

Why Not Share The Faith?

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"Congratulations, Mr. Smith," said the pastor as he shook hands with his new parishioner. "May every day of your life be as happy as this, the day of your baptism."

"Thank you, Father," replied Mr. Smith. "This is indeed the happiest day of my life and your wish is a very generous one."

The scene was the steps of St. Michael's Church, where the middle-aged man had just been received into the Church, and baptized. Others crowded around too to offer their congratulations, his wife, his children, his relatives and friends.

"There is only one regret that I have," continued Mr. Smith. "I am sorry now that I waited so long."

"Why did you wait so long?" asked one of his friends.

"Chiefly, I suppose," he said slowly and with hesitation, not wishing to offend, "because no one ever asked me before."

In those words spoken on the steps of a Catholic Church by a newly-fledged convert is contained a story full of meaning for souls, and for all interested in winning souls for Christ. It is the story of the strange silence of Catholics about their faith, and the impression that they have no role to play in converting souls to Christ. It is the story of those who say that the conversion of souls is the exclusive work, of the clergy. And it is the business of this pamphlet to break that silence, to help remove that false impression, and to enlist the co-operation of all our people in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel far and wide.

THE NEED IN AUSTRALIA.

I do not think that anyone will deny that there are vast opportunities for conversion work in Australia at the present time. During the last 10 or 15 years, it is true, valiant efforts have been made to step up this work. Special missions for non-Catholics have been held in various cities; Enquiry Classes have been operated in some parishes, and Information Bureaux have been set up. Some groups of the laity, like the Legion of Mary have been active in recruiting converts, and the clergy have been zealous where-ever possible in the work of instruction and conversion.

All this is true, but by and large, this activity has been limited, and for evident reasons. With only 2,500 priests to minister to the ordinary needs of the faithful, it has been difficult for the average priest to find time to care for those not of the fold. In a young and growing country, other things have had priority — the building of Churches and schools, for example, and the general development of parish life. Other factors such as sectarianism have played their part in delaying the work of conversions. As a result there has been only a meagre trickle of converts to Catholicism — probably not more than a couple of thousand throughout Australia and New Zealand each year.

Is there any way of increasing this number and changing the trickle into a steady stream? Yes, there is. It is the wholehearted co-operation of the laity in the work of recruiting and instructing those outside the Church. This is the mighty reservoir of power and energy that has yet to be tapped, and which will win many of the churchless people of Australia to the one true Faith.

In this matter the facts are plain enough. There are some Australians who are bitterly opposed to the Church on political or sectarian grounds, but there are literally thousands who are well disposed and waiting for the truth. I have spoken to many of other Faiths who admire the teachings of Catholicism and who are eager to advance in their knowledge of religion. I have talked to hundreds of churchless people — those who are indifferent at the moment to all churches — tradesmen, office workers, farmers, professional men and women, but whose minds are wonderfully open to the claims of Catholicism. In this land there is a host of several million souls, whitening for the harvest. The clergy are doing their utmost to gather this harvest, but the reapers are too few. There is a crying need for lay disciples of Christ to supplement their work, and lead the way into the hearts of their friends.

To the million and a half lay Catholics in Australia [Footnote: Australia, in 2011 has nearly six million adherents in a population of 20 million. But how many of them are zealous for God's Kingdom on earth, His Church? Most of the increase in Catholic numbers has come, not by evangelization but by immigration. But, to continue]... to the millions of lay Catholics Christ addresses now the words He first uttered by Jacob's well in Samaria:

"Do not you say, there are yet four months, and then the harvest comes? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the countries, for they are white already for the harvest. And he that reaps, receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life everlasting" (John 4:35-36).

This is the message that deserves to be better understood by our Catholic people. This is the message that needs to be preached in every pulpit in Australia, in season and out of season. This is the lesson that can be learnt in our Catholic schools, and the challenge that can be presented to some at least of our lay organisations.

It is a duty that should be stressed until all Catholics are kindled with a generous zeal to share their Faith with their fellow-Australians, and thus win Australia for Christ.

WHY SO FEW?

Why is it a fact that so few lay people interest themselves in convert work of any kind?

Why are so many startled when they are asked to participate, as if someone had asked them to jump over the moon? Why are so many self-centred in their devotional life, and sometimes so indifferent to the needs of others?

For the simple reason that the duty of such an apostolate has seldom, if ever, been explained to them. We need to explain that Christ was speaking to them as well as the Apostles when He said: "Go all of you into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). And again when He said: "Going therefore teach, all of you, all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matthew 28:19).

Were Christ's words reserved to the chosen Apostles, or to the hierarchy and clergy of His Church? By no means! He spoke to all His followers, and made them "Fishers of Men," each in their own

degree. He bade His disciples to go into the highways and the byways to preach the Gospel, and He sent them into the cities of Judea and Galilee even during His own ministry to carry the vital message of salvation.

Every disciple of Our Lord must try and share the spirit of Christ Himself who searched ceaselessly for souls, and who gave His precious blood on the Cross to save them.

If further proof were needed, we have it in the writings of St. Paul and St. Peter who constantly urged the early Christians to preach the Gospel by word and work. Here for example is the advice of St. Peter to his flock: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may declare His virtues, who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

Not less in our own day has this duty of spreading the faith been enunciated by the Church. One of the favourite themes of recent Popes, in fact, has been the need for lay-apostles and of Catholic Action. The laity have been called to engage in the apostolate, in co-operation with the Hierarchy and the Clergy.

In the words of Pius XI: "All the faithful, no matter of what age and social class are called to the exercise of Catholic Action, since all must work in the mystical vineyard of the Lord."

And again he said: "Nowadays as more than once in the history of the Church, we are confronted with a world which in large measure has fallen back into paganism. To bring back to Christ these whole classes of men who have denied Him, we must gather and train from amongst their very ranks Auxiliary Soldiers of the Church, men who know well their mentality and their aspirations, and who will be able to win their hearts with kindly fraternal charity."

Here indeed is a clarion call to action, to restore all things in Christ; and although the tasks of Catholic Action are many and varied, ranging over many religious, cultural and social fields, they certainly include the winning of souls to Christ. Catholic Action would be sadly incomplete if it did not concern itself with bringing the Faith to as many people as possible.

In this matter it may help to make a comparison. One cannot help noticing at times the zeal of such bodies as the Salvation Army, or the Seventh Day Adventists in spreading their various beliefs. Look at the activities of the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Mormons. Most of the members of these groups are active. They are fired with astonishing zeal to spread abroad a strange mixture of truth and error. They make great sacrifices for their objective. They travel up and down the country and they go from door to door. They support publicity programmes on radio and television, and in the daily press. They preach in the streets and hold their meetings in spite of the indifference of the general public. They have special training colleges and stage numerous conventions.

The same phenomenon can be observed in the Communist Party, which aims at the destruction of all Christian society. Every Communist is an apostle of Communism — he is a cell member in a shop or factory, in trade union or political party, in war or in peace. He is the willing slave of a totalitarian ideology, and he brings to his tasks a formidable spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice.

How strange it is to see the zeal of the enemies of Christianity, and to observe the apathy of many Christians themselves! How depressing it is at times to find Catholics who care little about their Faith, that glorious deposit of truth left to the Church by Christ. Catholic men and women have received the priceless gift of their Faith through Baptism; they are fortified in that Faith, by Confirmation and the other Sacraments. They have the knowledge that others seek after, and the

peace of soul which Christ alone can give. Surely all that is needed for another Pentecostal flood of conversions is a similar dedication of their lives and energies to the greatest cause of all.

A PROGRAMME OF ACTION.

How then can the laity assist the Hierarchy and the clergy in winning souls for Christ? What methods can they use in sharing the Faith amongst millions who know little or nothing of the one true Church?

In the pages of this pamphlet it is impossible to give a complete answer to these questions, but perhaps it is possible to point out the more obvious means, and to mention briefly the more successful ventures in conversion work in Australia in recent years.

First and foremost, it should be noted that the only foundation of all conversion work is a dedicated Catholic life — a life of prayer, and action, based principally on the help of God and His Church. To undertake this arduous apostolate without developing the interior life is to ask for failure.

According to the striking words of Pope Pius X:

"To restore all things in Christ by the apostolate of good works, divine grace is wanted; and the Apostle does not get it unless he is one with Christ. When we have formed Jesus Christ in ourselves, then only shall we be able to give Him easily to families and to societies. All those who share in the apostolate must, then, have solid piety."

Hence it is clear that a 'Sunday-Mass-and-nothing-else' type of Catholicism is useless in this or in any apostolate. Something more is needed — a sincere quest for holiness and a solid Catholic piety. This will lead the apostle to closer imitation of Christ and His Blessed Mother, to a greater love of the Mass and the Sacraments; to a more constant practice of prayer, to a more generous charity towards his neighbour. It will help him (or her) to display a love of the Faith which is thoroughly convincing to his non-Catholic friends. It will bring the blessing of God upon a work which is supernatural in its origin and value.

Furthermore, the necessity of prayer in winning souls for Christ has another application. Speaking of his labours among the Corinthians, St. Paul wrote: "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore neither he that plants is anything, nor he that waters, but God, who gives the increase" (I Cor. 3:6-7).

One of the first steps in any crusade of conversions will be the launching of a Crusade of Prayer. Summing up the findings of a Conference on conversions, held at Roehampton, England, in 1950, Bishop Heenan spoke as follows:

"Not many will forget that Faith is a free gift of God. But actual experience among non-Catholics brings the truth home to us with ever-increasing force and clarity. The extent of religious ignorance, the plausibility of half-truth, the deep-rooted prejudices of many, the drag of human respect, the vitality of error, the inexplicable fear of the Church, the weight of past habit, the costly sacrifices and the painful journey required of many before they come to the light — all these soon persuade us of the paramount necessity of Grace. We cannot do a divine work with merely human instruments."

Hence the need of prayer, individual and corporate, in the apostolate of conversions. The Church is constantly aware of this need, and urges the faithful to pray for the conversion of souls. In Australia and New Zealand the prayer for conversions is recited often before the Blessed Sacrament at Benediction. [Will you continue to say it and pray for this intention?] It is when this spirit of prayer

is magnified a hundred times — when the children of our schools join in this crusade, when priests and religious remember this intention more often in their daily Masses and prayers, and the sick in our hospitals offer their sufferings for this noble cause — it is then especially that pride and prejudice will melt away before the sunlight of God's Grace.

Most of all will prospective converts feel the power of prayer which is introduced into their instructions and courses of enquiry. Instructions may be given, books may be read, and intellectual convictions may be attained, but without humble submission to the ways of God all else is in vain. It is prayer that makes the humble submission possible. Prayer is the upstroke of Divine Grace. God always gives the grace of prayer itself, and enables men and women to ask for the better gifts, and for help in the more difficult problems of conversion.

RECRUITING IN THE PARISH.

Presupposing therefore that this vital spirit of good example and prayer are present, there are several means and methods of helping conversions within the reach of most Catholics.

One of the most obvious fields of action is the parish itself. There is, of course, a canonical obligation for the Pastor of every parish to care for the non-Catholics in their midst (Canon 1350 in the 1917 code), but the laity have a role of assistance in this work. What could be simpler, for example, than to invite a non-Catholic relative or friend to be present at a Church function? It might be a Catholic marriage, or a Baptism ceremony or a Confirmation. All the year round the Liturgy unfolds in its splendour, especially at Easter and at Christmas, and these are occasions of interest to all Christians.

Many, many Protestants, and churchless people have welcomed this friendly attitude on the part of Catholics, and this sample of kindness. Some out of sheer curiosity have come to see the beauty of God's house, where Our Lord is reserved in the Blessed Sacrament, and awaits all who come and visit Him.

Here it is necessary to add a word concerning the duty of Catholic partner to invite their loved ones to share their Faith. Of all Catholics they are the best placed to influence others. By living a full Christian life themselves, by setting an example in the home, by encouraging family prayer, and seeing that the children receive a thorough Catholic training, they can overcome the barriers of indifference and prejudice in the end.

We should not forget the saying of our newly-fledged convert, who was married to a Catholic wife for many years, and who entered the Church late in life — "No one ever asked me before."

On a more organised basis, perhaps through a Sodality Group, it is possible often for the laity to join in the visitation of the homes of the parish. In these busy, hectic times, in large and cosmopolitan parishes, there is an opening here for zealous Catholics to gather prospects for conversion, under the direction of their pastor. By travelling from door to door, by establishing friendly relations with parents and children, by leaving some Catholic pamphlet or magazine to be read, by consoling the bed-ridden and the sick, they can win souls by sheer charity and kindness. Nothing breaks the ice of coldness or indifference quicker than real kindness offered in the home. Marvellous results have been obtained in many Australian parishes by this system of home visitation.

Naturally it is not an easy task. It probably has to be done after a day's work, or in one's spare time, or at the weekend. It has its dangers and obstacles which have to be considered and overcome with

the help of prayer. But it does seem to be a fundamental work in the apostolate of conversions, and one that the parish can best perform.

PROSPECTS FOR PARISH MISSIONS.

The importance of such a canvass appears most conspicuously when we consider the occasion of a parish Mission, which is held every two or three years. At such a time the whole parish is invited to hear the word of God, to give thought to their spiritual problems, and to accept the help of the Sacraments. The mission is widely advertised as a rule, the schools and sodalities are alerted, and the missionaries are at the disposal of all.

Usually in such a week or fortnight's mission, besides the Catholic people, it is found that a few non-Catholics attend as well. Perhaps 10 or 12 attend each evening of the Mission. This is something, but suppose that a thorough canvass of the homes of the parish were made beforehand, suppose that all mixed-marriage partners have been contacted, all engaged couples of mixed religion and all prospective enquirers — the results would be tenfold.

I venture to say that here in the ordinary parish mission a magnificent opportunity for conversion work is being missed. A mission is not intended only for a few hard cases in the parish nor conversely for the better-class Catholic families alone. No, it is intended for all the people of the parish. While it is directed mainly to Catholics, it welcomes all who are willing to enter the church, Catholic and non-Catholic, all who desire to hear the word of God.

Here indeed the Catholic partner of a mixed marriage has a golden opportunity. Through their loving and prudent invitation, the non-Catholic wife or husband might come to the mission, and the wheels of grace begin to turn.

Sometimes it has been said that the solid sermons of a Mission, e.g., those on the eternal truths, are unsuited to non-Catholic ears. Only the half-educated or the unintelligent hold such an opinion. The preaching of a mission is the preaching of the Gospel of Our Lord, and it has a universal appeal. Sometimes it has a very special appeal to non-Catholic minds, breaking down the barriers of indifference or prejudice and opening their minds to the truth. Besides this, the average non-Catholic is deeply impressed by the various mission devotions which are an ardent expression of the living faith of a parish and its people.

MISSIONS FOR NON-CATHOLICS.

In many centres also it has been found an advantage to hold special courses of lectures, or Missions for non-Catholics. In capital cities like Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, as well as in other centres such as Toowoomba, Armidale, Rockhampton and Wollongong, these gatherings have been held with considerable success. Sometimes they have taken place in the parish Churches or Cathedrals, and at other times according to circumstances in the local town halls.

During such a mission to non-Catholics, it is possible to explain the faith more fully to enquirers, and to answer their honest objections. And for this reason suitable subjects are chosen, e.g., the divinity of Christ, or the characteristics of His Church. But whatever the actual details of each mission, the clergy who have organized them freely admit that their success depends largely on the co-operation of lay-Catholics. Here again as in the parish mission it is the friendly attitude of their Catholic neighbours which counts most with non-Catholics. Here again it is extensive home visitation that brings the best results, and ensures the maximum attendance. Here again the prayers

and example of a Catholic wife or husband may tip the balance in favour of an enquiry into the Catholic religion.

In organising and supporting such public missions, the Catholic laity of Australia have undoubtedly a great work to do in the years ahead. Perhaps 25 years ago it would have been difficult to have such meetings in many towns and cities. Now the scene has changed, and as experience has shown, they are well attended by many Protestants and churchless people who desire to hear the truth about the Catholic religion.

THE PARISH ENQUIRY CLASS.

Stemming from these activities, and having its own special importance, is the parish Enquiry Class, now found in a considerable number of parishes. Perhaps it is the most significant phase of all conversion work. It brings the parish into action on an organised basis, and lays stress on the parish catechumenate as the answer to most problems in this field.

As Father A. Cleary, P.P., of Melbourne Archdiocese, has written: "Everywhere in England and America where the class system has been introduced it has doubled and trebled the annual total previously received. So impressive have been the results from the group instruction plan, that some Bishops have requested all their Pastors to institute enquiry or instruction classes....All present knowledge of convert work, as well as reason and tradition, point to the parish catechumenate as the answer. Through it the Catholics of the parish are gradually mobilised behind the work of conversion, non-Catholics can be instructed in large numbers with economy of time and effort, and the whole Church system can be directed outwards towards conquest."

Thus the paramount value of the parish Enquiry Class. It has many other advantages which need not be discussed here, but again it depends for success on the support and help of the Catholic laity. The clergy will take the lead in directing the classes, but who will find the recruits for them, and make them worthwhile? Obviously the average Catholic parishioner. Whether it be the partners of mixed marriages who attend the class, or those who intend such a marriage, or the casual enquirer, or even fallen-away Catholics, it is the friendly and zealous lay-apostle who will find these recruits, and bring them to the classes.

THE LEGION IN ACTION.

In these works, and in other phases of the apostolate, there is no more active group today than the Legion of Mary. Through its local Convert Committee, the Legion has had conspicuous success in winning souls for Christ, and in furthering the conversion of Australia.

Probably the reasons for this success have been two-fold. First, the Legion of Mary encourages a true Christian zeal amongst its members, and secondly it leaves nothing to chance in its methods of organisation. It is truly a Legion of apostolic lay workers, organised in the pattern of the Roman legions of old, and it fights bravely for the Christian cause, under the banner of Our Lady.

A typical example of Legion Convert work is found in the Instruction centre at St. Augustine's Church, Melbourne, where over seven years about 700 enquirers received instruction, and nearly 400 non-Catholics came into the Church.

In its own distinctive way the Legion of Mary, with the co-operation of clergy and religious, have evolved the "Days of Recollection" as a means of contacting non-Catholics. These Retreats, usually held in Catholic Convents on certain Sundays have been highly successful in various cities. They

have been attended by an average of 25 to 30 non-Catholics and many who attended have been received into the Church. These days of instruction and prayer are now an established feature of convert work in Australia.

In addition the Legion of Mary has organised special courses of lectures (as at the Aquinas Library, Brisbane) and used other means of contacting those outside the Church. It has cared for Literature racks in many Churches. It has organised house to house visitation in many parishes, to assist Missions to non-Catholics. It has organised other layfolk to join in special bodies, such as Patrician Groups, to help in the Apostolate by prayer and other means.

All in all, it is quite certain that any zealous Catholic who is prepared to join the Legion, and carry out its programme of prayer and action, will make a definite contribution in the spreading of the Faith. The record of its work for the conversion of non-Catholics is truly magnificent, and it will surely prosper in the years ahead.

SPREADING OF CATHOLIC LITERATURE.

Here again is a field of action in which the Catholic laity may do splendid work in the defence and promotion of the Faith, and it is a field that is largely uncultivated or neglected.

The printed word is a powerful handmaiden of truth, and the Church possesses a great treasury of all kinds of literature from books and newspapers, to periodicals, pamphlets and leaflets. But the great problem is summed up in one word — "distribution." One could almost write a slogan — "Wanted, 1000 Apostles," for the Church in Australia, one apostle of literature for each Catholic parish. In some parishes literature is sold or distributed effectively — in many others there is little or no distribution. Catholic newspapers are unsold, pamphlet racks are left unattended, and so on.

All this is a poor advertisement for the Church in general, and it is a missed opportunity in the apostolate of conversions. Nothing is quite so easy, or effective, as the placing of a well-written attractive pamphlet or periodical in the hands of a non-Catholic enquirer. A clear statement of Catholic doctrine, an appealing story, or news item — no one will ever know the extent of its influence. Like a stone cast into the quiet waters of a lake, it causes ripples of thought and prayer that travel from one soul to another, in ever-widening circles. It would be impossible to estimate, for example, the good done by such works as "The Question Box" or "Radio Replies," or the innumerable pamphlets of various Catholic Truth Societies that have encircled the globe.

The main avenue for distributing such literature is undoubtedly the Church-door rack, but other opportunities could also be used by the lay-apostle. Racks can be established in community centres, and in many other places such as railway stations, bus-terminals and airports whenever possible; pamphlets and leaflets can be distributed freely during the visitation of Catholic and non-Catholic homes. They can be displayed on Mission Stalls, and in our Schools and Colleges. The ways of distributing the printed word are endless, and it needs only the co-operation of a devoted laity to ensure that they are used in abundance.

SOME OTHER AVENUES.

In addition to the methods explained above, there are some other means of propaganda and contact which are of value, and which have at least an indirect effect for conversions. One of the greatest obstacles of conversion nowadays is the stone-cold indifference of many people towards God and all religion. They do not deny the existence of God, nor are they hostile to the Catholic Church; but

over all there lies the cloud of ignorance and indifference. It is clear that to reach such souls special efforts have to be made, and vital contact made.

(a) Catholic Evidence Guild.

One of these means is the Catholic Evidence Guild, now functioning in some Australian cities and elsewhere. Every Sunday afternoon and evening, in these cities, the interesting sight is found of the Guild platform in the open air with its lay or clerical speaker, and a crowd of people gathered round. At every meeting, talks are given on the Catholic religion, its beliefs and practices, and many questions are answered.

It may be argued that very few converts have been made by Catholic Evidence speakers. Perhaps not! Perhaps few step forward there and then to ask for instruction, but there can be no doubt whatever about the positive fruits of Guild work. The way to conversion is prepared by lecture and debate, the interest of the casual or indifferent is aroused, and many cases are known where this has led to further enquiry. Sometimes the crowds number five or six hundred; and the expression in their faces is always the same — one of lively interest in the truths of Christianity explained on the Guild platform.

Here then is a field in which more Catholics of ability and education could be active in various ways. After adequate training they would make effective Guild speakers, and help to extend this excellent Apostolate. There is really no reason why the Guild could not spread to all the major cities of Australia; and this is a wish often expressed by leaders amongst the Hierarchy and the Clergy. It is also implied in the words of our Holy Father, in 1950. "Let the priests speak from the pulpits, from the city streets and squares, wherever there is a soul to be saved; and alongside the priests laymen who have learned to penetrate minds and hearts."

[For more information about the Catholic Evidence Guild, do a search on the Internet. New York, Guam, and Sydney (where it is known as Lumen Verum Apologetics) are some of the places where the Guild is found.]

(b) Radio, Films, Television. [And the INTERNET!]

In the apostolate of conversions these modern media of propaganda seem to have a very definite place. They have been described as the shop-window of the Church. They say to all — "Come in and buy — we want your custom — we have the things you want, to help you to live better, to feel better, to have a safer passage to eternal life."

In the preparation of suitable programmes, in sponsoring and supporting them, it seems clear that the Catholic laity have an important part to play now and in the future.

(c) Home Contacts.

Another method of contacting non-Catholics, that has been used extensively in the U.S.A. is to have them visit your home for informal discussion. In the pleasant atmosphere of the home, it is sometimes easier to break down the barriers of reserve, and to encourage them to seek more formal instruction from a Catholic Priest.

In fact, any gesture which shows friendship and charity in religious matters will have good results. Many outside the Church believe that Catholics are narrow and intolerant in their attitudes. It is only by a discreet and genuine charity that this barrier can be removed, and the way opened to appreciation of the claims of our Faith.

AN URGENT NEED.

In all the works mentioned in these pages, it should be remembered that the Hierarchy and the Clergy naturally take the lead. As arranged by Christ for His Church their responsibility and authority is higher than that of the laity, and this extends to all phases of the apostolate. They are the generals and captains of Christ's army, which labours steadily for the conquest of souls, and upon their leadership the laity must always depend.

While this is true, nevertheless the role of the laity in this apostolate is most urgent and indispensable. They are the front-line troops, who have daily contact with the masses; they are the Church in action in the world. Whenever a Protestant sees a Catholic he is apt to judge and to say — "There goes the Catholic Church." Hence an urgent need of our times, as the Popes have maintained, is for all Catholics to be true soldiers of Christ, to participate in the apostolate of the Hierarchy and Clergy, and to have their share in winning souls to Christ. None of these activities, whether they be missions for non-Catholics, or Enquiry Classes, or Recollection Days, or the apostolate of the pen, can succeed on a large scale unless many Catholics are mobilised into action.

In the days of St. Bernard who went through Europe preaching the Crusades, the cry was sounded, "God wills it." It became the rallying cry of the nations. Today that cry must be sounded again in our own beloved country. When it is answered by thousands of Australian Catholics then will the light of the Gospel spread further and further, and many souls will come to Christ.

It is well therefore for you who read this pamphlet to consider your position. It is through your good example and prayers that the apostolate of conversions will flourish; it is through your zeal and self-sacrifice that the battles will be won. It is through your efforts to contact those outside the Church that many souls will find the one true Church founded by Jesus Christ. You can invite them to Holy Mass or some other parish function; you can bring them to a Mission or Enquiry Class; you can lend them a Catholic periodical or pamphlet and explain to them points of doctrine; you can visit them in their homes, or invite them to your own. You can set them on the path that leads to conversion, to a better, happier life here, and to Heaven hereafter.

In all these ways and many more, you can share the Faith that God gave to you. Probably you have the intention already of doing something about the matter, but may I remind you that good intentions are not enough. A definite resolution and a specific promise to act is required. What is needed is action, action as soon as possible, not tomorrow, but today!

Accordingly it is suggested that you make a specific promise to labour in this apostolate. Take your Rosary with its crucifix and upon your word of honour make your promise as follows:

"Dear Jesus, my crucified Lord and Saviour, I promise that I will heed your invitation to seek and win for you the precious souls for whom You died on Calvary's Cross. I will labour in this glorious apostolate — I will not turn aside, nor count the cost. I will help souls to know and to love you by whatever means I can. In particular, I shall do my utmost to win at least one convert for you, dear Jesus, every year of my life.

So help me God — Amen."

Then kiss the Crucifix, and seal your promise with the Sign of the Cross saying: "In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

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