

form of Office it fancied, but in recent years, since the establishment of an Advisory Council for Religious Communities with the blessing of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Visitors have limited powers to regulate what Breviaries or Diurnals are adopted.

Plainchant books for use with vernacular Offices are now available, most of them edited by the late Dr Palmer, and published by the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage. They include an English plainchant Psalter, the Offices of Vespers and Compline, and a complete musical edition of the Sarum Day Hours, entitled *The Diurnal Noted*.

Three and a half centuries ago it seemed that the leaders of the Reformation movement in England had managed to suppress the traditional worship of the Catholic Church. But the Divine Office, either in its complete or in an abbreviated form, like a tiny seed buried in the ground, has come up again and grown into a mighty tree. This startling development of liturgical worship in religious communities in communion with Canterbury throughout the world, which really began with the publication of Newman's *Tract 75*, is a phenomenon which all who work and pray for the cause of Unity among Christians should study. For it is a consoling thought that, in these times when it is far more important to stress what Christians share than what are their points of difference, there is a vast body of men and women outside the Fold of Peter whose spiritual life is based on the *Opus Dei cui nihil praeponatur* of St Benedict. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to hope that in the long run some of them will be united with us in belief as well as in prayer, even if 'the mills of God grind slowly'.



## THE CHARACTER OF A MISSIONARY

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**A** CORRECT view about the purpose of the Missions must determine the qualities needed in a missionary. The first requisite is adaptability: he has to form new Christians, and has to adjust himself to a new and foreign outlook and way of life. While the development of communications and health services has rendered the possession of exceptionally strong bodily

qualities generally unnecessary to-day, and the variety and extent of mission work gives an opportunity for almost all kinds of talents and types of mind, there are certain general qualities which are still necessary for all engaged in mission work.

Pope Pius XI stressed especially the dangers of nationalism among missionaries, and these are obvious, though nowadays such tendencies are less than formerly. Yet they are not entirely gone, and Pope Pius XII urges the missionary to make of his Mission a second fatherland, an adaptation not possible to some characters. In a recent encyclical he has reiterated another warning of Pius XI: the danger of excessive attachment to a religious order or congregation. Owing to the many advantages which it brings, the Holy See commonly entrusts mission areas to particular religious bodies to be evangelised. But it is necessary for the religious, and especially for those who are superiors, to keep the aim of the Missions before their minds: the establishment of the Church with an indigenous Hierarchy. There is a danger of setting the apparent good of the religious family before this aim. The Pope remarks that really nothing can benefit the religious family which impedes the good of the Church. The missionary religious must therefore be able to take a wider view than is required by his colleague outside the Missions. Whether it is necessary to build up a diocesan secular clergy, or whether it is perhaps possible in a given case (as envisaged by the Pope in his discourse to the Congress of Religious in Rome in 1950<sup>1</sup>), to aim at a diocese permanently staffed by religious, it is necessary to aim primarily at the establishment of the pastoral clergy and their bishops. The particular good of the religious body can only be sought in connection with the pastoral clergy. In many cases the future of the religious will be as auxiliaries to a pastoral secular clergy, or as specialists of various kinds. It must also be remembered that religious are part of the normal organisation of the Church, and that indigenous religious must be built up no less than indigenous clergy. Pope Pius XI insisted that those who have the vocation must not be refused entry into the already existing orders and congregations, but suggested that it might often be found desirable to establish quite new groups of religious more adapted to new territories.

Certain personal qualities in the missionary follow from the need for adaptation. The common idea that the less gifted and less

1 cf. LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, April, 1952.

intelligent are suitable for Missions is false. Greater intelligence and gifts are normally required to deal successfully with the problems of adaptation which occur in even the humblest spheres in the Missions, and unintelligent zeal can be more damaging there than in more settled places. The pagan world is becoming less and less a world of primitive people; and a superior training is essential, if the missionary is to be able to wield an influence for good. It is also sometimes thought that defects of character which cause offence in civilised society do not matter on the Missions. On the contrary, to deal successfully either with the high civilisations of the East or with the primitive cultures of Africa, a very high degree of tact, prudence, self-control, courtesy and attractiveness is needed. What would be defects in Europe are usually much more harmful in the Missions. Solid virtue and holiness are necessary, but holiness alone is not sufficient, unless it be so complete as to eliminate all natural defects and confer all qualities lacking. Certain positive aptitudes are needed. Tact, sensitiveness, detachment from one's own ways of viewing things and of acting, and a readiness to see things from the point of view of another are most important. Imagination is also a requisite: the ability to envisage the possible in a concrete way, to see the future, and to see the steps to be taken to accomplish it effectively. These natural gifts are the normal basis for the 'missionary spirit'. This is fundamentally a constructive spirit. Its presence must be taken into consideration especially by those who have the duty of appointing those in authority in the Missions. A person who would be an excellent administrator in a non-mission country can be a failure, and do great harm in the Missions, by a lack of constructive spirit. He may impede its use in others or even kill it, and so work directly against the purpose of the Missions. This is especially liable to happen in religious orders and congregations, where the qualities which make an excellent superior in normal conditions can be deadly in a place where the primary need is growth, both of the religious body and of the Church at large.

The missionary spirit is, however, at root, a special type of charity, and if present in a high degree it can supply many natural defects of character. It is a charity which builds. There are two faults into which it can fall. The first is when the love of others is primarily merciful and wishes to give to others that which they lack. Such charity leads to disillusion. The missionary finds that

his people are blissfully unconscious of what they lack and unthankful for all he does for them. Later, when they develop self-consciousness, they will begin to insist not upon what they lack but upon their own good qualities. This shows where the error has been. The primary task of the missionary is to build: his charity must in the first place love what the people have, see it as they see it—and not only as they see it, but also as it can be perfected by Christianity. Their good qualities must be led to develop in a Christian way. The missionary must love both what his people possess and what they lack, their defects and the cure for them, nature and grace in them, the present and the future. Such charity is free from disillusion and disappointment, because it really seeks the good of others and is always glad at what is accomplished, and it is not surprised at what is not. Disillusion leads to irritation, when the good qualities of the new people are praised, or when the Holy See urges the creation of Christian cultures or the establishment of an indigenous clergy in control. The missionary must be an educator in the widest sense, fully aware of the defects of his people, but equally aware of their progress. He must not expect the qualities he might like, and which they are perhaps incapable of, but those which are proper to them.

The second fault into which missionary charity can fall is when it stresses too much what is lovable in the new people. This can be uncritical admiration, which will usually not be appreciated or beneficial. Or it may be a certain kind of spiritual exploitation, the missionary loving the virtues and good qualities which he expects his converts to display. They will frequently fail him, whence disillusionment and annoyance again.

Missionary love, apostolic charity, falls into neither defect. It loves the new Christians both for what they have and what they lack, and seeks to build them up to the image they should have of themselves, and which God has of them.

Lastly, the character of the missionary must be 'universal'. The proper aim of the Missions shows why the whole Church must take part. 'Nothing seems more suitable', says the Pope in the encyclical, 'than the dogma of the Communion of Saints to impress the importance and utility of sacred Missions on the Christian people.' The Church is one body, and when it grows it grows as a whole. The growth of the part is the concern and work

of the whole. The obligation to work for the Missions is not proper to the priesthood or to the teaching Church, it is a consequence of Baptism, which makes persons members of the Church, and of Confirmation which makes them active members, apostles. Under the direction of the Hierarchy, it is the duty of every Catholic to assist in the growth of the whole Church. Although in times past it was perhaps easy to regard the fate of the Church in China or in Africa as having no practical bearing on the life of Catholics in Europe, the contrary is now clear to all. As the Pope says in his encyclical of 1951, there are two groups of missionaries busy trying to conquer the world: those of Christ and those of materialism. The outcome of the struggle, of which the mission-fields are the front line, will affect the future of every part of the Church and of every individual. It is a spiritual world-war, into which every Catholic must put all he can, even out of self-interest. Every individual, every parish, every diocese is vitally concerned in it, and should provide missionaries, and material and spiritual aids.

But quite apart from such considerations of self-interest, the bonds of Charity and Baptism, and the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, enforce the same conclusion. The love of God and of our neighbour are inseparably joined here. The Christian who loves Christ wishes to extend his kingdom, to give all souls to him, to cause his love and praise to rise from all hearts. The missionary spirit aims above all at building up the kingdom of Christ which is the Church, at offering to God the souls of men. The obverse of this is giving God to men, saving souls. The Church is to be set up to bring God to men and men to God by her priestly ministry. This is the function of the whole Church, the Pope, the bishops and the laity, who together form the Body of Christ and the means of joining the world to God. Hence it is not possible to be a really good Catholic and to be indifferent to the growth of the Church and the progress of the Missions. The Popes, in urging the universal extension of the mission-aid societies, are merely inculcating a necessary element in Catholic life.

All can help in some way, not least by prayer and sacrifice. St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, as well as St Francis Xavier, is held before our eyes as the patron of Missions and the embodiment of the missionary spirit. A notable missionary, called in South

Africa the Social Apostle of the Bantu, Father Bernard Huss, C.M.M., said: 'The first assistance we need is prayer, and that is within the power of everyone. . . . I am sure that I am voicing the conviction of every experienced missionary when I state that the more one gets an insight into the mission work, the more one feels the need of prayer. If a missionary has to speak for an hour to men, he wishes first to speak two hours to God about himself and about those to whom he is going to speak. But since this is often impossible, we can make a "division of labour" also in the spiritual realm, so that those who have otherwise no connection with mission work pray, figuratively speaking, with uplifted arms to God (like Moses), while the missionary is "fighting the battles of the Lord".'

The planting of the Church, then, means the establishing of the visible Church with all its normal organs. This is not merely a work of grace, but a visible and material human work as well. It requires enormous human contributions in money, material and gifts of mind and character. The missionaries are the authorised special organs of that growth, but it is the work of the whole Church through them. Every part of the Church, diocese or parish, has the duty of co-operating in the expansion of the Church elsewhere. In the Missions themselves, the new Christians must co-operate in further expansion, and the Holy See insists on the establishment of Mission-aid societies also in the Missions.

Missions are therefore as wide as the Church, since they establish the Church. All the normal elements of the Church in a Catholic country must be found in a state of growth in the Missions. The new lands must be provided gradually with their own clergy and religious, with contemplative and active institutes, with schools, colleges and universities, with medical and social works. The Catholic laity must be helped to develop a Catholic culture and literature. All these are part of the work of the Missions, elements in the complex building of the Church.