

# ***Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam***

## **An Appeal to the Catholic Laity in Canada to join in The Propagation of the Faith**

By Hugh P. Comerford

Canada Catholic Truth Society No.ccts002 (1920)

### **Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam**

Not many months ago, the Bishop of Leeds, England, issued a pastoral, in which he recalled in the words of two Sovereign Pontiffs, the duty of every Catholic man and woman of actively supporting and assisting in the spread of Catholic reading. Our late Holy Father, Pius X, told us that "all our works, all our efforts will be destroyed if we are unable to wield the offensive and defensive weapon of a loyal and sincere Catholic press". This can have but one meaning to all who believe in the importance of the spiritual influence and the power of the printed word to aid or hinder them.

It is with all the eloquence of a holy zeal, made restless by a want long felt and unsupplied, that the Bishop of Leeds points to the indifference and neglect of Catholics in this matter as "a standing shame". The lesson is one that is needed, not only in the North of England, but wherever the Church has gathered her children around her to protect her institutions and her teachings, and it is not too much to say that there is no place where it is more urgently required than in this our own country of Canada.

As a member of the Catholic Truth Society of Canada, I must leave it to others to speak of the labors and the successes of that organization.

That there is such an institution, organized, equipped and active, we trust every one of our fellow Catholics is aware. But it is a remarkable and a regrettable thing that the nature and importance of its work has hitherto failed to impress itself on the Catholic community generally.

The present year has been distinguished by the reception of letters from the dioceses of Ottawa, Quebec, Montreal, Halifax, St. John, Prince Albert, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg into the work of Catholic Truth. In letters from all these dioceses of Canada their Archbishops and Bishops, as directors, have given their names with unanimous words of approval and benediction to the work undertaken by the Society. One would have thought that such recommendation from our leading spiritual guides, if any appeal were necessary, would have been sufficient to take hold of the Catholic laity, urging the necessity of the work.

It is with some regret, which has proved itself in other countries to be a powerful factor in the propagation and protection of our holy religion.

The intention of the federation of the various Catholic dioceses into the organization of the Truth Society was to facilitate the extension of the work throughout the country, and to make it possible for the activities of the great Catholic associations which our Bishops and pastors have blessed, who

have commended and supported, and left in the keeping of the Catholic laity of Canada, to be efficiently carried out through the Dominion.

It would seem that the work inaugurated for years, with the benediction of our Holy Father and their directors, are blessed by God, and if these are not being followed by our people, so that the work the Bishops have put in their hands is being left undone. Are we so difficult that it should not be clear to those who are working much about such things, not enquiring into those whose work has been appreciated by our Bishops and the rank and file of our fellow Catholics? Are they so busy that they are not knowing much about such things, not enquiring into the urgency and importance of the work? It is evidence that the weekly Catholic paper is not read, because there is in each issue news of the Society, calling attention to the many avenues for just such work as is being done by the Catholic Truth Society.

Those who have interested themselves in propagating or reading Catholic Truth, and are grateful for encouragement of any kind, will, of necessity, appreciate any help. The work of the Catholic Truth Society is distinctly that of the printed word, and distributing Catholic pamphlets, books and literature where they will do the most good. This is not exclusively a parish activity on the part of the Church.

This feature will require and merit that the Society will be organization, if the Society is to warrant it. It should reach from Halifax to Vancouver, or from coast to coast, but should have at least one active branch in every diocese.

These two avenues of work should suffice: it is necessary that the propagating of the Faith embraces the pulpit and platform, but to protect the impressionable minds of our young Canadians from the poisonous and immoral literature which is so openly and blatantly exposed upon the bookstalls and counters. Many of these books find their way on to the shelves of the public libraries. Like many things tolerated today because "we must be liberal", unchaste ideas and impure suggestions are clothed in "the popular novel of the day" and it operates a strong second to the movies in destroying the innocence of the youth of the cities.

Is this any work to be left to our already over-taxed pastors? A work which cannot be too extensive to be ranked among the work that is large and too urgent to be left to the efforts of one who are already the rank and file of our fellow Catholics can never acquire that knowledge and familiarity with their religion which they must have if they are to prove themselves loyal and worthy children of the Church. If they are not that, it will be hard for them to, not only, defend their religion, but to be able to advocate it.

It is to this work that the Sovereign Pontiffs have again and again summoned the Catholic laity of the world. It is this work that you are called upon to encourage and support. It has been left to the efforts of the mere handful of men whose zeal and energy has been minimized because of the want of earnest support and co-operation. There is no exaggeration in the statement made. The writer has in mind one branch which is struggling under overwhelming and unnecessary difficulties, where the number of active workers are less than the number of committees needing attention. In consequence, work is doubled and in some cases trebled, and even then much must be left undone.

To mention only one example: owing to the unsettled economic times, thefts have been numerous, and the donation boxes of churches have not been free from robbery. The donations placed in the Society's rack boxes, where the racks have had proper care, have been untouched, but the others

have, not only, been robbed but badly damaged. This loss of income, increased by costs of repair, is a heavy tax on the meagre amount of the present financial support.

This is only one instance of the difficulties which are encountered in carrying out the work for the propagation of the Faith, which is so important and so necessary for God and His Church, and which is the urgent wish of our Holy Father.

In a country so Catholic as Canada, it may well be termed "a standing mystery, and a standing shame".

There exists side by side with the lack of workers a steady and disheartening want of money. It is so easy to take our weekly paper or pamphlet from the church door each week without ever thinking of how the rack got there; where the pamphlets came from; who keeps up the supply; or who pays for damage or loss. It is in filling such demands that the slender means of the Society are used, meanwhile an abundance of greater good work is being left undone, and the work that is necessary to meet requirements cannot be done until additional support is given to its members.

The Society is most grateful to its members, and when one glances over the list of names on the membership roll, it will be found that a bare few hundred, cannot but regard it as creditable to the Catholics of Canada. With the Catholic population of Canada, the membership of the Society should run into tens of thousands. All cannot be active workers, but the Church has never hesitated to insist in her frequent utterances, that the propagation of Catholic Truth is the duty and responsibility of every man and woman in the fold.

What does this mean but that the number of members should be in proportion to our Catholic population, who would, by their annual donations, supply the means to carry on the work.

Of the importance of the work, it should be necessary to say but very little. During these times of national crisis and social upheaval, the world is crying out in its agony for the solution that will give back peace and righteousness. We Catholics know the answer that it seeks. We hold the secret that alone can free it from the tyranny of evil that besets it. Only Christianity, based upon Catholic doctrine, will ever uplift it or transform it into a fitting dwelling place for the children of God. That doctrine is ours to spread broad-cast by every means and channel in our power.

Do not let ourselves believe that because we hold the weapons of success that therefore the field offers no opposition. Recently the Orange compatriots of Toronto laid claim to the "Glory" of having defeated Catholic doctrine in the Tremblay-Depatie discussion. They boast of the greatest of their victories by which they intend that all the methods of Protestant propaganda should be followed by no less than one member during the past year, they have distributed three hundred thousand pamphlets, telling us what they know, and what they intend to do to let us know it.

Let us know what they tell us. It has been recently stated that Protestant extremes may take no notice that they have been spreading tremendous propaganda, and intend to spread it. In order to do very much less than three hundred thousand bibles have been distributed, during the past year, free of charge. By the course of a very few years they promise that they have issued no less than one hundred and fifty thousand and the notice of what they have produced and distributed, say about a million. The bibles have been placed in the rooms of every hotel in the United States and in Canada. They claim that their bible has been translated into almost every language, and distributed in every country, free. What are we doing, we Catholics from whom they got the Bible?

In Montreal the C. T. S. branch Executive tried to have one of the Society's racks placed in the railway station, but failed.

How many Catholics as one finds in Montreal, as Catholic as it is, French as well as English, are aware that in a city so eminently Catholic, cleverly compiled leaflets, written in French as well as English, are being placed under the doors of our co-religionists? This is being done continuously. Somebody has thought it worth while that our doctrine might be misinterpreted, somebody thought it worth while to study our doctrines, in order to misinterpret them, and we will not trouble to contradict him. Someone thought it worth while to pay for the printing of this contaminating rubbish, and to get those who will give the time to go about distributing it. Yet Catholics, the most of them, think it too much to give a few dollars yearly towards spreading the real, the TRUE word of God. These things are being done continually in cities and towns, and the more Catholic the place, the more persistent is the distribution. Have we, then, not reason to ask ourselves, "if these things are done in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

Vain is it to argue, that not all the court decisions in the world, nor all the accumulated wealth of Orangeism will ever change the teaching of the Catholic Church in regard to marriage; vain, unless we, as individual Catholics do our part to give effect to that teaching, and by word and example make it known to others. Vain is it to plead that if men are to doubt the truth of our religion, they will come to us for the duty of our religion, they will come to us for it unless we, as individual Catholics, are prepared to make our teaching known and available to them. Vain to say that the increased activity of "a Protestant Publicity League" is now in Toronto, formed by Protestants for the publicity of the one truth, if for Protestant men who profess to advocate "the greatest things", and has as one of its objects from its leaflets "to take up the diffusion of accurate information on the vital doctrines of Christianity, and at the same time set out in a non-political way the various movements of the Roman Catholic Church designed to secure dominance in Canada". Could we wish for a more direct challenge than this?

These gentlemen propose to launch their work on a membership of at least one thousand men, committed to an annual subscription of ten dollars. Their pamphlets are to be prepared at the expense of the League and with the exception of fifteen hundred dollars required for administration, the rest of the funds will be spent in printing and distributing literature.

Now, upon supposition, if this project of Protestants should succeed, (and what reason have we for believing that it will not) how does the Catholic Truth Society of Canada compare with it after its years of existence? The comparison will be all the more marked by the fact that 'The Protestant Publicity League' is formed primarily to oppose the Catholic Truth Society.

There can be no doubt of that from the following paragraph in a leaflet sent out from Toronto:

"It should be remembered that The Catholic Truth Society which has recently been formed by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of Canada, is engaged in an exactly similar enterprise. This country is being flooded with Roman Catholic literature, explaining in subtle and sometimes convincing ways, the doctrine and the authority of the Church, and the arguments for the supremacy of the Pope. There is no more important work to be done in Canada by Protestants than to counteract this movement on the part of the Roman Catholics".

There is nothing for us to be ashamed of in that. On the contrary, it should be the cause of great encouragement to us to know that in spite of the difficulties of the past years, good work has been done, and the influence of the Society has made itself felt.

But what of the future? Are we to concede our position to others because we have not a membership of several thousand or because we are not as wealthy as our opponents. Surely not! SURELY NOT! When our Bishops have pleaded with us: when our pastors have urged us: and when the Holy Father himself has cried out to us, to take our places in the lay apostolate. Let us not any longer blind ourselves to facts. Let us rather own to our short-coming if there is one and set to work to right it.

Is it not true that the weapons which the Church has unceasingly begged us to take up in her name, have been left idly alone, till her very enemies have wielded them against her—and is this indeed well set "a standing shame"?

Those who have interested themselves in this work know well the reward it brings with it. It has been begun and set little has been achieved, but nothing compared with the good work which is still waiting to be done, if others would come forward and show their zeal as Catholics by contributing in some way towards the work of the Society for the propagation of the Faith. Why must we wait longer? Why must this duty of all the faithful be carried by so few? The seed is ours and the soil is ready, but we lack the willing hands with which to sow. When is our message to reach the hearts of our people and bring forth active and self-supporting branches in every diocese in Canada from coast to coast.

Distributing centres are needed in every city so as to reach outlying districts, and also to offer an information bureau for those who may not desire to admit any deep reason in wishing an answer on faith and doctrine.

We appeal to the Catholics of every diocese in Canada to carefully think over the cause of our Holy Religion, to think of the souls that can and should be brought into the fold, to think of those who are becoming negligent, to think of the families away in the western missionaries who for their childrens' sakes need the help of charity Catholics of the East. The greatest means of charity is to save a soul. The propagation of the Faith means the saving of many souls. Will you not join with us AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM.

## **"Thou Shalt Love the Lord, Thy God"**

"THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD, THY GOD WITH THY WHOLE HEART, AND WITH THY WHOLE SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL THY MIND, AND THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF."

St. Luke X., St. Mark XII.

*(By The Society.)*

These TWO commandments place on man a duty to God and to man. In reference to the State) we must serve to earn the right to live. If our responsibility is so great and so limited to those which come under our ideas of ease, happiness, and material gain, how much more deserving of our attention is that duty to serve God well that we may earn eternal life.

Our Lord served the Almighty, and mankind, in humility, pain and death.

As Catholics we have a duty of service to our Faith and to our Church, which is the custodian of our Religion. That duty implies our active association and co-operation with one or more of the activities endorsed by our Spiritual Guides.

Among these activities Charity takes the first place. Under Charity comes our duty to our neighbor. It may be for his material welfare or for his spiritual advancement. The saving of a soul is the highest and most worthy charity, which always includes always the primary charity, or the effort that keeps alive the desire to join with others in the noble work of "Propagation of the Faith"—which is invariably included among the charities worthy of the blessing when the Holy Father.

The Catholic Truth Society—this salient example of invaluable but poorly supported effort—is, apart from the pulpit, our most direct means of propagating the faith amongst our non-Catholic brethren. Its chief means of doing so is the pamphlet, containing short, clear, logical explanations of Catholic doctrine, elucidation of points of controversy, application of ethics to current questions, lives of the best exemplars of Catholic principle, episodes in the long story of Church history—all that is needed, in fact, to make the Faith known to outsiders and beloved by those within the fold. One would think that this apostolic work would number its active supporters by tens of thousands, and that there would be no church or chapel or Catholic centre of any kind but would form a nucleus of distribution for the Society's publications.

But there are alas, scores of centres that make no use of them, and out of the 3,500,000 Catholics of Canada hardly one in a thousand pays the Society's modest annual subscription of \$5.00. Consequently, admirable as the work is, it has not reached anything like its due development. Were its membership multiplied only by ten, its output might be enormously increased and the pamphlet occupy its place as its most effective weapon.

For many reasons the bound book does not meet the great and extensive need for explanation of the teaching and practices of the Catholic Church. To meet that need in Canada, the Catholic Truth Society's Head Office has become the main distributing centre, not only for its own low-priced publications, but for pamphlets of similar Catholic Truth societies of the world. Which pamphlets range in price from 3¢ to 25¢ each. When required in quantities for schools, etc. a liberal advantage is allowed.

When any clergyman requires copies of a pamphlet on any subject fully treating or this and that same subject for distribution to his congregation, all he has to do is to address the Society.

The Society has been a medium for procuring books for its members, and added very many to its library, and has sent out many tens of thousands of pamphlets. With present printing rates this would at first mean subsidizing those publications, but money could hardly be better spent, and as sales were adequately pushed and additions become larger, they would at length cover expenses.

The estimated Catholic population is placed at 41¼ million. With such numbers and benefits, and all the influence we ought to have greater representation which would greatly aid in strengthening our efforts on behalf of our religion and, therefore, develop good citizenship.

## **The Work of the Catholic Truth Society**

The ambition of the Catholic Truth Society is to have unity, as far as is possible, of all Catholics organized and co-operating in the dissemination of Catholic teaching by the printed word and by lectures. The organization to be a laymen's work with branches in each diocese, each branch subject to the Bishop in the diocese and to the Pastor in the parish.

The Catholic Truth Society of Canada has received, in writing, the Apostolic Blessing of the Delegate, Cardinal Begin, and seven of the Archbishops of Canada.

It is incorporated by a Federal charter, and has branches in Vancouver, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal, and it hopes to have a branch in every diocese.

The General Executive expends, at present, five thousand dollars each year, and has to keep in stock between two thousand and three thousand dollars' worth of leaflets, pamphlets and booklets.

The work is attended to by business men who give their services voluntarily.

Much of the work is free of charge. No profit is made on any of the Society's activities. Pamphlet racks are supplied at less than cost. In many cases expressage on parcels is paid by the Society. Hence the need of financial aid to make the work more effective and to extend its usefulness.

By the act of incorporation diocesan branches may be duly formed and affiliated by the regular by-law, with the General Executive operating from the head office, and branches may avail themselves of the privileges, which are many, granted under the letters of the charter. A Diocesan branch will be under the management of the Diocesan Executive.

The object of a Diocesan branch is, primarily, to bring to every one of the laity a knowledge of the importance of the work of this Society. It will be a real membership committee.

Its movement along that line will be first met by having—with the consent of the pastors—each and every parish form its Aquinas Auxiliary, which will be known as the parish activity of that parish. The Aquinas will get members, striving for "Ordinary" (\$5.00) and "Sustaining" (\$10.00), while not overlooking the "Associate" (\$1.00) annual dues. These dues to be collected by the Aquinas from its own parish members and sending them to the Diocesan Executive.

The Diocesan Executive by keeping in touch with each Aquinas of the Diocese will learn if a parish is meeting expectations. As the Diocesan branch grows in extent, influence and means, its autonomy will permit aiding and advancing such works as shall be approved by the Spiritual Director.

The Diocesan branch will endeavor to have a pamphlet rack placed in the vestibule of every church in the diocese, and to encourage the Aquinas to have them always supplied with seasonable subjects. Care to order requirements in time to assure a supply is necessary.

The Diocesan branch should promote a spirit of reading Catholic books by organizing Reading Circles and Study Clubs. The General Executive has issued a list of recommended Catholic books and instructions how to organize a reading circle. The great good of Catholic reading will be advanced by establishing a Diocesan library from which boxes of books may be loaned to parishes in which there is no public library.

Where there are public libraries, Circles should ask for the books they wish, and—being ratepayers—are entitled to be supplied with them. Association with the public library will aid in placing more books of Catholic interest on the shelves.

Each Aquinas should arrange that new converts receive some attention, in a quiet and unostentatious way. Converts are, as a rule timid, to a certain extent, doubtful. It will be well to consult the Pastor, and as soon as wisdom warrants it, then to meet other members of the parish, and introduce them to the parish societies. New converts may know friends who are in doubt; they may be of assistance in the selection of controversial pamphlets for the rack. This will prove a great help as they can appreciate where those born in the faith do not.

Remaining Catholic families in unsettled districts who cannot procure Catholic papers or magazines, when this class is not read elsewhere, should be encouraged.

Also sending parcels of Catholic reading to the missionaries. Catholic papers and magazines are gathered and made into 5-lb. parcels. These are mailed to the missionaries throughout the scattered and unsettled districts of the northern parts of the Western Provinces, the North-West Territory, the Yukon, and also to Newfoundland. The laity benefitting by this activity are nearly always many miles from a church or school, and it is by receiving this Catholic reading that their faith is kept alive until they can hear Mass and go to Communion. These two privileges, so easy to obtain in our Eastern Provinces, may not be availed of by these Western settlers more frequent than four or five times in a year, and these times are often many months apart.

Installation of Mass Registers in leading hotels: Any Catholic called away to another city or town and has to remain over Sunday can appreciate the advantage of being able to see a Mass Register, placed prominently in the hotel, and to see the time that Mass will be said in such town or city. This work of interviewing proprietors and managers throughout Canada with a view to prevailing upon them to consent to such a Register being placed in their hotel should appeal to all Catholic travelling men.

As all annual membership dues go to the Diocesan branches, and also donations under \$20.00, and as all the moneys from "Life" (\$50.00) and "Endowment" (\$100.00) memberships and donations of \$20.00 and over are to be remitted to the General Executive to be invested in securities authorized by Government statute for the guidance of trustees, the General Executive will have no means by which to print, purchase or disseminate pamphlet and other outlays falling to Head Office. To procure this necessary financial assistance for Head Office, the Diocesan branches are expected to approach the Pastors to allow, once a year, a collection to be taken up on Sunday, either at the Offertory at Mass or at evening devotions. It is not desired to trespass on the Pastor's average collection: it will be left entirely within the kindness of the Pastor as to how much he will send to the Diocesan Executive, to be remitted to Head Office.

An explanation of the work of the Society would be beneficial. When possible, a "Sermon on Church Literature", or some such subject, would be taken, before the collection is made, and the Society by such sort of announcement be taught as the Church may direct.

The collection by the Society is to be made annually until the trust fund derived from securities reaches \$50,000.00, when the principal revenue will be used for defraying the secretarial and other expenses of the Head Office. The Capital Trust Corporation have kindly consented to act as the trustee of the reserve fund of the Society.

Our Holy Father, Benedict XV, has granted many indulgences to members and HELPERS of the Society. Therefore, many who cannot see their way to become annual subscribers through membership, may be HELPERS by contributing to collections; or by sending their weekly, when read, Catholic papers and magazines, whose name and address should be written on them when remailing to the Society's office, or by undertaking the mailing of Catholic reading to families or missionaries.

It is earnestly hoped that the whole Catholic laity will interest themselves in our work, in a manner conformably with the authority and purposes of the Spiritual Guides in which it may be done yet not trespassing on any other branch of Church activity.

For further particulars address "The Catholic Truth Society of Canada" Head Office, 67 Bond Street, Toronto.

## **Branch Offices:**

- **Montreal**—274 Union Avenue
  - **Vancouver, B.C.**—646 Richards Street
  - **Regina, Sask.**—2545 Osler Avenue
  - **Winnipeg, Man.**—Columbus Hall
  - **Hamilton, Ont.**—Bishop's Residence
  - **Kingston, Ont.**—Archbishop's Palace
  - **London, Ont.**—St. Peter's Seminary
  - **St. John, N.B.**—91 Waterloo Street
  - **Prince Albert, Sask.**—Bishop's Palace
  - **Ottawa, Ont.**—95 Laurier Avenue
  - **Halifax, N.S.**—Archbishop's House
  - **Edmonton, Alta.**—10757 Eighty-Third Street
-