate the beginning of that "great hour of grace" when the Church, having established the West in the true Faith, will bring the whole world in allegiance to the Kingship of Christ.

There is an even deeper meaning in all these things. When the Vicar of Christ proclaims his plan for the Kingship of Christ, and when a rebirth of mission life follows on his words, then are we really living the life which flourished nearly two thousand years ago on the hillside of Galilee. At that time, the risen Son of God manifested Himself to His worshipping disciples as their King, "To me is given all power in heaven and on earth!" And by way of a royal command He issued the missionary order, "Go into the whole world, teaching all nations in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

This is the special greatness of our times - that Christ manifests Himself in it, Christ Who is with the Church "all days even to the end of the world." This it is that gives the Pope's words their really deep significance - that Christ speaks in them, Christ Who is "the same yesterday, today and forever." Herein lies the strength and the nobility of the Catholic mission endeavour; Christ works in it, Christ toils and suffers in his missionaries, Christ is glorified in them and through them, Christ Who is united to the Church, His Mystical Body, and Who lives in her. His most secret and divine life.

Nearer and nearer through the missions comes the "fullness of time" wherein all things in heaven and on earth will be bound together in Christ as in the Head. St. Paul, speaking of the wonderful union that exists between Christ and His Church, adds the words: "This mystery is great." You, too, will be silent and awestruck before this mystery when you try to penetrate it more deeply. You will stand in humble admiration before the unfathomable goodness of God, who would work such great things in His creatures. Then will the words of human speech no longer satisfy you. When you hear of the Kingship of Christ and of the Catholic World Mission, your first thought should be to set yourself to pray; and as you pray you will understand for yourself the meaning of the call of Christ the King.

Hence, you see that great thoughts and important eras always have something to say to each one personally - and it is this: they want each one to be personally great. St. Ignatius of Loyola understood this deeply and clearly as few have done. Therefore he gave a personal note to his favourite meditation of the Kingdom of Christ. Let him speak to you in his own simple and powerful words: Place before your eyes an earthly monarch, chosen by God Our Lord Himself, whom all Christians reverence and obey. Mark how this King addresses his people: 'My Will is to reduce to subjection all the lands of the infidels; wherefore, whoever desires to come with me must be contented to eat what I eat, to drink and be clothed as I. And likewise he must labour as I do during the day, and watch during the night, in order that afterwards he may have part with Me in the victory, as he had in the toils.'" St. Ignatius concludes with the words: "If any one did not welcome the request of such a king, how he would deserve to be censured by all the world and deemed a slothful knight." At the beginning of the meditation and at the end, and during the whole hour of prayer, the saint calls upon us to pray, to call to God tirelessly, *'Ne sun urdus,*" "that I be not deaf to His call."

Christ is the King: He calls for volunteers. He calls His own to the winning of the world: "My will is to reduce to subjection all the lands of the infidels." I must stand with our Saviour on the field of battle! May I not be deaf to His call! May I see and understand the meaning of the Kingship of Christ; - understand what it means to me personally, what the triumph of the Kingdom of God on earth means for me; what the Redeemer wants from me! It is quite certain - Our Lord is calling, calling you, calling every Catholic. Everyone must help Him. Everyone must be a missionary in his own way as a layman or a priest, in his own country or among the pagans. The call of Christ has gone out to all. His royal message is everyone's concern. It is the holy Christian duty of every soul to labor with Him to establish His worldwide kingdom. 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' "*Adsum facere voluntatem tuam.*"

I am ready, may I not be deaf to Thy call?

H. DUMOULIN, S.J.

(II)
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

Dear Jim,

That the call of Christ the King gives you now no rest does not surprise me! What young person could listen to His call and not be moved? Is there any one whose soul St. Ignatius' earnest prayer, "that I may be not deaf to His call," would not set on fire?

And now you have overwhelmed me with questions. I am not sure where to start. However, I know a way out. This time I shall relate to you a story which may, indeed solve many of your difficulties. It is the story of St. Francis Xavier, how he heard the call of Christ and the way in which he responded to it. I do not know whether you have already read his life or not. It is a fascinating and highly attractive story. But I must leave it to you to read the life itself in some book, perhaps the new one written by Father Schurlianimmer. For the feast day of the saint I shall bring before your mind only three pictures from his life.

Out from the family castle of his father's rides the youngest member of the Xavier clan. His youthful dream of knight errantry and hero-renown has been dreamt through to its conclusion. Enemies have conquered his fatherland. His home land, Navarre, lies grovelling in the dust. The strength of the aristocracy has been broken. Francis' father has fallen in battle, and his two brothers dragged to prison. Francis was still a child when it all happened. Navarre had finally to surrender to the superior strength of the enemy. The small country's struggle for freedom was at an end, and subjection to foreign power made inevitable.

Francis Xavier rides forth from his homeland -- nineteen years of age. Nevertheless, he will win again the laurels of renown. The University of Paris is his goal. It is the spiritual Mecca of the world. He felt within himself the power to become a great man there in the intellectual sphere.

Francis Xavier rides forth into the world. Its length and breadth lie open to him. Never again shall he set eyes upon the peaceful land of Navarre. The woodlands of his home country rustle in the autumn wind as he makes his way out. It is autumn, too, in the great world whither he rides. It is grown to be a weary place. Decay and disintegration are the characteristic features of the sixteenth century. Mankind no longer thinks again the great thoughts of the noble Middle Ages. The last knight is dead. The hero-ideal is sunk in its grave. The Church bleeds from deep wounds. Francis Xavier knows nothing of these contemporary events. He knows only that he wills to be great. It is springtime in him. He dreams, he desires, he wills. So it is with the nineteen-year-old.

The second scene is in Paris. Before the altar of our dear Lady at Montmartre, among the first seven Jesuits kneels Francis Xavier. The ambitious young Professor, the Master of Arts, who at twenty-four years of age has won the admiration of the University and stands at the threshold of a glorious career, kneels and vows poverty, spiritual poverty and actual poverty as it may please the Divine Majesty; kneels and vows chastity, a stern, hard life of renunciation and penance. The proud nobleman who, by birth, intellectual gifts and strength of character, seems born to rule, kneels and vows obedience, to renounce forever his own will to be the servant and the least of all. "*Voveo paupertatem, castitatem et obedientiam perpetuam,*" "I vow perpetual poverty, chastity and obedience!"

A miracle has taken place-a miracle of Divine Grace. Francis Xavier is now meek and humble, a disciple of Him Who was crucified. Now he is nothing but a "vinctus Christi," a slave of Christ. His heart, his will is "preparedness"; his only prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Not to me, but to Thy Name, O Lord, be praise!" That is more like the lofty character, the noble-mindedness and devotion of a saint in the making.

And now a last scene. The lonely fishery island of Sancian lies opposite the mainland of China. In a straw hut built on the shore Francis Xavier lies resting-- resting on his deathbed. He has won thousands for Christ in India and founded a flourishing young church in Japan. Now China lies before him, that enormous country of a hundred million souls. if he can make the journey thither, if China will receive the Faith even now, then here would be hope that within a brief period all Asia would become Christian, and that the Cross would triumph in the East.

Thus did Francis Xavier hope as he set out on this, his last, journey. But now he lies in death with pagan China before

his very eyes. Only an Indian who had accompanied him, and one Chinese-- a foretaste of the fruits of that country-- are at his side. He had indeed brought two companions from the fatherland with him to help him in his work, but they had deserted him. Portuguese fugitives from a Chinese prison described the terrors of Canton dungeons: how the prisoners were penned together there by the thousand, how their feet were racked every night in wooden blocks, how they were struck and maltreated, and how strong iron doors, high walls and rough guards prevented all access to them. His companions weakened and turned back home. Francis Xavier remained alone with the two strangers waiting for a passage, gazing towards the land he could distinguish in the distance-- waiting: until the fever attacked and brought him down. Now he lies in the straw hut on the lonely shore of Sancian. The tropical night closes in. His two faithful followers watch over him as he draws his dying breath. As the morning of December 3, 1552, dawns, the Indian closes the eyes of the Saint and the Chinese lights the death candle.

Such was the death of St. Francis Xavier— alone among the sons of the East, in the prime of his years, prematurely broken by his excessive toils and sufferings, alone before the gates of China locked and bolted...

You have tired of my story, and I should like to end my letter here: only I should like, too, to stand with you for a few moments in silent awe before the greatness of the Apostle; and to pray with you, to pray to St. Francis Xavier, to pray that you may understand those words of St. Augustine in which he explains the meaning of a life of sanctity. In his Confessions he describes the thoughts that came into his mind when he contemplated the great family of the saints: "I saw great numbers of boys and maidens, men and women, young .and old, grave widows and ladies of dignity.. *'et tu non potens quod isti, quod istae?'*, and should not you be able to do what these, what those have done?" Did they achieve it of themselves, and not rather in the Lord, their God?"

You need not, indeed, you may not, lose courage considering the greatness of a St. Francis Xavier. You should and must have courage, the courage of humility. "*Virtus in infirmitate perficitur,*" "Virtue is perfected in weakness." Was St. Francis Xavier's strength his own and not rather the Lord's, his God's? Has not God in thousands and thousands of missionaries repeated over and over again the life of St. Francis Xavier? And will He not renew it again and again until the light of the true faith is a beacon to the whole world?

It is not a useless romanticism to dream the dream of Xavier. That for which Francis Xavier longed, and for which he sacrificed his strength and his life with a consuming love has not yet been fulfilled. The heroism of the missionaries remains the same even in the twentieth century, The importance of their work has indeed increased. It seems as if today the hour is struck for which Francis longed and prayed, the great hour of grace for the nations of the distant East.

The life of St. Francis Xavier must not merely be dreamt about in the quiet hours. A man must will it, and, with God's grace, live it. It is only natural if all that is great, noble and heroic should be aroused in you as often as you hear of Francis Xavier. Many of the noblest souls share these sentiments with you. It is true, you will also find that it is hard to keep step with the saint; hard not to fall completely behind him in the spirit of sacrifice aid the warmth of your love. For that you must repeatedly pray.

H. DUMOULIN, S.J.

(III.)

THE PRIESTLY VOCATION.

For the Feast of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception.

Dear Jim,

How I rejoice to be able to write this letter to you under the protection of the dear Mother of God. If the grace of God ever visibly works in the lives of men, assuredly it is in the question of a vocation. And in the affairs of grace, Our Lady is our most powerful assistant: she, the Mediatrix of all Graces, the most kindly counsellor: she, the Mother of all who profess the Faith of Christ. "*Per Mariam ad Jesum,*" "through Mary to Jesus." Mary has always been the safest guide to Our Lord in every land. Even during the life time of Jesus she fulfilled this task: and in the course of the centuries she has accomplished it with happy success for so many saints. And she will carry it through for you, too, if you will only trust

yourself to her. Under her guidance, then, we shall broach this difficult question with the fullest confidence.

But is it really so difficult, this question of a vocation? One might think so, seeing so many young people sorely suffering on its account and hearing so many timid doubts - or, considering how much depends upon the solution of the problem where the complete happiness of a young man's life may be involved. Yes, the question is a decisive and an important one, but not on that account difficult and alarming.

The Church shows us a wonderful picture, which is a consoling reality, in the Epistle read in today's Mass. Mary, our Mother, standing and speaking from the earliest times to people in every walk of life: "He who has found Me, will find life, and he shall achieve the salvation of the Lord!" You have found Mary in your life, and you have prayed to her, your Mother, from your youth. Your quest cannot fail. Be humble and confiding. The Mother of God will guide you safely.

But your pressing problem calls for a more distinct reply. You shall have it. You should clearly understand what is meant by a vocation to the priesthood--such a vocation is indeed the very kernel of the call to the missions - and how it fits in with your own vocation. I shall tell you what Our Lord Himself said about vocations and what the Church thinks and teaches on the subject. Thus we shall be on safe ground and in no danger of error.

A strange story, deeply significant, is found in the Gospels: the meeting of Jesus with the rich young man. You have often heard it, and perhaps once upon a time it affected you profoundly. You may learn from it how important is the choice of a vocation.

All that is necessary for a genuine call to the priesthood and apostolate was present in the case of the rich young man. He is noble and high principled, well disposed for grace, and willing to receive it. From his youth he had observed all the Commandments and the precepts. And now he puts the problem of his vocation to the Master. "What is yet wanting to Me?" Is not this your own problem? In every letter you write, you return to it.

And the Saviour's reply: 'Jesus, looking on the young man, loved him.' And He spoke to him: "One thing is yet lacking, come, follow Me!"

Our Lord invites the rich young man. He calls him to be His companion. What significance has that in the question of selecting a vocation? This: the call to the priesthood is grace. It is "calling" in a special sense. "It is not you who have chosen Me; it is I Who have chosen you!"

The priest is a "vessel of election." Fullness of power is bestowed on him, making him a sharer in the power of God. Day after day the Son of God descends upon the altar obedient to his word. Day after day he brings Him to the Heavenly Father as a sacrifice of reconciliation for the sins of the world. Power is given to him to forgive sins. Truly the grace of a vocation to the priesthood is a sublime gift of God. No sinful creature is worthy of such an exalted calling. "Let no man presume this honour for himself, but he must be called to it by God," says St. Paul.

The power of the priest is in his vocation. He may be weak and quite unworthy in himself, but he knows that God, who began the work, will see to its fulfilment. Yes, perhaps his very paltriness is the foundation of his vocation. God has indeed chosen what the world esteems as weak in order to confound the strong. The call is the work of grace; that means humility. I have done nothing towards it myself. ... It is grace; that means courage. God will manifest the workings of grace in me.

The vocation is founded in the elective grace of God. It becomes efficacious through the free decision of the one called, as is shown by the other words Jesus spoke to the rich young man: "If thou wilt be perfect. . . ." The vocation is voluntary. God's grace forces no man. Christ founded His Kingdom on the generosity of His disciples, on their free consent. If the Church is to grow and expand on earth, if the mysteries of the Blessed Sacrament are, to be celebrated or the truth of the Gospel to be proclaimed, it will depend upon whether men of noble minds may still be found ready to sacrifice all and to follow Christ. There is something greatly touching for a noble soul in Our Lord's confidence in the generosity of His own.

It is true that Our Saviour knew that very many noble-minded men would be forthcoming until the end of time.

But there still remains the final decision allowed to every single one in his own free choosing. Each one has the power to say "no."

That invitation came to the rich young man just as it did to the twelve Apostles. The same vocational graces worked in them all. Of the Apostles it is written: "And they left all and followed Jesus." But of the rich young man: "And he went away sad, because he had great possessions." A young man must put his goods together and give his consent. In this lies the ultimate meaning of his freedom in the matter.

You may learn yet another truth from the story of the rich young man, a golden truth, above all for the choice of a vocation. It is written: "He went away sad!" Sad because he had not the will to make the sacrifice. Have you ever thought about the pleasure that is found in sacrifice? It is the only true and absolutely pure pleasure - pleasure through sacrifice and in sacrifice. Try it for yourself; try it again and again until you are able by the great final sacrifice of your life to win the highest possible happiness for yourself.

Now let the story of the rich young man and the words of Our Saviour speak once more to your soul: "Jesus looked on the young man and loved him; and He said to him: One thing is still wanting to you. If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou wilt have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me."

These are Our Lord's words about vocation. And the Church, that is to say, Christ still living on the earth in time, takes care that the Saviour's words are rightly understood and carried out and so bring men to eternal happiness. Accordingly, I shall now tell you what the Church thinks about vocation to the priesthood.

First of all you must believe that God willingly and liberally dispenses the grace of vocation, that He calls many to the ranks of His priests. You would not, and could not, credit that God would be miserly in His gifts, nor that His grace could be found wanting at a time when the world has too few priests and too few apostles. It is God's Will that all men should be saved. But how can they be saved when there are not priests enough to distribute to them the grace of redemption, when there are insufficient numbers of apostles? O preach to them the word of God? The grace of a vocation is not an unusual thing, God bestows it on many young men. Our late Holy Father states this expressly. In his encyclical on August 1, 1922, we find: "The priesthood is an essential part of the Church. Wherefore it cannot be doubted that in our own day God grants an ample supply of priestly vocations. Otherwise He would be withdrawing His assistance from the Church in a matter of vital importance."

In accordance with her way of understanding the matter, the Church lays down the conditions by which the genuineness of a vocation is tested. They are only these two: right intention, and suitability. Pope Pius X. announced this clearly in his Decree, July 26, 1912. He says: "The vocation to the priesthood does not in itself necessarily include a definite perceptible inclination or a continuous impulse on the part of the Holy Ghost. As far as the candidate is concerned nothing more is required than the right intention and the suitability; that is, that he be endowed with natural and supernatural gifts in such a measure that one may have the well grounded hope that he will grow to be really suitable for fulfilling the obligations of the priesthood. Such is the case when he has led an upright life and has received the necessary intellectual formation." As Father Vermeersch says, discussing this Decree, the right intention is present "when one wants to become a priest, not in order to lead an easy, pleasant life, nor with a desire for the honour and respect which the ministry brings with it, but in order to take one's share in the work of establishing Christ's Kingdom, convinced that a priest can do much more for the glory of God, for the salvation of afflicted souls and his own personal sanctification."

The mind of the Church on the subject of the choice of a vocation is made quite clear in these recent explanations. Whoever satisfies these conditions, which the Church lays down, should be comforted by the conviction that God has bestowed upon him the grace of a vocation. Now it remains for him to do all in his power to reach the goal of the priesthood. The young man has no business to brood and doubt any further. He should make his decision courageously and offer himself wholeheartedly to the Church for the sacred ministry. In the Church the Holy Ghost holds sway. If the Church accepts him as her priest, and, after preliminary trials in a diocesan or regular seminary, gives her final consent through the Superiors who take God's place, then the Lord has chosen him. God has bestowed on him the fulness of the grace of vocation.

My letter has become somewhat lengthy, but I thought I should write all this to you to explain what choosing a vocation means. You should now understand the matter quite well and make your decision with your mind clear.

Meanwhile I continue to recommend you and your troubles to the dear Mother of God. You placed your choice of a vocation in her hands from the beginning. It is in safe keeping. For, indeed, "it has never been heard of that anyone who fled to her protection, implored her help or sought her intercession was abandoned." And note well that least of all has it ever been heard of in the great anxiety of choosing a vocation.

- H. DUMOULIN, S.J.

(IV)

THE HEATHENS' NEEDS.

For the Feast of the Epiphany.

Dear Jim,

Through the long weeks of Advent you have in your trusting prayer nourished in your heart your love and interest for the missions, until you were able to lay them on Christmas night at the feet of the Infant Jesus in the crib. I waited a while before writing to you again. The still, silent winter weeks, while the seed is growing in the soil, are indeed valuable moments. But today the Church is beckoning. She invites us to be her great mission ally. It is the Epiphany of Our Lord. "He has appeared; He has appeared. Christ, our salvation, has shown Himself to us." To all the peoples and the nations comes the call: Wait no longer; delay not to come and live in His incomparable light." See here the three holy Kings! They are the first born. "of the great host, of all peoples, races, families and tongues that no man can number," the multitude that in Christ has found its salvation.

The Epiphany is the Church's mission rally. It is the time when she rejoices in the great results of her mission labours, of the unwearying care that has brought in a hundredfold. Once upon a time our homeland was also an untilled mission field. The proud Roman empire was a most difficult heathen civilisation when the Apostles subdued it to the Cross of Christ. The Church looks back with joy and gratitude over a glorious mission history. She may also rejoice when she considers the present position of the world missions. How amazed were men at the Vatican Mission Exhibition held in Rome during the Holy Year! The world had not seen its equal over many years. "Their fame has gone forth unto the ends of the earth." That is true; the call of the Faith has gone forth unto the bounds of the earth -- unto the bounds of the earth the kingdom of God expands. "*Cor Pauli cor mundi*," these are the words inscribed beneath the maps on which St. Paul's missionary journeys are traced. "*Cor Ecclesiae. Cor totius orbis terrarum*," "The heart of the Church embraces the whole world." This is the story of the Mission Exhibition. Cardinals, Princes, Bishops, priests, and long processions of devout pilgrims move backwards and forwards through the rooms of the Exhibition. How that sight must have stirred their hearts!

The eyes of a young Roman lad lit up when he saw such evidence of great heroism in the missions. And then he thought: "It has all been done already, nothing remains for us to do." These words express something like the fear of the young Alexander that his father had left him no more worlds to conquer.

This childish remark brings sorrow to the heart of one who knows the actual facts. Sorrow and the feeling of responsibility mingle with joy in today's mission festival. And the Church wants us to ponder on such thoughts as these. In spite of all the great success that has been and of the even greater efforts that are being made, only a very small part of the enormous work to be done has yet been completed. You know the figures, I think: of the 16 or 17 hundred million in the world, over 1000 million are non-Catholics that is, heathens, Mohammedans and Jews. And of the 650 million Christians, only one half belongs to the True Church.

Thousands of millions--numbers are cold and speechless, but the distress which such figures conceal cries out the louder. Great numbers, it is true, are saved from paganism through the inexhaustible mercy and grace of God. But we may not and can not forget the heartrending misery and the frightful danger which lurk beneath these figures. In his Mission Encyclical, our Holy Father Pius XI has the following words: "As long as God in His Divine Providence shall permit us to look upon the light of this world, so long shall we carefully and anxiously fulfil this part of Our Apostolic office. We are continually pondering on the fact that there are still a thousand million heathens, and Our heart finds no rest. It is as if We

heard in the depths of Our soul that striking command: 'Call to them and do not weary. Raise up thy voice like a trumpet!'" A thousand million heathens -- may these figures strike fire in our hearts.

I do not know whether you have heard the frightful story of that desperate young Japanese student. It is typical of a thousand others. If you want to realise the full meaning of the phrase, "a thousand million heathens," you should keep this fact before your eyes while you read it.

It is in Japan, the land of the rising sun. The fragrant life of spring abounds. The Kegon waterfall springs down from a high rock. Prayers and hymns are wafted over from the nearby Buddhist sanctuary, Nikko. At the foot of the rushing waterfall a young man is lying. His limbs are shattered. He is couched among the dewy grasses and crowned with the flowers of spring. The paleness of death is covered over with cherry blossoms. That young human life was extinguished by the terrible leap into the depths from the brink of the rock above. They found cut into the smooth bark of a cypress nearby a few words giving an account of the young suicides life and of the motives for his action. He was a Japanese university student. He had begun to lose faith in the gods of his fathers, and modern European paganism had then driven him to the last stages of despair. Hundreds followed him in the next months and made the death leap.

That is the history of a single man. Do you understand that this is typical of a thousand million heathens? Each of these thousand million human lives has its story. Truly, an appalling number share the plight of unredeemed humanity, unredeemed from the curse and the yoke of sin.

But you may say: "Do I not find the same thing when I take up a German newspaper— -sorrow and misery everywhere? What need have we to go to Africa or the Far East? Our pagan mission is so near. Indeed, we live among heathens!" Certainly, and yet the distress in the mission countries is still incomparably greater than in our capital cities. In Christian Europe each one of goodwill can find the safe way to heaven through the Church. There crosses greet one by the wayside; the bells ring out; the Church invites all to come to the knowledge of the true faith and through it to be saved. The Sacraments and the means of salvation are at the disposal of everybody. The call of grace goes out to all.

Conditions in pagan countries are vastly different. There, millions of men still live who never learn anything of Christ and of salvation through Him. And the number of priests is so small that it is impossible to teach the majority even the fundamental truths of religion. How difficult it is for these poor souls to attain salvation without the true Catholic faith!

There lies the mission duty of the Church. She must preach the Gospel to every nation, she must offer salvation to every creature. That is the meaning of Christ's mission command with its solemn obligation: "Go into the whole world and teach all nations."

Even though she suffers and is in great need at home, the Church must be missionary. She knows the great mystery of Christianity: "Whoever will save his life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life for My sake shall save it." She knows that if she makes sacrifices for the missions, then she grows in the homeland. The more sacrifices she makes, and is allowed to make, so much the more is God's blessing with her, and so much the more vigorously does she show forth the spirit of Christ, of the Good Shepherd who came to restore and save what was lost: "*Semen vocationum. est missio Apostolorum,*" "the sending forth of Apostles is seed of new vocations." If hundreds of missionaries journey to distant countries, God sends the Church thousands and thousands of new priests and apostles in return. How short-sighted is the anxious care of many for the homeland! As if ever a country would have suffered harm through enthusiasm for the missions. Cardinal Manning once remarked at the foundation of a mission house: "Certainly we have great need ourselves of men and means, but that for me is precisely a reason for sending money and men on the missions. The sacrifice will redound to the good of the Church at home."

And still another serious motive urges the Church today to pledge all her strength in the work of the missions. Christian Europe through her missionaries must pay a debt that presses heavily on its conscience. It must make good again that in which it has sinned and still sins today among pure and blameless races. Just think of the negroes whom the white dealers have enslaved by the thousands --of the Indians who have perished in cruel civil war, owing to the presence of Europeans dividing the loyalty of the natives-- of the people of Asia who for hundreds of years were sacrificed to an unscrupulous, exploiting policy. Still greater have been the spiritual evils. Europeans flooded these nations with the filth

of a corrupted culture, introduced the frightful gifts of modern economic systems, Capitalism and Socialism, and taught them a disruptive neo-pagan philosophy. Yet, just think, what were the obligations of Europe to the world, of a Europe that was Christian? Is it not high time to make reparation for the sins of our fathers and brothers? Is it not only just to sacrifice our all and to devote all our strength to the missions?

This letter has become a little serious for the beautiful time of Christmas. And yet it is a real Christmas letter. The need of the thousand million pagans, if you consider it rightly, is nothing else than the tearful uplifting of their hands in prayer, or the expectant gaze of their longing eyes to the Child in the crib, Who brings peace on earth to men of good - will.

If you listen to the Heart of the Divine Child in the crib you will find that It beats for no other reason than the salvation of all the children of men.

H. DUMOULIN, S.J

(V.)

THE YOUNG MISSIONARY.

For the Feast of the Purification of Our Lady.

Dear Jim,

Today the Church is celebrating at Candlemas a festive mystery from the youth of Our Lord, and so it will be very suitable if I tell you something about the youth of a young missionary.

The Church sings gaily and merrily, "*Lumen ad revelationem gentium*," "a light for the revelation of the Gentiles." Mary bears her little Child to the temple in order that He might be offered to the Lord. And this Child is "the light of the world," the only true light "which enlighteneth every man that comes into the world." A share in this light is for all those who ought to shine like Him as the Light of the world, for all apostles and missionaries in whose life the love of God, truth and holiness ought to radiate upon the earth.

"A light for the revelation of the Gentiles" - and, there stands before the monastery door a young novice who brings with him absolutely nothing but a little good - will and his holy vocation. But already a light is burning in this future missionary. The grace of vocation has lit it in him. True, this little light is yet but weak and tiny; it has not the brightness, the heat, nor the power to radiate. A great deal must happen before the novice becomes the missionary, or the apostle of the Gentiles. But Mary, whose intercession has won the grace of vocation and who has protected the feeble glow and brought it into the sanctuary of the noviceship, now takes the young missioner under her special protection. The wonderful care with which she watched over the early years of the Son of God in Nazareth, she now exercises again in the life of the future Apostle.

It is difficult to say what Mary means in the life of the young missionary. Almost everything! She strengthens and deepens his vocation: she maintains his lofty ideals: she makes his troubles light: she gives him vigour as he grows up. The way in which a young missioner develops under her mantle is indeed a joyous thing. There is joy in his heart; his powers and faculties increase; the whole youth grows and develops strength for his task. In this way, Mary having once won the grace of vocation now gives her gifts in all their fulness. The law of grace in the Kingdom of God states: "He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound." The vocation itself is only the first, the foundation grace. Whoever follows it may rest assured of more to come. Provided he remain faithful he will become a genuine missionary. God takes care that His apostles are well equipped. The young missioner no longer belongs to himself; he belongs to his holy vocation, the mission.

You may like to hear something more and, in particular, about the early years of a missioner. The Church sends diocesan clergy and religious to the missions. The different Orders and Congregations in their turn, send priests and lay-brothers. Moreover, there are many excellent societies of mission Sisters. The training of priests in the diocesan seminary and of those in the various Orders, though differing in detail, is the same in the essential lines of Catholic priest formation. From both go forth able and qualified missioners.

As an introduction, I will tell you today about the training of the young Jesuit missionary.

First, something in general. The Society of Jesus has a saintly mission tradition Right from the early days of their first fathers, St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier, a vigorous missionary enthusiasm prevailed among the young Jesuits. It was deeply founded in the ideal and the spirit of the Order. The Rector of the Scholasticate of Coimbra, one of the earliest houses of Study of the Society, announced in a letter of the sixteenth century: "The whole college is set on going to the Indies." That enthusiasm for the missions has remained until the present day. The Society of Jesus still sends the greatest number of missionaries to heathen countries, more than any other Order or Society. The Jesuit esteems it a great favour to be allowed to go on the mission; a favour indeed not granted to all who ask for it. But that need not deter anyone who enters the Society of Jesus animated with missionary zeal. By the very fact of his reception, he will be assured of being sent on the mission, as long as no extraordinary difficulties arise. (By a decree of the General Congregation.)

Missionary zeal and a high esteem for the missions have always been manifest in the Society of Jesus. Indeed, her best members have at all times repeatedly longed for this work and put themselves at the disposal of Superiors for it. Of the Society's canonised saints many are missionaries. The ardent desire of her two youthful saints Aloysius and John Berchmans was that they might be allowed to go on the missions. Thus the young Jesuit finds himself in the presence of the real mission spirit in the noviceship. What is the noviceship? What do these two years mean to the coming missionary? It is a happy time during which the foundations of a saintly priestly life are laid in prayer and all kinds of useful occupations. In the formation of the missionary these two years are all important. His most important work is to live Christianity among the pagans. He must, first and foremost, be a deeply spiritual and holy priest. Only then will his preaching and his labours be of any value. Only then will he be able to hope for a fruitful apostolate. St. Paul, the great model of all missionaries to pagan lands, made a three years' novitiate in the desert of Arabia. That ought to console many a young fiery soul who longs to be out converting the heathens before his time. At the end of the Jesuit's noviceship come the vows, the everlasting union with Our Lord in poverty, chastity and obedience.

Philosophical and theological studies follow seven years in all. These studies are necessary, for the missionary has not merely to learn a foreign language in order to complete his formation and be able to begin his apostolic work. Our best and most important missions are among the cultured eastern races. They require just as much learning and knowledge as would be necessary in the homeland. He must make himself familiar with the philosophical systems of Asia, and be armed against the errors of Protestantism, which are spread far and wide by the numberless sects. It is of the highest importance that our missionaries be well grounded intellectually. The blame for the slow progress of the missions in many places in Asia should certainly be attributed to the fact that insufficient importance has been given to the period of formation. These considerations explain the seven years' study and show the importance of this period. It is already indeed working for the missions.

It is a cause of special joy that even during this time much can be done by way of direct preparation for the efficiency of the future work. Working and sacrificing for the cause is always the best way to maintain zeal and enthusiasm. The seven years provide plenty of time for acquiring a thorough knowledge of the language of the future mission area, and this, in turn, opens up the way to an understanding of the spirit and the culture of the country. Learning the language is not, as many indeed think, the most important and the most difficult thing in the training. Admittedly it is a job that must be done, and can often become very tiring, but, on the whole, this study of language is a source of joy. I think that if you were to ask a veteran missionary about it, he would certainly not wish to have been without his difficulties in this matter. The labours are not comparable to the fruit they produce.

I still have to tell you about the final stages of the young missionary's development, about his ordination to the priesthood. But words are poor and meaningless things to describe it. A lifetime would not suffice to think out all that it means to be a priest, and day by day to offer His only begotten Son in Sacrifice to the Living God. As a priest the missionary goes forth to pagan lands, an intermediary between God and man, a vessel of grace and election....

I have told you enough now about the life of the young missionary. You may think perhaps that I have described it all in rosy colours. Certainly, so I have! For in actual fact the formation period of the young missionary is a bright and happy

time. From the first moment that he becomes conscious of his vocation he is as happy as the day is long. In the heart of a young man preparing to become a missionary a great love is burning, the love of Christ and the love of souls. St. Paul describes it in a letter he wrote to the Christians at Corinth. This love “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” It is the secret of the missionary’s youth.

H. DUMOULIN, S.J.

(VI)

THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

Passion Sunday.

Dear Jim,

On the feast day of Christ the King Our Lord unfurled His mission banner. You have taken your stand beneath it, and now it is waving above you.

The life and death of St. Francis Xavier have already shown you the greatness of the apostle’s sacrifice. And now today, Passion Sunday; the King’s banner bears in blood - red letters: “The Mystery of the Cross.” The Cross is the most profound and the most important fact in the life of the missionary. We must give a little time to considering it.

It often seems to people a very foolish thing that the young missionary should leave his mother, father and country, and should renounce all his prospects for the future in order to go to a foreign land. They cannot understand why he should journey **to** an unknown people with a strange language and strange customs, in order to lead a life of hard work and self denial, and finally to find a lonely grave in a foreign soil. Yes, foolishness it is: the folly of the Cross, a secret hidden from the wise ones of this world. The missionary's life is founded on this folly; it is the Mystery of the Cross that explains his life.

If you want to become a genuine missionary you must thoroughly understand the mystery of the Cross. You must examine it closely, embrace it lovingly; it is the spring of grace for your life’s work. As a missionary you live the mystery of the Cross in your own life and death. You co-operate with it, and in it you find your happiness.

“I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” These words are found right at the beginning of a missionary's life. Our Lord used them to call St. Paul to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. He uses them still today in the vocation of any missionary.. “Unless the grain of wheat falleth into the ground and dieth, itself remaineth alone; but if it dieth, it bringeth forth much fruit.” The missionary must die in many ways if he is to have the power to work for souls and to bring them to God. He must die in order that Christ may live in him. Our Lord leads him on from sacrifice to sacrifice until all self-will and all self-love are dead in him. This death to self begins early in his life—in the sacrifices he must make of the ties that bind him to family and to friends, in the trials of the long period of formation. Sufferings of many kinds follow in the distant pagan country, the cross, perhaps of failure; the cross of the continuous sacrifice of his heart whose dearest wishes remain unfulfilled. His heart must be immolated until the time comes when it has no desires of its own and seeks nothing but the greater glory of God.

The grain of wheat dies and brings forth much fruit. In the same way, the sacrifices which the missionary makes are the blessings of the mission. “The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.” The mystery of grace in the Kingdom of God is the mystery of martyrdom -- and so it is, too, on the missions. That is why all our mission countries must drink deep of the blood of martyrs; that is why today, too, every true missionary must be a martyr - at least in his heart.

The missionary cooperates in the mystery of the Cross. Today, Passion Sunday, the crosses are veiled in the Church. On Good Friday, when they are unveiled, the priest says: “Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world!” The missionary's task is to bring salvation to the world and absolution from the guilt of sin. He can do it in no other way than by pointing directly to the crucifix: “Behold the wood of the Cross” and by cleansing souls in the Blood of the Son of God, the Lamb that was crucified for the sins of the world. In a letter to the new Christians of Corinth, St. Paul wrote: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the

testimony of Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” The missionary does not look upon himself as the “bearer of a culture” or as one who brings high “spiritual advancement”; he knows he is simply the preacher of the Cross of Christ.

Still more closely does the missionary share in the sacrifice of the Cross. He cooperates in the salvation of the world. He must become by his own sufferings a co-redeemer. “I fill up the things that are wanting of the Passion of Christ,” as St. Paul wrote. Not as though Christ’s work of redemption was not completely accomplished. Nor does he mean that Our Lord’s Cross did not fully atone for our sins, or that it did not cause to spring up an inexhaustible source of divine grace. In the Blood of Christ every man of every age is redeemed. But it is for the apostle and the missionary to make the grace of redemption bear fruit, so that it will bring all men to salvation. Therefore, the Apostle of the Nations writes “Grace has not remained idle in me.”

The missionary sacrifices himself and suffers in the same way, in order that grace may not remain idle but may do its work. Christ accomplished the sacrifice for our salvation once and for all on the Cross; He wants to renew it in every apostle and missionary. That is the meaning of the words which the priest says every morning at Mass: “*Offerimus*,” “We offer to Thee.”

Every missionary knows that he depends upon the Cross for the success of his work. That is why he really desires to suffer and to make sacrifices. St. Francis Xavier in Japan and in India prayed through the long nights before a picture of Our Lord crucified, with a holy desire for suffering: “Let me suffer more and still more, O Lord.” He knew that souls are saved above all through suffering and prayer; the overflowing happiness that missionaries find in their sufferings. This is the crowning point of the mystery of the Cross. It is very difficult for us poor children of men to understand, so much so that we would not believe it if the saints did not speak of it over and over again, and if it did not so frequently reappear in letters from missionaries. Let us see what St. Francis Xavier says about it in his letters. From Goa he wrote to his brethren in Rome: “If we suffer these hardships on behalf of those for whom we ought to suffer them, they are a source of great comfort and a motive for much great consolation. How happy is our life when we die to ourselves daily, make war on our own inclinations and seek not our own but the things of Jesus Christ!”

In another of Francis’ letters from the pearl fishery coast, the goal of one of his hardest missionary journeys involving the greatest self-denial, we read the following words: “I know nothing else to write to you about concerning this part of the world except that the consolations, which God our Lord gives to those who live among the pagans and bring them to the faith of Christ, are so great that if there is any true joy in this life it is to be found here.

O, if a student seeking satisfaction in a knowledge of science, were to seek it in bringing his neighbours to a knowledge of those things which are really necessary - to know God and to serve Him; how much more happily would he live and how much better prepared would he find himself when he hears Christ summon him, “Give an account of thy stewardship!”

God grants His missionaries abundant joy in their sufferings so that they may be contented and happy men. They have to show the poor pagans that the Christianity which they preach is a happy religion, and that in it salvation and peace of soul are to be found.

But now, is it right to compose a long letter to a young missionary and talk only about the Cross? Won’t the hard, rough realities of life come only too soon? What right have I to check the enthusiasm of youth? St. Francis Xavier himself shall justify my letter. He once wrote: “I am afraid that some missionaries come from Spain with enthusiasm for the difficult call of the missions, and then when a storm blows up at sea, they would prefer to see themselves safe in the Society at Coimbra rather than on a ship. There is a certain kind of enthusiasm which wanes long before they reach India!”

I am glad that I have written this letter to you. I know it will not make you sad. Rather, the genuine enthusiasm of your young heart will thrive on it. You will accept with more determination and overcome with greater courage your daily crosses and sacrifices. You will cling with an even greater love to the Cross of Christ, and you will pray that its mystery may be more and more clearly revealed to you.

In the half year that has just passed God’s graces have flowed in their fulness upon you; they have enriched you and

brought you happiness. Your determination remains steadfast: you want to be a missionary. Before you lies a life that God will bless and render fruitful. God has bestowed on you the grace of a missionary vocation. You have now only to be faithful to complete the work.

The grace of a vocation brings with it a serious responsibility. You know well yourself how many a one has received the call of Christ and responded generously in his first wild enthusiasm. And yet he has never reached the goal, never made the noble decision proposed to him by the grace of God. Difficulties cropped up: the vocation involved sacrifice; enthusiasm waned... . He could have been a real missionary, but he did not make the effort. He looked back to the beckoning pleasures of the world; he looked for honour and glory. What was lacking to complete his vocation was that - he was unwilling. He did not cooperate, and so grace remained dead and unproductive.

You will have to make many dark hours, too. You will have to make many a sacrifice before you reach the goal which seems just now so bright and clear to you. She, whose beautiful Feast we celebrate under the title, Our Lady Mediatrix of all Graces, guarantees that for you...

- H. DUMOULIN, S.J.

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