

The Paulist Vocation



REVISED AND EXPANDED

The first Paulists:



Father Augustine F. Hewit
(1821–1897)



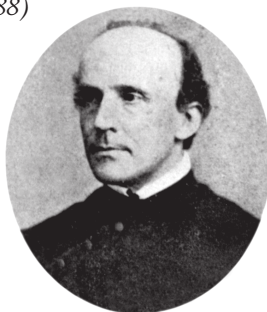
Father George M. Deshon
(1823–1903)



Father Isaac T. Hecker
(1819–1888)



Father Clarence A. Walworth
(1820–1900)



Father Francis A. Baker
(1820–1865)

The Paulist Vocation



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Foreword



Common wisdom tells us that it is hard to improve on a good thing. This revision of *The Paulist Vocation* proves the point particularly well.

The earlier version of *The Paulist Vocation*, which shaped the imaginations and spirituality of several generations of Paulists, was an excellent compilation of material from the writings of the Paulist founder, Father Isaac T. Hecker, C.S.P. (1818–1888). It had well stood the test of time and usage in the Paulist Community. However, all the copies of this earlier edition had been used. As the Paulists entered the third millennium, having a new collection of Father Hecker's writings would not only replace the earlier edition; more importantly, it would become an important resource for the Paulists and their associates and friends at a time of renewal of Paulist spirituality.

Since the earlier edition was done so well, the various Paulists who worked on this revision reviewed Father Hecker's writings for other passages that could be included, selected material from the recently published works (Isaac T. Hecker, *The Diary*, Paulist Press, 1988), and added dates for as much of the material as possible so that the development of Father Hecker's thought could be more clearly seen.

This renewed version of *The Paulist Vocation* comes in three parts. Part I forms a relatively chronological

sketch of Father Hecker's life and the founding of the Paulist Fathers (1858). Material from the original edition has been augmented in some places by new selections. Part II brings together various writings of Father Hecker about religious life for the members of the Paulist Community. This revision, however, has added Part III containing much new material shedding insight on mission directions of the Paulists (evangelization, reconciliation, ecumenism, working with the laity) and insights into culture and church. An appendix, in addition, contains the first chapter of the post-Vatican II Paulist Constitution approved in 1989.

Many Paulists have contributed to this revision. Father Lawrence Rice, C.S.P., scanned the original book into a format that today's computers could read. Fathers Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P., and Robert J. O'Donnell, C.S.P., reviewed the body of Father Hecker's writings, making judicious selections that would contribute to perspectives that have developed since the Second Vatican Council. Various Paulist novices helped work on the format of various chapters. Mr. Michael Connolly, of the Paulist Office of History and Archives, contributed a succinct overview of Hecker's life. Paulist archivist, Father John Lynch, C.S.P., a church historian and scholar widely known and celebrated, did the final revision and editing for this collection. In addition, numerous secretaries and professionals, both at Paulist headquarters and at the Paulist Press, assisted in various stages of the work.

The hope of the Paulists who have made this revised edition possible is that the spirit, intellect and

energy of Father Isaac Hecker will continue to be available to the members of the Paulist Society and to many others who have grown in appreciation of his unique contribution to North American Catholic life and spirituality.

Very Reverend Frank DeSiano, C.S.P.
President



Portrait of Father Isaac T. Hecker, c. 1858.

Isaac Thomas Hecker, C.S.P. (1819–1888)



The son of German immigrants, Isaac Thomas Hecker was born in New York City on December 18, 1819, the youngest of five children. Raised as a Methodist by his mother, Isaac never interested himself in the growing flour business begun by his prosperous brothers, embarking instead on a philosophic and religious quest. After an intense religious epiphany in 1842, he took the advice of a family friend, Jacksonian activist and Unitarian preacher Orestes Brownson, and entered the transcendentalist community of Brook Farm near Boston. Although he made friends of Emerson, Thoreau, Ripley, and many of the American literati, he remained spiritually lonely and intellectually curious and left the Farm in under a year. In search of spiritual discipline, Hecker briefly considered the Episcopal priesthood after reading John Henry Newman's *Tracts for the Times*, but in 1844 he and Brownson entered the Roman Catholic Church. One year later, after months of discussions with Bishop John McCloskey of New York and intense intro-

spection, he joined the Redemptorist order and sailed for Europe.

Hecker's novitiate and seminary years in Holland and Germany were academically rigorous and ascetically grim. Ordained in October, 1849, he served briefly on missions outside London before returning to New York in 1851 as an assistant on the Redemptorists' newly organized American mission. Joined by Clarence Walworth and three other Americans—Augustine F. Hewit, George Deshon, and Francis Baker—Hecker and the Redemptorists began Catholic missions across the entire country. Satisfying his urge to convert America and “make Yankeedom the Rome of the modern world,” he also wrote two books in the 1850's aimed at reaching educated, mystically-oriented Protestants: *Questions of the Soul* and *Aspirations of Nature*. Nationally known as a prominent spokesman of Roman Catholicism, Hecker with his mission band pushed for an English-speaking house in New York from which to base their operations. When the Redemptorist superiors denied the request, Hecker received the support of both Bishop John Hughes of New York and the Vatican in seceding from the Order in 1858 and founding a new community of American priests, the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle.

Given charge of a New York parish at 59th Street by Bishop Hughes, Hecker and the Paulists continued to give missions across the nation until the outbreak of the Civil War. A personnel shortage forced the fledgling community to remain in parish work for the remainder of the 1860's. Hecker himself managed to

pursue his vocation on the northern and western Lyceum speaking circuit. Addressing Protestant audiences, these speeches acted as surrogate missions to non-Catholics and gained him a great deal of public notoriety. In addition, he founded the monthly *Catholic World* magazine, containing American and European works of apologetics and literature, in 1865. While his fame in American Catholic circles was still growing, he also began to receive notice in Europe after appearances at the Catholic Congress at Malines, Belgium in 1867 and as procurator to Bishop Sylvester Rosecrans and theologian to Bishop John Spalding at the First Vatican Council in 1870. Both appearances solidified his reputation as a leading progressive Catholic and a proponent of Catholic reconciliation with the modern age.

Soon after he returned from Europe in 1871, however, Hecker's health began a slow, puzzling, and painful decline. Constant headaches, intestinal troubles, and chronic exhaustion befuddled doctors and slowed his activities to a minimum. To regain his health and clear his mind, he traveled around Europe and the Middle East from 1873 to 1875, including a fascinating boat trip up the Nile River and a pilgrimage through Jerusalem. Spas in France, Germany, and Switzerland offered only temporary relief for his anxiety and nervous exhaustion. Community demands forced his return to New York in 1875. Still in poor health, he left much of Society leadership to Hewit and Deshon but continued his writing. His *Church and the Age*, published in 1886, was a reaffirmation of his ideas on the ability of Catholicism to coexist and

thrive under democratic governments and among free peoples.

Even after Hecker's death on December 22, 1888, his influence within American Catholicism remained strong. In the 1890s and early 1900s, leading liberal prelates like Cardinal John Gibbons, Bishop John K. Keane, and Archbishop John Ireland used many of Hecker's ideas in their campaign for a uniquely American Catholic spirituality. Later, during Vatican II, progressive Catholics again turned to Hecker as inspiration for modernizing and reforming Roman Catholic doctrine.

Michael J. Connolly
Office of Paulist History and Archives

PART I



Father Hecker's Life and the Founding of the Paulists in His Own Words*

*Parts I and II, except for some additions, are reproductions of the original parts I and II of *The Paulist Vocation*. Consequently, revisions of Hecker's spelling and punctuation employed in this earlier edition have been retained. In part III, however, citations from *The Diary* of Father Hecker have been made to conform to the definitive version edited by John Farina (Paulist Press, 1988).



Geor Hecker

*George Hecker, brother of Father Hecker and
lifelong benefactor of the Paulist Fathers.*

CHAPTER I

Before Conversion

*Father Hecker's description of his early life as
given in his diary and statements made
toward the end of his life.*



*(From statements made by Father Hecker
towards the end of his life.)*

Once in my childhood I was given over for death, having been taken down with the small-pox. My mother came to my bed-side and told me that I was going to die. I answered her: "No, mother, I shall not die now; God has a work for me to do in the world, and I shall live to do it."

Often in my boyhood, when lying at night on the shavings before the oven in the bake house, I would start up, roused in spite of myself by some great thought, and run out upon the wharves to look at the East river in the moonlight, or wander about under the spell of some resistless aspiration. What does God desire from me? How shall I attain unto Him? What is it He has sent me into the world to do? These were the ceaseless questions of my heart, that rested, meanwhile, in an unshaken confidence that time would bring the answer.

...

While I was a youth, and in early manhood, I was preserved from certain sins, and certain occasions of sin, in a way that was peculiar and remarkable. I was also, at the same time, and, indeed, all the time, conscious that God was preserving me innocent with a view to some future providence. Mind, all this was long before I came into the Church.

...

You know I had to leave my business—a good business it was getting to be, too. I tell you, it was agony to give everything up—friends, prospects in life, and old associates; things for which by nature I had a very strong attachment. But I could not help it; I was driven from it; I wanted something more; something I had not been able to find. Yet I did not know what I wanted. I was simply in torment.

...

(From a diary kept before conversion, and for about a year after conversion.)

April 24, 1843.—* * * How can I doubt these things? [He refers to his spiritual impressions.] Say what may be said, still they have to me a reality, a practical good bearing on my life. They are impressive instructors, whose teachings are given in such a real manner that they influence me whether I would or not. Real pictures of the future, as actual, nay, more so than my present activity. If I should not follow them I am altogether to blame. I can have no such adviser upon earth; none could impress me so strongly, with such

peculiar effect, and at the precise time most needed. Where my natural strength is not enough, I find there comes foreign aid to my assistance. Is the Lord instructing me for anything? I had, six months ago, three or more dreams which had a very great effect upon my character; they changed it. They were the embodiment of my present in a great degree. Last evening's was a warning embodiment of a false activity and its consequence which will preserve me, under God's assistance, from falling. * * * I see by it where I am; it has made me purer.

...

June 12.—At times I have an impulse to cry out, "What wouldst Thou have me to do?" I would shout up into the empty vault of heaven: "Ah, why plaguest Thou me so? What shall I do? Give me an answer unless Thou wilt have me consumed by inward fire, drying up the living liquid of life. Wouldst Thou have me to give up all? I have. I have no dreams to realize. I want nothing, have nothing, and am willing to die in any way. What ties I have are few and can be cut with a groan."

...

About ten months ago—perhaps only seven or eight—I saw (I cannot say I dreamed; it was quite different from dreaming; I was seated on the side of my bed) a beautiful, angelic being, and myself standing alongside of her, feeling a most heavenly, pure joy. It was as if our bodies were luminous and gave forth a moon-like light which sprung from the joy we experienced. I felt as if we had always lived together, and that our motions, actions, feelings, and thoughts

came from one center. When I looked toward her I saw no bold outline of form, but an angelic something I cannot describe, though in angelic shape and image. *It was this picture that has left such an indelible impression on my mind.* For some time afterward I continued to feel the same influence, and do now so often that the actual around me has lost its hold. *In my state previous to this vision I should have been married ere this, for there are those I have since seen who would have met the demands of my mind.* But now this vision continually hovers over me, and prevents me, by its beauty, from accepting anyone else; for I am charmed by its influence, and conscious that, should I accept any other, I should lose the life which would be the only one wherein I could say I live.

October 18.—I feel this afternoon a deep want in my soul unsatisfied by my circumstances here, the same as I experienced last winter when I was led from this place. It is at the very depth of my being. Ah, it is deeply stirred! Oh, could I utter the aching void I feel within! Could I know what would fill it! Alas! nothing that can be said—no, nothing can—touch the aching spot. In silence I must remain and let it ache. I would cover myself with darkness and hide my face from the light. Oh, could I but call upon the Lord! Could I but say, Father! Could I feel any relationship!

...

[New York] 31st December [1843], Sunday afternoon.—This almost passed year I cannot cast back a glance upon without moving my heart. How different! How changed! Alas! I may say what pain, suffering,

and bitter anguish have passed through my bosom! This time last year I was at my dear friend O. A. Brownson's residence, filled with an unknown spirit, driven from home by it, and like one intoxicated, not knowing who I was, where or what, why or wherefore I was so troubled, and the influence of which, though regulated, still is none the less powerful (as my experience these two days back has proven to me). From O. A. B. I went to Brook Farm, remained there nine or less months, and then went to Fruitlands and stayed there three or four weeks, and was then induced to come home by the willingness of brother John to do anything in his power for any object I might have in view. Here I have been now for about five or six months, and alas! here I am now, not so restless nor so chaotic as I was, but, ah! not without an almost unbearable pain at heart and nervous excitability.

[New York] *March 8* [1844].— My life is becoming more practical. I am now much occupied in my mind regarding my position and purpose in life so far as any seems to have been given to me. * * * I am here now in body but not in spirit. The greater part of my true life is lost in my present position. Thoughts, feelings, and study which would occupy my mind if I had my own course, so far as my time is [now] occupied with them, are so almost by stealth. I am neither living in the business nor am I making much progress in my studies. In this case I do not benefit others, nor do I see that I am much benefited. This should change. One of the two must cease as an object. The first has not been, nor is now, nor does it seem possible for it

to be, ever my aim in life. What then shall I do? And how shall the end in view be accomplished?

One great difficulty seems to be this: I cannot place any definite purpose before my mind and bend all my energies to its accomplishment. I am willing to be true, submissive, self-denying, self-sacrificing for the spirit of my nature, but—

10th.— At the above line I was called away. Since the above I have made up my decision of giving up my life, my time, to study for the field of the Church.

...

[Concord, Mass.] *June 6* [1844].—My whole heart these two days past feels like one fresh wound.

What would the Spirit have me to do? to say? It seems to give me no rest.

My studies are pursued with the same spirit in which they were commenced, and there seems to me no reason to fear but that they will be continued by the same for some time to come. However, this I would affirm the same as has been affirmed by me for these two years back; the only consistency that I can promise is submission to the Spirit which is guiding me, whatever may be the external appearance or superficial consequences to others. Of no other consistency am I aware but unconditional surrender and reliance on the guidance of God. The entire co-operation of our will with His will. Our truthfulness consists not in following our own path but the path He marks out for us, be it a path of rocks and thorns or one of flowers and pleasantness.

June 11, 1844 [Hecker's Conversion to Catholicism]. This morning [Tuesday] I returned from Boston having gone there on Saturday to see Bishop Fenwick of the R.C. Church. I saw the bishop and his coadjutor Fitzpatrick. The latter I spent some time with yesterday afternoon and inquired particularly as to the preliminary steps in entering the RC Church. My mind is made up to join the C. Church, and this soon. . . .

My highest convictions, my deepest wants, lead me there and should I not obey them? This permits no room to harbor a doubt in. My friends will look upon it with astonishment and probably use the common epithets—delusion, fanaticism, and blindness—but so I wish it to appear to minds. As they are otherwise to me, this would not be satisfactory. Men call that superstition that they have not the feeling to appreciate and that fanaticism that they have not the spiritual perception to perceive.

June 11 [1844].— This is a heavy task; it is a great undertaking; a serious, sacred, sincere, and solemn step; it is the most vital and eternal act, and as such do I feel it in all its importance, weight, and power. O God! Thou who hast led me by Thy heavenly messengers, by Thy divine grace, to make this new, unforeseen, and religious act of duty, support me in the day of trial. Support me, O Lord, in my confessions; give me strength and purity to speak freely the whole truth without any equivocation or attempt at justification.

O Lord, help Thy servant when he is feeble and would fall.

One thing that gives me much peace and joy is that all worldly inducements, all temptations toward self-gratification whatever, are in favor of the Anglican Church and in opposition to the Catholic Church. And on this account my conscience feels free from any unworthy motive in joining it. The Roman Catholic Church is the most despised, the poorest, and, according to the world, the least respectable of any; this on account of the class of foreigners of which it is chiefly composed in this country. In this respect it presents to me no difficulty of any sort, nor demands the least sacrifice. But the new relations in which it will place me, and the new duties which will be required of me, are strange to me, and hence I shall feel all their weight at once.

June 13, 1844. I feel very cheerful & at ease in perfect peace since I have consented to join the Catholic Church. Never have I felt the quietness, the immovableness and the permanent rest that I now feel. It is inexpressible. I feel that essential and interior permanence which nothing exterior can disturb and that no act that it calls upon me to perform will in the least cause me to be moved by it. It is with perfect ease and gracefulness that I never dreamed of that I will unite with the Church. It will not change but fix my life. No exterior relations events or objects can disturb this unreachable quietness nor no event can break this

deep repose I am in. I feel centered deeper than any kind of action can penetrate feel or reach.

June 25, 1844.

Man is a mystic fact.

The interiormost is ever mystical and we should ever be in the center of the circle of the mystic life. We must unfold the mystical in all our expressions, actions, thoughts & motions. It is the mystic life only that can fully interest Man.

This is deeper than all conditions behind all organs, faculties, & functions. We must hear those who speak to us in the interior world and hear the mystic Man speak through us.

The mystic Man is ever youthful, fresh & new.

The mystic sphere is the kingdom of heaven within.

I cannot study, sit down and read for a length of time; the new man will not permit me; ever he calls me from it to meditate and enjoy his presence.

He says I am all; ask of me and I will give you more than has been written, than you can find or dig out by study.

Be my spokesman this is your office. Submit to me; this is your glory. I have taken up my abode in you on condition that you will be obedient, faithful, and submissive.

You have no business to ask of me what I am going to set you about. I am and you know it and this is enough for you to know.

This is my condition of remaining with you: that

you entertain me and me alone and no other on any pretext whatsoever.

I am all and this suffices.

You have nothing to say, do, or to be troubled about; only do as I bid you to do; follow what I tell you and be still. If you neglect me in any way, forget me for any other object now, after you have enjoyed my confidence, love and blessing, I will not abide with you any longer.

I want all your time and to speak all that is to be said. You have no right to speak a word, not a word of your own. You are not your own. You have given yourself up to me and I am all; I will not leave you unless you leave me first and then I shall be ever the nearest to you but you will not know it.

I am your Friend, the one who loves you and I have discovered myself to you and will do so more, but the condition of so doing requires ever more faith, tenderness and submissiveness. Nothing is so real, so near, so full of enjoyment as I am to you, and you cannot leave me without giving up the greater for the less.

I talk to you at all times and am with you at all seasons and my delight is to be in your presence to love you and take delight in the love I bestow upon you. I direct your pen, speech, thoughts and affections though you know it sensible, but you shall know it clearer who I am and all respecting me if you but comply with my requirements.

You need not fear, you cannot make any mistakes, if you submit to be directed by me.

July 15, 1844. This morning I saw Bishop McCloskey [in New York]. In 8 or 10 days I expect to receive conditional baptism from the Catholic Church. . . . He asked me if I felt like devoting myself to the order of the priesthood and undergo their denial, discipline, be a missionary, etc. etc. I answered that all I could say was that I wished to live the life given to me and felt like sacrificing all to it, but would not say that the priesthood would be the proper place for me.

July 18, 1844. Grace is the free gift of God. God being universal love will consequently give his grace to all those who will submit to the love conditions of his universal love.

The highest object of man's earth existence is to be the same as Jesus, to submit to Christ, to yield to heaven. To labour for the redemption of man, the establishing of God's kingdom upon earth.

Yield yourself to the absolute all embracing Love and let it act in, through, and with you in its own infinite loveful manner. Co-operate with it in all its loveful purposes, and this is your work and none other. He that seeks for a work will never find it, but he that submits himself to the Creator will always be at work.

CHAPTER 2

After Conversion

From excerpts of his diary and letters, Father Hecker reveals his own spiritual growth and the hopes generated by his decision to join the Redemptorists. His struggles with studies and his spiritual searching after his ordination show a quest that would lead to his climactic trip to Rome in 1857.



(From the same diary.)

[New York] July 27 [1844].— I have commenced acting. My union with the Catholic Church is my first real, true act. And it is no doubt the forerunner of many more—of an active life. Heretofore I did not see or feel in me the grounds upon which I could act with permanence and security. I now do, and on this basis my future life will be built. What my actions may be, I care not. It was this deep, eternal certainty within I did wish to feel, and I am now conscious that the lack of it was the reason for my inactivity. With this guide I ask no other, nor do I feel the need of the support of friends, or kindred, or the world. Alone it is sufficient for me, though it contradicts the advice of my friends and all my former life. It certainly seems to me absolute; if any error arises it will be from my disobedience.

...

My want of humility, talent, and culture seems an insuperable barrier to my usefulness in the priesthood. This would keep me from it if something did not with greater and irresistible force push me forward. I submit, I go; the end, God knows. He knows all, and I follow the will of Him, I hope of Him, not my own. If I follow His will, the true end of my birth and existence undoubtedly will be accomplished. This is all that I know: that I am I, and here, and that I strive to submit and follow His will.

August 1, 1844. This morning we were baptized by Bishop McCloskey. Tomorrow we attend the tribunal of Confession. We know not why it is we feel the internal necessity of making use of the plural pronoun instead of the singular. It has come to a bad pass when we cannot perform miracles nor work in good earnest with our hands. Why is this, is it because we stop and have not the valour to proceed? We cannot stop long on the mystic bridge between Earth and Heaven if we once have started on our journey. There is no half-way-house, it is either onward or backward.

Catholic World, 46 (October 1887) p. 231. As for myself, I never had been a member of any denomination of any kind and, when received into the Catholic Church by Cardinal McCloskey early in the year 1844, the creed I recited was my first adhesion to any form of religion. I had no heresy to renounce, for I never had embraced any. Not having had personal and experimental knowledge of the Protestant denomina-

tions, I investigated them all, going from one of them to another—Episcopal, Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, and all—conferring with their ministers, reading their books. . . . I knew Transcendentalism well and had been a radical socialist; all was found to be as stated above. Brownson's ripe experience and my own thoroughly earnest investigation tallied perfectly. Indeed, the more you examine the Protestant sects in the light of first principles the more they are found to weaken human certitude, interfere with reason's native knowledge of God and his attributes, and perplex the free working of the laws of human thought. Protestantism is no religion for a philosopher unless he is a pessimist—if you can call such a being a philosopher—and adopts Calvinism.

Against Calvinism we had a particular grudge. Among the truths I gained in company with Brownson was that the affections of the heart are guides to truth as certain as the logic of the understanding—that is, when the heart is pure. But according to Calvinism the human heart is never pure, and, with all its affections, is totally depraved.

September 27, 1844. Oh Lord I am nothing, nothing, verily nothing. Oh how sensible I am that I am nothing. Yes I am a sinner, a sinner, a guilty sinner. Take me to Thee, dear Lord, and let me not be in this sorrow. My heart is sick and it fain would cry aloud in despair why oh Lord art Thou not near when I am in distress? Oh where is the Physician, where is the balm of Gilead? Guardian Angel, speak comfort to my Soul. My soul mourns after Thee like the turtle dove after

its lost mate. Thou art its love and it will not be comforted without Thee. Comfortless, ever sad, weeping unconsolated is my Soul widowed, parentless and forsaken. Oh why has the memory of joys gone by and not been taken from me? Thou art merciful, oh Lord, and kind; canst Thou look down upon such a miserable sinner as I am?

October 22, 1844 [God's Forgiving Love for Sinners]. Oh Lord the manifold sins that I commit which I see, the innumerable which I see not, and thousands of those omissions, would laden me down to earth if Thou didst not in Thy mercy forgive and lift me up to Thy bosom. Thou has purchased me, and I still dare offend Thee. Ah oh Lord Thou art full of love & kindness and we are forgetful of Thee and insensible towards Thy infinite Love. If death should take me this night, oh Lord, nothing but Thy exceeding love would save me from the place of fear & trembling. Lord, oh vouchsafe Thy protection and that of Thy Angels. Will Thou my guardian angel, especially, protect me this night from the snares and all other wicked devices that may beset me? *Beatus Deus.*

December 18, 1844. This day I commence the 25th year of my conscious existence on this globe.

Let me look back for a few moments and see where I stood last year this time (an incomprehensible length!) and where I now seem to stand. Then my faith was dim, unfixed and unsettled, then I was not so disentangled from the body and its desires as I hope in God I now am. In all I feel a consciousness

that since then I have spiritually grown—been transformed. For my presence I cannot speak. For my future it seems I dare not speak. Dreams of the future! Exalted visions of the beautiful! Unspeakable hopes! Deep untranslatable longings that fill the conscious soul. . . .

25 Birth Day . . . What called me into the new existence? What shall call me from it? And whither it will call? Is to me but questions spoken to the infinite silence around which gives back nothing but the echo. We realize not our birth nor do we our exit. At each extreme of Man, the beginning and the end, lies a mystery.

December 18, 1844 [Reform and Self-reform] Until the reformer yields himself to the great Artiste to be formed, he cannot re-form others.

January 14, 1845 [Holy Spirit Inspiration] The genius of religion is divine inspiration. The influence of the Church is divine excitement.

February 16, 1845 [Prayer for God's Help] Thou knowest oh Lord my unhappy condition. Shed down Thy mercy upon me. Oh my guardian Angel be with me and direct me. Leave me not to myself. Be Thou ever present with me. If I am left alone I am most miserable. Without thee I am blind. Whisper to my Soul divine advice. Keep me from all dangers of thought of words and actions. Keep me from the influence of the evil ones. Be thou my protector. Let not my ingratitude send thee far from me. Teach me to act

so as to please thee. Ah say that thou takest pleasure in me. Oh say that thou wilt not forsake me. That I am thine. Spirit of love! Spirit of Grace! Spirit of beauty! Be thou my only object. Angel of God. Channel of love. Medium of Light. Let me behold thee. Stir up my heart to good. Give me humility. Greater love of God. More wisdom. Devotion. Love towards Men. Self sacrifice. Greater faith. Knowledge of thee, heaven, and the hidden things of God. I pray thee, I pray thee to be to me what I need, not what I ask.

April 24 [1845]. It is a subject of much and deep concern to me in making the choice of the Order under which I shall place myself. I know not, unless the grace of God is given to me in a greater measure, what I shall do about it. It is a new step; unquestionably an important one. I desired my confessor to say to me what was best for me. But he thought I had best think over the subject. It seems greater to me now that it may really be. God gives grace according to the destiny to be realized. There is the Order of the priesthood, the Order of the Jesuits, and other Orders in this country, though not numerous, to which I might be united. O, Lord! choose Thou, and with the help of Thy grace I will follow Thy voice. . . . I am nothing, and ah! what wouldst thou have me to do? There is nothing in this world that is of any interest to me. O, Lord! help Thou me in my dimness, make plain my path, open my eyes that I may see, give me grace that I may walk in Thy way. Lord, what shall I do? Thou art almighty and all-knowing; give me, O, Lord, grace and wisdom. Lord, I commit myself to Thee; reject not

such a great sinner as I am. What can I do? O, Lord, could I but come to Thee. Lord, help me in my troubles, and let me not remain in darkness. Ah! what am I thus to be so? Who will give me aid? Lord, none but Thee. Come, O, Jesus, open Thou my eyes. Ah! who will intercede for me? O, Guardian Angel, Speak! I will have faith in God in all things. * * *

...

I saw my confessor yesterday. * * * I will try to keep my mind composed and easy about this matter, hoping that the grace of God will in due time enlighten me. If I look back, all has been opened to me in due season, and at present why should I be so anxious? God, give me Thy grace to help me on in the way that Thou wouldst have me to go. Give me hope, grace, love. Jesus, come to my soul, and give it the true courage of Thine own. Be Thou with me, O, Jesus, and the world, friends and all, will be no hindrance to me. That which seemeth to me [hard] will be light and easy, and my heart will be with Thy joy filled in all distresses. Jesus, Thou art almighty, and full of love. Give me from Thy abundance, and I shall be strong. It is a pleasure to suffer for Jesus—more sweet than the joys of the world. *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona pacem.*

...

In making choice of an Order it is the spirit of God to which I should listen and not my own will. To hear the will of God I must put myself in proper conditions. And this is to be accomplished by prayer, silence, interior recollection, and self-abnegation.

When I look back at the repeated and unsuccessful attempts that I made to bury myself and my attention in business, I cannot for a moment doubt that I am called or destined for a different sphere of life. It is a law of Divine Providence—though up to this faith in my personal affairs I have not acted—that He gives His grace to fulfill the duties of the station to which He calls us. Subjecting, attractions are in proportion to destinies. * * * Lord, I am nothing. Give me Thy grace to enlighten me in my present darkness. Give me Thy grace of perseverance to embrace and continue in whatsoever state Thou mayest call me. Lead me, O Lord, in the way I should go. Let not my thoughts be distracted from this one thing in view. May all my attention be directed to this one point, until Thou shalt enlighten me as to Thy purpose in my being. O Lord, I renew my promises made in baptism,—I renounce the world, the senses and the devil, and give myself wholly to Thee. Do with me, O Lord, as seemeth good in Thy sight. I desire to overcome all self and be nothing else but Thine alone. Help me, O Lord, to overcome my self will. Whatsoever is in my way, remove it, O Lord, that I may see. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus and Thy Saints.

July 27 [1845].—I have decided that I will leave this country in order that I may prepare, or rather be prepared, for whatever labor the grace of God may lead me to. Bishop Hughes recommends me to go to St. Sulpice. This would be in order to prepare me for the secular clergy. So far as I can judge of myself I never

wish to be one of the secular clergy. But of this I cannot speak now. The Redemptorists have been much in my thoughts.

...

(From statements made towards the end of his life.)

What I saw in the Redemptorist community in Third street pleased and attracted me, for everything was poor and plain, and there was an air of solitude and silence. But, though solicited to do so, I would by no means change my spiritual adviser by taking one of the Fathers for my director, instead of Bishop McCloskey, by whom I was guided as to my vocation from first to last.

(From The Diary.)

July [1845].— I strive to follow my spiritual director, or else I should be fearful of my state. All my difficulties, sins, and temptations I make him acquainted with. . . . Though the world has no particular hold upon me, I give it up, once and for all.

...

(From statements made towards the end of his life.)

On Friday [August 1, 1845] I was informed by Father Rumpler that Walworth and McMaster would sail for Belgium the evening of the next day. I decided to join them. Father Rumpler was favorable, but puzzled. And I must first present myself to the Provincial,

Father de Held, who was in Baltimore. I arrived in Baltimore at four o'clock in the morning on Saturday, traveling all night. Father de Held looked at me, as I presented myself, and said that he must take time to consider. I explained about the departure of the others that day. He ordered Brother Michael to get me a bowl of coffee from the kitchen, and me to hear his mass. I heard the mass and after that he examined me a little, asked me to read out of the *Following of Christ* in Latin, which I did. He gave me my acceptance, and I rushed back to New York by the half past eight o'clock morning train. George had packed my trunk, and I sailed that day with the others.

...

Of the supernatural visitations by means of which God informed me of my mission, I have made an explicit statement to various persons, singly and in common, always under compulsion of either obedience or necessity. The Holy Spirit gave me a distinct and unmistakable intimation that I was set apart to undertake, in some leading and conspicuous way, the conversion of this country. This came to me while I was in the Redemptorist scholasticate at Wittem; but I had premonitions of it before that; in fact ever since my conversion, and especially while in the novitiate at St. Trond. It was the incongruity of such a message to a man of my inferior endowments, and, at that time, helpless inactivity of mind in matters of study, that made me a puzzle to myself, no less than to my superiors at Wittem. But to them, under obedience, I made a statement of my vocation to labor for the conversion of America.

Father de Held was superior at Clapham [near London], and for a year he treated me as Henry Suso says a dog treats a rag—he took me in his teeth and shook me. At last I went to him and begged him to settle my case one way or the other—ordain me, or make a lay brother of me, or take off my habit and dismiss me to another Order, though I told him that would be like taking off my skin. Father de Buggenoms then went my surety. He had been my confessor at Clapham and was then absent. But he wrote to de Held that he would guarantee my conduct if ordained. De Held then changed and became my fast and constant friend. Only for Father de Buggenoms I should not have been ordained at all. He was a Belgian, and my confessor while I was at Clapham. I was there, not ordained, nor yet making my studies. I had been forced to give them up; I could not go on with them. De Held did not know what to make of me, and he treated me harshly and cruelly. Finally, I went to him and told him my thoughts. I said I was absolutely certain I had a religious vocation; that he might compel me to take off the habit, but it would be like taking off my skin, and so on. After that interview de Held changed toward me and was ever after my warm friend. He was a very prominent member of the Congregation. You know he came within a few votes of being Rector-major. He was very warm in his sympathy with us during our trouble in Rome. Well, Heilig, a German, was about coming over to England as superior. He had been my director for two years. Before he came he wrote me a letter that gave me indescribable pain. He wrote that I must change—that I was all

wrong, and so on. I answered that it was too late to change; that he had been my director for two years, knew me well, and had been cognizant of my state. If he wanted me changed he must do it for me, for I did not see how to do it for myself. When he came, de Buggenoms told him to have me ordained, set me to work at anything, and he (de Buggenoms) would be responsible for me in every respect. Heilig complied. I asked him afterwards why he wrote that letter. "Because," said he, "I thought you needed to be tried some more." "Why," said I, "I have had nothing but trial ever since I came."

(From a letter to his mother, dated London, January 17, 1851.)

Oh! may Almighty God prosper our voyage, and may His sweet and blessed mother be our guide and protector on the stormy sea. And may my arrival in America be for the good of many souls who are still wandering out of the one flock and away from the one shepherd! I hope that to no one will it be of more consolation and benefit than to you, my dearest mother.

(From statements made towards the end of his life.)

When I came over to America with Fathers Bernard and Walworth, Bernard wanted to know what I could do. Well, by that time I had given up all hopes of any public career. I couldn't preach. My memory and intellectual faculties generally were so influenced by my interior state that theology was out of the question.

The lights that God had given me about the future state of religion in this country were still clear as ever, but I thought that I should have to confine myself to imparting them to particular and individual souls whom the providence of God should throw in my way; and I was entirely contented to live and die a Redemptorist, and was quite certain that I should. So, when Bernard asked me what I could do, I told him to get me some place as chaplain of a prison or public institution of charity, as that was about all that I was capable of. But he thought differently. My first instructions on the missions were almost word for word given me by Bernard. I didn't seem to have a single thought of my own.

(From a letter of Dr. O. A. Brownson to Father Hecker on the latter's departure for Rome, dated August 5, 1857.)

I learn with much pleasure that you propose to start today for Rome with a view of making arrangements with your superiors for establishing in this city an English house of your congregation, or perhaps, I should rather say, an American house.

Hitherto no direct efforts have been made by the clergy, secular or regular, for the conversion of our non-Catholic countrymen, for they have had as much and more than they could do to attend to the wants of the Catholic population already here, and because it has appeared to most of our foreign-born and foreign educated clergy almost useless to dream of any

general conversion of the American people. The Church here has hitherto been, and is even now to a great extent, the Church of a foreign colony, with a foreign or quasi-foreign clergy, with slender acquaintance with the real American character, and less sympathy with it. But it seems to me that the time has come when it is possible to commence a change in this state of things, and to institute measures for bringing this great and powerful nation into the Church of God. The task of conversion will certainly prove laborious and difficult, for here the Church has and can have no extrinsic aid, and can advance only as she convinces the reason and wins the hearts of individuals.

The dispositions of the American people are much less unfavorable, however, to the Church, than is generally supposed, and owing to the breaking up of Protestantism, and the wild, fanatical, and offensive course of its ministers on a great variety of subjects, their attention is turned to the study of Catholicity as it never has been before, and if approached in a proper manner, with earnestness and charity, in their own language and tone, by a clergy free from foreign habits and manners which repel their confidence, and who sympathize with their fine and independent spirit, I cannot but believe that a rich harvest of souls will be reaped.

There are many wrong notions entertained abroad, and by a portion even of our own clergy, with regard to the American people. They are supposed to be at heart, when not in conduct, a nation of rebels and fil-

ibusters, whom hardly the grace of God can render loyal and obedient. You and I know, dear Father, that this is not so.

...

No people are really more submissive or easily governed than Americans, only you must give them a reason and must govern them as freemen.

My own conviction has been that it would be necessary for the conversion of the country that a Congregation should spring up of native origin and growth; but I am not certain that the Congregation founded by St. Alphonsus will not answer every purpose. The Fathers who, I understand, are to be associated with you in your new House, in case your mission is successful, are men of the country, well acquainted with the American people, and fair representations of the American mind, and if permitted to work, as they must work, if they are to have influence over their non-Catholic countrymen, they will everywhere be listened to with respect, and after a little while, with God's grace, by crowds eager to catch their words and learn to know, and obey the truth. The experiment, at any rate, is worth trying, and it strikes me that now is the most favorable conjunction for trying it.

(From a letter of L. Silliman Ives, a converted Episcopal bishop, written to Father Hecker on the eve of his departure for Rome, August 4, 1857.)

The Redemptorist mission has proved itself eminently adapted to the capacities and tastes of our people. To realize the truth of this fact, it is only necessary

to follow in the train of the missionaries, as I have done, and mark the extent and importance of their work—the impression made upon the Protestant mind, and upon the lukewarm and almost apostate Catholic heart. Indeed, my good Father, could the zealous and godly men who preside over your Congregation witness the signs of redemption where your little band have passed, *I know*, not an hour's delay beyond the positive necessities of the case, would be allowed in the erection of the house for which we so anxiously pray.

Within this Union is the field of missionary labor. Here the prospect of conversions to Catholicity is almost boundless. Here the great mass of mind is fresh, unsettled, and reaching forth for the truth.

Hasten then, dear Father (if you will allow the entreaty of *experience* without *authority* to urge you), hasten on your noble embassy with unwavering faith and courage. It cannot fail. It is enforced by the prayers and importunity of *all*, yea, *it is the manifest plan of Almighty God for the conversion of the United States*. All His servants will unite their hearts and hands in carrying it out.

(From a letter of Jas. A. McMaster, written to Father Hecker on his departure for Rome, dated July 28, 1857.)

Providence has remarkably singled out your Order in this country for a new and fresh development. I allude not only to the number of American-born who have had vocations, but to their personal qualities.

With whatever differences in degree, it must be admitted and is felt, that these men now of your Order, have individually, before they were Redemptorists, and before they were Catholics even, been personally distinguished. To no other religious order in this country have any corresponding accessions been made.

You are of us. You know the country, its habits of life, and of thought, and the way of access to the hearts and confidence of its people. God has certainly a special design in bringing so many of you together in the Congregation. The marvelous effects of your missions on the people, Catholic and non-Catholic, already have given proof of this.

The most intelligent and devoted Catholics in the country openly agree that the work of St. Alphonsus, as represented by your missions in the English language, is the inauguration of a new and truer Catholic life in this country, as it is the only sustained movement professing an intention of converting the country.

I write to you, my dear Father Hecker, because Providence points you out as the man who should accomplish this evidently good work. You know there is not a word of flattery in me for anyone, but you, from special gifts and providences in your history, have in a particular manner the confidence and love, as well as respect, of bishops, priests, and the best of the laity. Your rigid devotion to the religious spirit of your Order, your zeal, and your knowledge of the country give you at the same time, as I know, the greatest influence with your own superiors.

Carpe diem, and God will surely bless your noble

daring in setting about the conversion of this great country.

(From a letter of Father Hecker to his brother, George V. Hecker, announcing his arrival in Rome, and his expulsion from the Redemptorist Congregation, dated Rome, September 2, 1857.)

This morning I said mass in St. Peter's. Our affairs are in the hands of God. I hope no one will feel discouraged, nor fear for me. All that is needed to bring the interests of God to a successful issue is grace, grace, grace, and this is obtained by prayer, and if the American Fathers will only pray, and get others to pray, and not let anyone have the slightest reason to bring a word against them in our present crisis, God will be with us, and Our Lady will take good care of us.

So far, no step that has been taken on our part need be regretted; if it were to be done over again it would have my consent; the blow given to me I have endeavored to receive with humility in view of God; it has not produced any trouble in my soul, nor made me waver in the slightest degree in my confidence in God or in my duty towards Him. Let us not be impatient; God is with us, and will lead us if we confide in Him.

CHAPTER 3

Hecker's Mission

*Excerpts from various letters to and from
Father Hecker unfold the drama that led to
the establishment of the Paulist Community
and the growing clarification of the
mission of the Paulists.*



*(From Father Hecker's statement to Cardinal
Barnabo, Prefect of the Propaganda, after expulsion
from the Redemptorists, dated September, 1857.)*

My Lord Cardinal: For several important reasons which it is not necessary to enumerate here, the prospects of our holy faith were never so encouraging in the United States of America as at the present moment. The most intelligent and pious Catholics regard the existing state of things as Providential and most favorable for the beginning of the conversion of the American people. Our Holy Father, Pius IX, has recently declared in a letter to the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States, that the time has arrived when the most strenuous exertions and efforts should be made for the conversion of the non-Catholic people of the United States.

The capture of a young, and already powerful,

nation is a great and holy enterprise; an enterprise which the Catholic faith alone has the grace to undertake and the zeal to accomplish. But who are called to take the initiating steps in this glorious mission?

The attention of many leading Catholic minds in the United States is directed to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer as the instrument under divine Providence called to take the initiating step. And there are good reasons to believe that it is so, since a very considerable number of the members were born in the United States, many of whom are converts, who, from their former position and experience as Protestants, understand most thoroughly the non-Catholic community, and who, by their extensive labors since their conversion, as Catholic missionaries, have gained also a full knowledge of the Catholic population of the United States, and this preparation seems to point them out as the providential instruments for a work of this kind.

(After speaking of the converts received during missions to Catholics, Father Hecker adds:)

And it is important to know that the sermons and exercises of the missions are intended for and directed exclusively to the faithful; which shows plainly that if there were preaching and exercises adapted for the conversion of non-Catholics, the harvest of souls that would be reaped would be abundant beyond belief. Knowing this, and witnessing the blessing of God on our labors, it could not but be near our hearts to have the opportunity of laboring for the conversion of our

countrymen, not only on missions but at home, where we could adapt our preaching, instructions, and other exercises so as to bring about their conversion more generally and effectually.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, September, 1857.)*

But in this case, suppose he [the Superior General of the Redemptorists] does accept these, and the dismission is removed, and the Cardinal should say to me, “It is not your duty to return [into the Redemptorist Congregation], but to devote yourself to the English-speaking Catholics, and to the conversion of the non Catholics—this is the will of God for you”—and is willing to leave the door open to you, to the same end, of course, not to free us from our religious vows and obligations, but as religious to enter upon this career, with the approbation of competent authority—and if he approves of it we may be sure to have the Holy Father’s blessing—are you willing to say yes?

As regards the General, I think he would be glad to come to such terms in order to get rid of us, for surely our attitude toward him is everything but pleasant.

But you must well understand that I should not accept such a proposition for myself before having asked the best counsel of men of God, and their unhesitating approval of its being God’s will. There are holy men here, and I take counsel from them in every

important step; and they are religious, so that they are good judges in such important matters.

If God wishes to make use of us as instruments in such a design, and I can be assured of this on *competent authority*, with His grace, whatever it may cost, I will not shrink from it. I call competent authority the approbation of good and holy men, and one like the Cardinal, who knows the country, knows *all* our affairs now, and who has every quality of mind and heart to be a competent judge in this important affair.

Though you made me your minister plenipotentiary, yet this is an individual affair; one we did not contemplate; one of the highest import to our salvation and sanctification, and must depend on God and our individual conscience.

Even before making this proposition to you, I asked advice from my spiritual director, and he approved of it. You may be confident that in every step that I take I endeavor to be actuated only by the Spirit of God, and take every means to assure myself of it; so that hereafter no scruples may trouble my conscience, and God's blessing be with me and with you also.

Last Saturday evening the Cardinal requested me to go to Mgr. Bedini and tell him to speak with the Pope to-day when he has an audience, on our affairs—he promised to do so—and ask an audience for me.

Read this note, my dearest Fathers, and *do not delay in writing to me* the answer you may determine on. Of course, as yet this a *mere possibility*, but if it should turn out an actuality, I must have your opinions to know how to act; if it should turn out that I am to act soli-

tary and alone in this matter, my confidence is not shaken in God, and I will comply. *Fiat voluntas tua.*

You must pray for me and make all your penitents pray for me. What have we to fear, possessing God's friendship? I am faithful to all my religious duties—I am sensible of God's help—and this will not fail so long as you pray for me. You know my address, J. Spithover, Piazza di Spagna, Roma, Italia.

Affectionately, in the S. Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
I. T. Hecker.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, September, 1857.)*

But how are these to be secured? This is an important question, more so now than before, for suppose that the dismission is withdrawn, *my* position and *yours* in the Congregation will not be of the pleasantest sort, you may be assured. What is to be done? The Cardinal in a long conversation last night suggested the above point, and said: "Of course, if it be for your own sanctification, and you are willing to suffer, you must return to the Congregation," which you know I would most gladly do even though the General did not wish it; but then he suggested whether God might not desire of me a special work. I told him I could not think of this while a dismission was over my head; he said "of course not, for if you are a *mauvais sujet*, as the General thinks, God will surely not use you for any special mission—that must be first determined."

You will remember, and, I hope, before this reaches you, have answered my proposition in my last note,

whether you would be willing to form an independent band of missionaries, to be devoted to the great wants of the country? I have considered and reconsidered, and prayed and prayed, and in spite of my fears, this seems to me the direction [to] which Divine Providence calls us. When you consider the disposition of the superiors of the Congregation in our regard, their ignorance and want of sympathy with its wants, the struggles we have made to keep up our missions, the parishes which will absorb many of our American Fathers already in operation, that of St. Thomas and of Canada is spoken of in the report of the General as decided, and a foundation in the U.S. as a thing of time, and at the same time they will make a point of keeping down the "rebel Americans" by all the means in their power, and other obstacles which will easily suggest themselves to you, can we hope of succeeding in doing for the success of religion in our country what the interest of both demand?

Since writing the above I have had time for more reflection, and consulted with my spiritual adviser, and this course appears to be the one Divine Providence points out.

(From a letter to George V. Hecker, from Rome, about the same date.)

The same assurance is made by others of my ultimate success. Do they know what this means? In my mind the question is of the conversion of the people of the United States, and to be successful in the sense I understand things, is to obtain from the Pope his

sanction and blessing for the American Fathers to form themselves into a company with this object in view. Shall this be obtained? God alone knows.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, in the autumn of 1857.)*

I got Father Deshon's letter eighteen days after its date. Thousand thanks for your kindness, dearest Father. We are in the hands of God. My health is pretty good. I endeavor to keep close to God, keep up my confidence in His protection, and in the aid of our blessed Lady. I pray for you all. You cannot forget me in your prayers.

I have placed all information in your hands. In regard to the Archbishops of New York and of Baltimore, and of others, do what your judgment dictates, but nothing without giving me the information. The Archbishop of New York has been written to by Cardinal B., and perhaps by this time also the Archbishop of Baltimore and the Bishop of Newark. * * * So far from my devotion to religion being diminished by recent events, it has, thank God, greatly increased; but many other things have been changed in me. On many new points my intelligence has been awakened, experience has expelled much ignorance, and on the whole I hope that my faith and heart have been more purified. If God spares my life to return, I hope to come back more a man, a better Catholic, and more entirely devoted to the work of God.

(From a statement made a few years before his death.)

While with the Redemptorists I felt about the true work necessary for our time and country, that I was to view it as Moses did the Promised Land. But when they threw me over the wall, (Hallo!) says I, here I am in the midst of it, and I must attend to it myself.

(From a letter to the American Fathers, dated Rome, November 12, 1857.)

And, besides, I was not sure of your views being the same, as I now am. As soon as you made known these, and I found we were of the same mind, instead of the difficulties which I encountered discouraging me they rather indicated to my mind the will of Divine Providence in our regard, and gave me confidence. I hope, therefore, your answer to my letter of October 2 will be *a plan of uniting our labors in one company and backed up by Episcopal authority*. I think there will be no difficulty in the latter, for any Bishop will be willing to accept us, I should suppose, in his diocese.

(From a letter to the American Fathers, dated Rome, November 7, 1857.)

As to your request to “stay at Rome until all our affairs are arranged,” be sure I will, and will do all for you as for myself. All I ask of you is to pray to God and to our Lady for support for me.

The other day the proof sheets of my two articles [in the *Civiltà Cattolica*] were sent me, and I took them to Cardinal Barnabo, who read them and was pleased, and said I had proved my point, namely, Divine Providence was preparing the American people for conversion. Monsignor Bedini said, after reading them, that I had not instructed the reader what measures ought to be taken to accomplish the aim in view, though the articles were very interesting. This was not my purpose, I replied, and if called upon by the proper authority I was prepared to give my views on this point.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, November 20, 1857.)*

I told him [Cardinal Barnabo] that I was aware that my picture of the United States [in the articles in the *Civiltà*] was painted somewhat in *couleur de rose*, but that I was prepared also to show the difficulties in the way of the conversion of the American people to the Catholic faith, and how these were to be overcome; [and that] I had written these two articles expressly to excite an interest in our affairs in the United States, and, if God pleased, to excite the rulers of the Church in our behalf and lead them to see what a great and hopeful field was opened to the Church on the new continent. "That you have succeeded in doing," he said, "and you must write the other articles."

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, November 20, 1857.)*

You do not understand my sensitiveness on Americanism; if you were here you would. The impression of an exclusive American movement in the United States, even among Catholics, had taken possession of the minds of many here. So much so that our affair, at first blush, was in danger of being identified with it. Every word had to be weighed even in conversation which might give rise to a suspicion of this kind.

Now to F. H's (Hewit's) letter. You, my dear Father (Hewit), got almost sick after reading the General's document; that is only a specimen of what has been said and circulated against me here in Rome, and whispered by certain *camerati*, God bless 'em! into the ears of the Pope. Sometimes I have been overwhelmed with the most outrageous fabrications, and felt as if I should be crushed by them and our cause defeated. What could I do but cry in silence to God and our Blessed Mother for help? Some days I have passed in the intensest suffering from seeing the means resorted to against us, and the helplessness of our position. One period every way was blocked up, and everything looked dark, and nothing was left but simply to wait with the hope of a change. There was no answer that could be made to the preposterous charges against us. Some times I replied by telling those who related them that I intended to inform the Pope that they had the design of eating, some fine morning, St. Peter's for their breakfast, and drinking the Tiber dry to wash it down.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, December 6, 1857.)*

My convictions grow clearer and stronger. We need as broad and unconstrained a basis to act upon as we can get, for there is no reason why we should not adapt ourselves to accept what is good in our social and political customs and institutions, as other religious orders have done here in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. My convictions gain more firmness and intensity that we are called by Divine Providence not to confine ourselves to meet but one or the other special demand of religion in our country, but to hold ourselves in readiness to meet the general wants of our people.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, December 9, 1857.)*

Considering our past training and many other advantages which we possess, I cannot but believe that God will use us, providing we remain faithful to Him, united together as one man, and ready to make any sacrifices, for some such a holy enterprise; and my daily prayer is that the Holy Father may receive a special grace and inspiration to welcome and bless such a proposition.

(From a letter to Father Hecker, written by Rev. A. Sherwood Healy, dated Rome, December 16, 1857.)

The impression you made on our Superior is as favorable as it could well be. He gave talk at table the day you saw him in order to speak of you. He spoke of you as *"un homme très remarquable, un maitre-homme,"* etc., etc., and said that you understood your country more perfectly than anyone he had ever met, and that no doubt you were destined *"de faire de grandes conquêtes à le' eglise en Amèrique,"* etc. So follow up your advantage.

(From a letter to the American Fathers, dated Rome, December 5, 1857.)

Your repeated assurances of being united with me in our future fills me with consolation and courage. We may well repeat the American motto: "United we stand, divided we fall." Never did I find myself more sustained by the grace of God. How often have I heard repeated by acquaintances I have made, "Why, Father Hecker, you are the happiest man in Rome!" Little do they know how many sleepless nights I have passed—how deeply I have suffered in these three months. But ain't Almighty God good? It seems I never knew or felt before what it is to be wholly devoted to Him. Let us pray like bucks and fight like sixty for the good God and the conversion of souls.

(From a letter to George V. Hecker, dated Rome, December 18, 1857.)

God has bestowed on me great success, for all who know me here are my warm friends, and those acquainted with my affairs promise me great success. All depends on God; in the meantime I keep myself in my humility. But I would have you, my dear brother, as I know you have, some participation in the joy mixed with sadness in the things which have happened to me. God evidently has been in all these events, and, as you say, my stay here has not been useless. Indeed, I know that I am another man from what I was on coming here. No worse, I trust in God, but much better, greater zeal, heroism, submission to God. Indeed, this has laid in me the foundations of something much greater than the world imagines—that of becoming a saint; for I am sure my present opportunities on that score are abundant, and, thank God, His grace is more abundant.

(From a letter of the same date to Mrs. George V. Hecker.)

Indeed my stay in Rome has introduced me into a new life, and it seems to me I am not the same person I was before.

(From a letter to George V. Hecker, dated Rome, December 26, 1857.)

If it be the will of Divine Providence that something should be done in a special way at this moment for the conversion of our fellow-citizens, and it is my constant and deepest conviction that it is, then we may hope for a favorable issue [of the case with the General of the Redemptorists]. The views I hold in this regard have found a ready reception and sympathy from all intelligent and holy men here, so much so that I have but given expression to their own convictions in speaking my own. What confirms me is that they do not hesitate to tell me that I am the one to carry out such views. Nothing surprises me more than the impression which I have left on certain persons in Rome, and I cannot help seeing in this the hand of God in our favor.

(From a letter to the American Fathers, dated Rome, December 22, 1857.)

Today at half-past 12 I had an audience with His Holiness the Pope. After the usual etiquette, he informed me that he knew all about my affairs, and then asked what it was I wished. I replied that he might have the goodness to examine the purpose of my coming to Rome, since it regarded the conversion of my fellow countrymen. "Nothing can be done," he replied, "till Monsignor Bizari, who is engaged in examining your affairs, makes his report; then I will

give my opinion and my decision." "Your decision, Most Holy Father," I answered, "is God's decision, and willingly and humbly I will submit to it, whatever it may be." This seemed to give him pleasure. "The conversion of the Americans would be very difficult," he continued; "they are so engrossed in worldly pursuits and in getting money; and these things are not favorable; it is not I who say it, but our Lord in the Gospel." "The United States, your Holiness, is in its youth, and is like the young father of a family, who is furnishing his house—while this is going on he must be busy; but the American people do not make money to hoard. They are not avaricious or miserly." "No, no; they are willing to give when they have riches; the Bishops tell me that they are generous in aiding the building of churches, etc. You see I know also the bright side as well as the dark of the American character. But in the United States there exists too unrestricted liberty; all the refugees and revolutionaries gather there and are in full liberty." "True, *tres saint Pere*, but this has its good side, for it is a singular phenomenon that many of these, seeing in the United States that the Church is alone and independent, begin to regard it as a divine institution, and not as necessarily connected with what they term despotism, and they return to the Church." "Yes, the Church is at home in a republic as in a monarchy or aristocracy. Then there is among you abolitionism, in which parties get each other by the hair." "But, Holy Father, there is also the Catholic truth, which if once known would come between these two parties and act like oil

on troubled waters; and our most enlightened statesmen are becoming more and more convinced that Catholicity is necessary to sustain our institutions and enable our young country to realize its great destiny. And allow me to add, Most Holy Father, that it would be a work worthy of your glorious pontificate to set on foot the measures for the beginning of its conversion. The hearts of the most intelligent and pious Catholics are in favor of such an undertaking, and, among others, Dr. Ives, whom you know, looks upon it as the manifest will of Divine Providence." "Yes, I remember Dr. Ives. Is his wife a Catholic?" I replied in the affirmative.

On my retiring, he gave me his blessing, and repeated in a loud voice as I kneeled: "Bravo! bravo!"

(From a letter to George V. Hecker, dated Rome, January 2, 1858)

No one is more aware of what such an enterprise demands and will cost, as sketched out, than I am, and if it be not clearly the will of God in my regard I will be glad to escape it. But should it prove to be His will, then I am ready to stand alone, pay the costs, and suffer any treatment. Indeed, I have been kicked and cuffed of late by friends and foes to that extent that I am quite proof against such things.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, January 1, 1858.)*

In regard to a new company, it may be that Divine Providence has permitted these things to happen in order to raise up by our hands a new company, * * * one that would have in view the conversion of the great body of non-Catholics, well adapted to the fresh and diverse wants of a people composed of such elements as ours in America.

...

I must confess to you frankly that thoughts of this kind do occupy my mind and day by day they appear to come more clearly from heaven. I cannot refuse to entertain them without resisting what appears to me the inspirations of God. You know that these are not new opinions hastily adopted. From the beginning of my Catholic life there seemed always before me, but not distinctly, some such work, and it is indicated both in *Questions of the Soul* and the *Aspirations of Nature* and I cannot resist the thought that my present peculiar position is, or may be, providential to further some such undertaking.

You may imagine that these views which I have expressed may only be a ruse of the devil to thwart our common cause and future prospects. If it be he, I shall head him off, because all that regards my personal vocation I shall submit to wise and holy men, and obey what they tell me. [And I will submit them to the Holy Father.] Should he pronounce them the creation of my own fancy or suggestions of the devil, and count us all as one and give us the rules of St.

CHAPTER 4

A Narration of His Life

From a document Father Hecker submitted to his spiritual director in 1858, he gives a résumé of his life, his growing convictions about mission and his desires for a new apostolate in America.



(Document submitted by Father Hecker to his director and others, in Rome, 1858.)

Born of Protestant parents and in the midst of a Protestant community, no positive religious instructions were imparted to me in my youth, and my religious belief, therefore, was left for me to decide—as is the case with by far the greater part of those born in the United States—at some future period and according to my own choice. At the early age of twelve years my mind began to seek after the truth, and my heart was moved with the desire of doing good to others. The first channel in which my mind was directed in the discovery of the truth and of the means of benefiting my fellow men, was that of politics, a subject which is one of the earliest that occupies the thoughts of everyone born in a republic. Political reform was the first, therefore, to present itself as the remedy for existing evils and of rendering mankind happy.



Susan Caroline Hecker (nee Friend), mother of Isaac Hecker. Her strong Methodist faith and her relationship with Isaac, the youngest in the family, influenced his life.

Several years' study and effort in the way of political reform made it evident that the evils of society were not so much political as social, and that not much was to be hoped from political action, as politicians were governed more by selfishness and a thirst for power than by patriotism and the desire of doing good to their fellow-citizens. Hence a social reform was called for, and this led me into the examination of the social evils of the present state of society. The many miseries and the great wretchedness that exist in modern society, sprung, in my opinion, from the want of the practical application of the moral principles of Christianity to the social relations between men. How could a man love his neighbors as himself and then accumulate wealth by their toil? How can those who believe that all men were created in the image of God, and redeemed by the blood of Christ, and therefore equal before God, treat them as drudges, servants, and slaves? Why should not those who profess Christianity imitate Christ in devoting themselves entirely to the spreading of the truth, the relief of the poor, and the elevation of the lower classes? Such like thoughts occupied my mind, and since a social reform was needed, it was my duty to begin with myself, and this led me to treat those in my employ with greater kindness, and to make important changes in my way of living. Abstinence from all luxuries, from all flesh meats, and from all drinks but water, thus confining myself to what was strictly necessary; this was continued during seven years, until my entering a religious order in the Church; and applying the same principles to my dress, my clothing was simple and

common. Abstinence was necessary to bring the passions into subjection, and all superfluities should be devoted to the poor and other good works. Such, then, were my intentions. The desire of bringing these opinions to bear upon society led me to seek and inquire among several social institutions which were then inaugurated and professing similar aims. A couple of years were spent among them in this inquiry, when it became clear to me that the evils of society were not so much social as personal, and it was not by a social reform they would be remedied, but by a personal one.

This turned my attention to religion which has for its aim the conversion and reformation of the soul. But what religion of the many sects around me was the true one? My duty was to examine, and this examination occupied several years, and each of the principal Protestant sects passed under review, and none answered the demands of my reason or proved satisfactory to my conscience. The question then presented itself in this shape: either the truth is to be found in the Catholic Church, the place where it is supposed among Protestants the least to exist, or God will yet reveal it, for it is not reasonable to suppose that He would implant in the soul such an ardent thirst for truth and not reveal it.

At this period many struggles took place in my soul. It seemed as though God demanded of me the sacrifice of all desires after wealth, honors, and worldly ambition, and the renunciation of my attachment and affection for my friends, relatives, and parents. These struggles so absorbed my energies that all

attention to my business ceased, they reduced me to a low state of health, and not knowing what these things meant, or what they would lead to, threw me into great perplexity. God at length conquered, and led me to make this entire renunciation, and to be willing to be poor, despised, and alone in the world. It was then that the Catholic Church burst upon my vision as the object to which all my efforts had been unintentionally directed. It was not a change, but a sudden realization of all that had hitherto obscurely captivated my mind, and secretly attracted my heart. On my reception into the Church no abjuration was exacted, since my assent was never given to any sect or form of error; and the only desire that occupied me was to devote myself wholly to God and His service.

One year, about, elapsed when my confessor, then coadjutor Bishop of New York, suggested my studying for the secular priest hood, but my secret wish was to become at once a religious. It so happened at this moment two Americans were about to leave the United States to enter the noviciate in Belgium of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. My acquaintance with the Redemptorists had taken place a short time previous; it was suggested by one of them that the way was open to me to accompany these two novices. After counsel and prayer, we embarked together for the noviciate.

My noviciate was one of sore trials, for the master of novices seemed not to understand me, and the manifestation of my interior to him was a source of the greatest pain. After about nine or ten months he appeared to recognize the hand of God in my direction

in a special manner, conceived a great esteem, and placed an unusual confidence in me, and allowed me, without asking it, though greatly desired, daily communion. During my whole noviciate no amount of austerity could appease my desire for mortification, and several gifts in the way of prayer were bestowed on me. Towards the end of my noviceship the voluntary power over the direction of my intellectual faculties became very much restricted, and the use of my organs of speech were so tied that the practice of meditation and vocal prayer was necessarily very limited. A doubt of my religious vocation never entered my mind nor was it once suggested by the novice-master. Some fears, however, at not being able to pursue my studies in that state arose in my mind, but he bade me banish them, and my vows were made at the end of the year.

My studies began in another house, and my wish was to make a thorough course and begin with philosophy. This the superior granted. My intellect in all scientific [scholastic] matters seemed stupid; it was with the greatest difficulty that its attention could be kept on them for a few moments, and my memory retained of these things nothing. At the close of the first year all ability to pursue my studies had altogether departed. This state of things perplexed my superiors, and on being asked what they could do with me, my answer was: "One of three things: Make me a lay brother; or send me to a contemplative Order which did not require scientific [scholastic] studies; or allow me to pursue at my free moments my studies by myself." Instead of either of these, they gave me

charge of the sick, which was my sole occupation for the whole year following. During this year my stupidity augmented, and reduced me to a state next to folly, and it was my delight to be treated as a fool. One day when my fellow-students were treating me as such and throwing earth at me, an ancient father, venerated for his gifts and virtues, suddenly turned around to them and with emotion exclaimed: "You treat him as a fool, and despise him; the day will come when you will think it an honor to kiss his hand."

At the expiration of the year the question came up again, What was to be done with me? My superior put this question and demanded of me, under obedience, to tell him in writing how, in my belief, God intended to employ me in the future. Though the answer to this question was no secret to me, yet to express it, while in such a condition of utter helplessness, required me to make a great act of mortification. There was no escape, and my reply was as follows:

"It seemed to me in looking back on my career before becoming a Catholic, that Divine Providence had led me as it were by the hand, through the different ways of error, and made me personally acquainted with the different classes of persons (and their wants) of which the people of the United States is composed, in order that having made known to me the truth He might employ me the better to point out to them the way to His Church. That, therefore, my vocation was to labor for the conversion of my non-Catholic fellow countrymen. This work at first was, it seemed to me, to be accomplished by means of acquired science, but now it had been made plain that God would have it

done principally by the aid of His grace; and if left to study at such moments when my mind was free, it would not take a long time for me to acquire sufficient knowledge to be ordained a priest." This was in the year 1848.

This plan was adopted, and my superiors sent me to a house just about to be established near London, in England. The moments in which my mind was free to study were given to the reading of theology, and in about a year afterwards Bishop Wiseman ordained me a priest. During this period my abasement and helplessness continued and were increased, and so much so that it baffles all my powers of expression. It seemed as though the slightest action of my mind or body depended altogether and directly on God; and that my condition was like that of a wretched and famishing beggar sitting at the gate of a wealthy prince, who did not venture to raise his head and ask for assistance when he passed by. And it also seemed to me that God required of me to accept this abject condition for my whole life, and after some struggle this act of acceptance was made. Immediately after my ordination my superiors employed me in the work of missions. The duties of the sacred ministry appeared to me most natural, the hearing of confessions and the direction of souls was as though it had been a thing practiced from my childhood, and was a source of great consolation.

At the end of about two years my superiors sent me back to the United States, and on my return, being asked by my immediate superior in what way he could best employ me, my reply was: "In taking care

of the sick, the poor, and prisoners." The stupidity which still reigned over my intellectual faculties, and the helplessness of my will and my sympathy with those classes, led me to choose such a sphere of action as most suitable to my then condition. And although the conversion of the non-Catholics of my fellow-countrymen was ever before my mind, yet God left me in ignorance how this was to be accomplished. Such strong and deep impulses, and so vast in their reach, took possession of my soul on my return to the United States in regard to the conversion of the American people that on manifesting my interior to one of the most spiritually enlightened and experienced fathers of the Congregation on the subject (Father Rumpler) to obtain his direction, he bade me "not to resist these interior movements—they come from God—and that He would yet employ me in accordance with them." Such were his words. After a few weeks in the United States the work of missions began. My principal duties on these were to give public instructions and hear confessions, and up to this, missionary labors have occupied me almost exclusively.

The blessings of God upon our missions were most evident, and my share in them most consoling; usually the most abandoned sinners fell to my lot. But holy and important as the exercises of the missions among Catholics are, still this work did not correspond to my interior attrait, and although exhausted and frequently made ill from excessive fatigue in these duties, yet my ardent and constant desire to do something for the conversion of my non-Catholic countrymen led me to take up my pen. That took

place as follows: One day alone in my cell the thought suddenly struck me how great were my privileges and my joy since my becoming a Catholic, and how great were my troubles and agony of soul before this event. Alas! how many of my former friends and acquaintances, how many of the great body of the American people were in the same painful position. Cannot something be done to lead them to the knowledge of the truth? Perhaps if the way that Divine Providence had led me to the Church was shown to them, many of them might in this way be led also to see the truth. This thought, and with it the hope of inducing young men to enter into religious orders, produced in a few months from my pen a book entitled *Questions of the Soul*. The main features of this book are the showing that the sacraments of the Catholic Church satisfy fully all the wants of the heart, and that the desire of leading a life of Christian perfection can only be realized in the religious orders of the Catholic Church.

But the head was left yet to be converted. This thought led me to write a second book called *Aspirations of Nature*, which has for its aim to show that the truths of the Catholic faith answer completely to the demands of reason. My purpose in these two books was to explain the Catholic religion in such a manner as to reach and attract the minds of the non-Catholics of the American people. These books were regarded in my own secret thoughts as the test whether God had really given me the grace and vocation to labor in a special manner for the conversion of these people. The first book, with God's grace, has been the means of many signal conversions in the United States and

England, and in a short period passed through three editions; the second has been published since my arrival in Rome. An instance of its character may be drawn from the following anecdote: A copy of it recently came to my hands, and was given to a Protestant friend here in Rome to read, and on returning it he exclaimed: "This book has dispelled all my prejudices against the Catholic Church, and if I ever become a Catholic here is the cause of it." Since, he has received the grace to enter the Church, of which he is now a fervent member. (G. B. Brown, *Asp. of Nat.*; Mrs. Ward at the same time, *Ques. of Soul.*)

On an occasion of a public conference given by me before an audience, a great part of which was not Catholic, the matter and manner of which was taken from my second book, my fellow missionaries were present, and they as well as myself regarded this as a test whether my views and sentiments were adapted to reach and convince the understandings and hearts of this class of people, or were the mere illusions of fancy. Hitherto my fellow missionaries had shown but little sympathy with my thoughts on these points, but at the close of the conference they were of one mind that my vocation was evidently to work in the direction of the non-Catholics, and they spoke of such a work with conviction and enthusiasm. "I see clearly now," said the superior (F. Walworth) of the mission, "what your vocation is, and if the subject ever comes up in my presence before our superiors I shall speak plainly to them about it. And nothing would give me greater consolation and would be productive of greater effects than if you would devote yourself to

the work of the non-Catholic community. You should advance, and after you had opened the way, my vocation would be to follow up and complete your work. You would remove prejudices and excite an interest and desire to become better acquainted with the doctrines of the Catholic faith, and I would come and offer this knowledge." Such was his language. Secular priests who were present remarked that if ever the Catholic faith were to be brought before the American people, it would have to be done in the style and way of my conference.

The necessity of bringing the Catholic faith to bear on the American people, and the prospect of their conversion, and the way this is to be done—these convictions have taken hold of the minds of several Catholic writers and distinguished individuals in the United States, and they do not hesitate to acknowledge that this is owing to my writings and personal influence. These things are mentioned to show that my own personal convictions are confirmed by the testimony of others, and were the question presented to them whether God had given to me a special vocation to work in this way, they would answer, without doubt, in its favor. Those who are acquainted with the state of things and the wants of religion in America, have frequently in my presence expressed the necessity of some means better adapted to answer these, and have pointed me out as the one called to inaugurate them. Conversing while here in Rome with two religious superiors, both well acquainted with the United States, they were of the same opinion that something better adapted to the needs of religion in

that country was demanded, and told me without hesitation that I was just the person calculated for such a work; and in several other instances my interior convictions have been confirmed by the mouths of others.

If God has called me to such a work, His Providence has in a singular way, since my arrival at Rome, opened the door for me to undertake it. The object of my coming to Rome was to induce the General to sustain and favor the extension of our missionary labors in the United States. It was undertaken altogether in the good of the order, the general interests of religion, and in undoubted good faith. Under false impressions of my purpose, my expulsion from the Congregation was decreed three days after my arrival. This was about three months ago, and was the source of the deepest affliction to me, and up to within a short time my great desire was to re-enter the Congregation. At present it seems to me that these things were permitted by Divine Providence in order to place me in the position to undertake that mission which has never ceased to occupy my thoughts. * * * Two-thirds of the twenty-four millions of its population hold no positive religious doctrines, and the method and means of reaching them, * * * require an institution which shall have their conversion to the Catholic faith as its principal aim, which is free to develop itself according to the fresh wants that may spring up, thus opening an attractive future to the religious vocations of the Catholic young men of that country.

Regarding, therefore, my early and extensive acquaintance among my own people, politically, so-

cially, and religiously, with the knowledge of their peculiar wants, and their errors also, and the way in which God has led me, and the graces given to me, and my interior convictions, and the experience acquired and confirming them, since my Catholic life, and also my singular position at present, the question in conclusion is to know from holy, instructed, and experienced men in such matters, whether there is sufficient evidence of a special vocation from God for me to undertake now such a work? Epiphany, 1858. Rome.

(This document I had translated into Italian, and gave it to Cardinal Barnabo, Monsignor Bedini, Father Francis, Passionist, my director while in Rome; Father Gregorio, definitor, Carmelite, and Father Druelle, of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, and each gave a favorable answer.)

(Concerning the above document, Father Hecker said toward the end of his life:)

I was fully determined to forego the entire matter, go back to the Redemptorists, or drift whithersoever Providence might will, if a single one of the men whom I thus consulted had failed to approve me, or had so much as expressed a doubt. I had enquired who were the most spiritually enlightened men in Rome, and I had been guided to the three religious whom I associated with Cardinal Barnabo and Archbishop Bedini to assist me in coming to a conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

The View from Rome

Various letters to and from Father Hecker in Rome fill in the background to the decree of Pope Pius IX, presented here, which dispensed the first Paulists from their vows as Redemptorists and allowed them to begin their own mission.



*The Church of Santa Susanna in Rome,
in the care of the Paulist Fathers since 1921.*

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, January 10, 1858.)*

Bishop Connelly saw the Pope, and the Pope said: "Why do they not form themselves into a new company of missionaries?" etc. When told they were ready, "Well, when it comes up before me I will examine it, and, if good, give my consent." [He added.] "They cannot expect me to take the initiatory step; this would be putting the cart before the horse. Let them present their plan to me, and if I find it good it shall have my consent." * * * Taking our present missions and our present mode of life as a groundwork, the rest will have to be left to Divine Providence, the character of the country, and our own spirit of faith and good common sense.

*(From a letter to George V. Hecker, dated Rome,
February 13, 1858.)*

Your note of January 20, informing me about Mr. Donnelly's views and sentiments, was more important to me than you perhaps imagined. They give me to understand that others, and my friends, have some idea of what I myself am impressed with; that is, my work here may be of great importance to the future of religion, to our country and also to the present. That this conviction is shared by others consoles and strengthens me. The incident of my expulsion has been the germ of things of much higher and more general character, and almost daily it opens up to me

views which regard the present and future of the Church and our country. If God blesses our personal affairs with success, then the opportunity may be given to me to express these views, and perhaps to the Pope. On leaving our shores I had the presentiment that God's Providence was about to employ me in just such a work as now seems before me. Of course, *how*, I did not know, but the moment my expulsion was being read, this thought flashed again across my mind, and led me to say interiorly to God, *fiat voluntas tua*. Not only the expulsion, but the delays and difficulties, the misrepresentations and calumnies which I have had to bear, all are regarded by me as providential means of placing me finally in the position here to further the work of God. The Pope begins to think now that we are good fellows, and by and by he may regard us as zealous missionaries, devoted to God and His Church, and called to a special and providential work, and hence take a special interest in our regard. If this happens, it will give me the occasion of expressing and explaining my views to him. . . . My views on these subjects are becoming daily more clear, just, and practical; and I imagine that if the Holy Father should place any confidence in me, which I trust my conduct in these troubles may merit, he will listen to them, and be guided in a measure by them. But the future is in the dark, and it is the intimate conviction of the guidance of Divine Providence in this whole affair, and the promise of triumph [given me by] all who are cognizant of its nature, which gives me hope and fortitude.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, March 9, 1858.)*

The Pope has spoken, and the American Fathers, including myself, are dispensed from their vows. The decree is not in my hands, but Cardinal Barnabo read it to me last evening. The General is not mentioned in it, and no attention whatever is paid to his action in my regard. The other Fathers are dispensed in view of the petition they made, as the demand for separation as Redemptorists would destroy the unity of the Congregation, and in the dispensation I am associated with them. The Cardinal [Barnabo] is wholly content; says that I must ask immediately for an audience to thank the Pope. * * * Now let us thank God for our success.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, March 11, 1858.)*

We are left in entire liberty to act in the future as God and our intelligence shall point the way. Let us be thankful to God, humble towards each other and everyone else, and more than ever in earnest to do the work God demands at our hands. * * * The Pope had before him all the documents, yours and mine and the General's, and the letters from the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States. Archbishop Bizarri (Secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars) gave him a verbal report of their contents and read some of the letters. Subsequently the Pope himself examined them and came to the conclusion to grant us

dispensation. But there was *I* in the way, who had not petitioned for a dispensation. And why not? Simply because Cardinal Barnabo would have been offended at me if I had done so. * * * I could not go against the wishes of the cardinal. A few days after he had given me his views, and with such warmth that I could not act against them, he saw the Pope, who informed him of his intention to give us dispensation and to set aside the decree of my expulsion. On seeing the cardinal after this audience he told me that I might communicate this to Archbishop Bizarri. I did so by note, telling him that if the Pope set aside my expulsion and was determined to give the other American Fathers dispensation from their vows, in view of the circumstances which had arisen, I would be content to accept my dispensation also. This note of mine was shown to the Pope, and hence he immediately associated me with you in the dispensation.

The wording of the decree is such as to make it plain that it was given in view of your memorial, and its terms are calculated to give a favorable impression of us. * * * Archbishop Bizarri told me yesterday, when I went to thank him for his part, that in it the Holy See had given us its praise, and he trusted we would show ourselves worthy of it in the future. I rejoined that since the commencement of our Catholic life we had given ourselves, soul and body, entirely to the increase of God's glory and the interests of His Church, and it was our firm resolve to continue to do so to the end of our lives. He was quite gratified with *our* contentment with the decision, for I spoke, as I always have done, in your name as well as my own.

But whom do you think I met in his antechamber? The General [of the Redemptorists]. When he came in and got seated I immediately went across the room and reached out my hand to him, and we shook hands and sat down beside each other. * * * In the course of the conversation he inquired what we intended to do in the future. My reply was that we had been guided by God's providence in the past and we looked to Him for guidance in our future. * * * As to my return [home], the cardinal says I must not think of departing till after Easter. Indeed, I see that before I can obtain an audience to thank the Holy Father it will be hard on to Easter. If there be a few days intervening I will go to Our Lady of Loretto to invoke her aid in our behalf, and for her protection over us as a body and over each one in particular. In May, earlier or later in the month, with God's blessing and your prayers, I hope to be with you. * * *

The decree, which places us, according to the Canons, under the authority of the Bishops, you will, of course, understand, does not in any way make us parish priests. The Pope could not tell us in it to commence another congregation, although this is what he, and Cardinal Barnabo, and Archbishop Bedini, and others expect from us. He [the Pope] said that for him to tell us so [officially] would be putting the cart before the horse. These are his words.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, March 18, 1858.)*

It is customary here, before giving dispensation of vows to religious, to require them to show their admission into a diocese. As this was not required in our case, we are consequently at liberty now to choose any bishop we please who will receive us. "Choose your bishop, inform him of your intentions, and if he approves, arrange your conditions with him." These are the cardinal's words, and both he and Archbishop Bedini suggested New York. * * * My trip to Loretto has come to naught, as I can find no one to accompany me, and then my health, I fear, will not bear so much fatigue. I shall come back with some gray hairs; I thought to pull them all out before my return, but on looking this morning with that intention I found them *too many*. However, that is only on the outside; within all is right—young, fresh, and full of courage, and ready to fight the good fight.

*(A memorandum of his second audience
with Pius IX.)*

Yesterday, the 16th of March, the Pope accorded me an audience, and on my entering his room he repeated my name, gave me his blessing, and after I had kissed his ring he told me to rise, and said: "At length your affairs are determined. We have many causes to decide, and each must have its turn; yours came finally, and now you have our decision." "True,"

I replied, "and your decision gives me great satisfaction, and it appears to me that it should be satisfactory to all concerned." "I found you," he rejoined, "like Abraham and Lot, and (making a motion with his hand) I told one to take this, the other that direction." "For my part," I said, "I look upon the decision as providential, as I sought no personal triumph over the General, but entertain every sentiment of charity towards him, and every one of my former religious brethren." This remark appeared to move the Pope, and I continued: "I thought of your Holiness' decision in the holy mass of this morning, when in the Gospel our Lord reminds us not to decide according to the appearances of things, but render a just judgment; and such is the one you have given, and for our part we trust that you will receive in the future consolation and joy [from our conduct]." "As you petitioned," he said, "with the other Fathers as one of the Congregation, in giving you dispensation I considered you a member of the Congregation." "So I understood it," was my reply; "and as a [private] person I felt no inclination to defend my character, but as a priest I felt it to be my duty; and in this regard your Holiness has done all that I have desired." "But you intend to remain," he inquired, "together in community?" "Most assuredly, your Holiness; our intention is to live and work as we have hitherto done. But there are many [spiritual] privileges attached to the work of the missions very necessary to their success, and which we would gladly participate in." "Well, well," he answered, "organize, begin your work, and then demand them, and I will grant them to you. The Amer-

icans, however, are very much engrossed in material pursuits." "True, Holy Father," I replied, "but the faith is there. We five missionaries are Americans, and were like the others, but you see the grace of God has withdrawn us from these things and moved us to consecrate ourselves wholly to God and His Church, and we hope it will do the same for many of our countrymen. And once our countrymen are Catholics, we hope they will do great things for God's Church and His glory, for they have enthusiasm." "Yes, yes," he rejoined, "it would be a great consolation to me." I asked him if he would grant me a plenary indulgence for my brethren and my friends in the United States. "Well," he said, "but I must have a rescript." "I have one with me which perhaps will do," I answered. Looking over it, he made some alterations and signed it. I knelt down at his feet and begged him to give me a large blessing before my departure, in order that I might become a great missionary in the United States—which he gave me most cordially, and I retired.

His manner was very affectionate, and in the course of the conversation he called me "*caro mio*" and "*figlio mio*" several times. We could not desire to leave a more favorable impression than exists here in regard to us and our part in the recent transaction, and we have the sympathy of the Pope and the Propaganda. Rome will withhold nothing from us if we prove worthy of its confidence, and will hail our success with true joy. I look upon this settlement of our difficulties as the work of Divine Providence, and my prayer is that it may make me humble, modest, and renew my desire to consecrate myself wholly to God's designs.

(From a letter to George V. Hecker, dated Rome, March 19, 1858.)

According to my judgment and views we have obtained *all* we had at heart—liberty to devote ourselves, *and that without any restriction*, to the great wants of religion in our country. And obtained this without any fault on our part, if my conscience is any evidence, and honorably before the world. Our success is complete, and I leave Rome to return to the United States without having any desire or wish unfulfilled or unanswered. And for this success I take no credit to myself, but regard it as the work of the Providence of God.

Thus far everything has been done wisely and prudently; and as regards the future, and in my view it is a great and glorious one, if we keep steadily in view the same course, with the light and help of God, and the protection of our dearest Mother, it will be and shall be ours.

(From a letter to George V. Hecker, dated Rome, March 27, 1858.)

Everyone here is delighted with the issue of our affairs, and looks forward with great hopes to our future.

(From a letter to the American Fathers, dated Rome, March 27, 1858.)

The seven months passed here in Rome seem to me an age, and have taxed me to that extent that I

look forward to home as a place of rest and repose. When I think of the fears, anxieties, and labors undergone I say to myself, boys that's fun enough for this time. On the other hand, when I remember the warm and disinterested friends God has given us on account of these difficulties, and the happy issue to which His providence has conducted them, my heart is full of gratitude and joy. To me the future looks bright, hopeful, full of promise, and I feel confident in God's providence, and assured of His grace in our regard. I feel like raising up the cross as our standard and adopting one word as our motto—CONQUER.

I have just received the documents for you to give the Papal benediction at the missions, and will send them. A letter reached here this week from the Bishop of Burlington, Vt., and it is strongly in our favor; it concludes by saying that all that we required to make us a religious Congregation was the special blessing of the Holy Father.

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Rome, April 3, 1858.)*

Monsignor Bedini asked of the Pope the special benediction that Bishop De Goesbriand suggested, and he replied: "Did I not give it to Père Hecker, and through him to his brethren, when he was here?" "But," answered Monsignor Bedini, "give them this benediction this time on the request of the bishop." And he answered: "It is well I do." So there is a special blessing from the Holy Father in view of our forming a religious body. Indeed, that is so well understood

here that several have inquired what name we intend to adopt, etc. Of course to all such questions my answer is: "I can say nothing; the future is in God's hands, and we intend to follow His providence." * * *

Good Cardinal Barnabo looks upon us with a paternal regard, and when I expressed in your name how warmly we returned his affection, and what a deep gratitude we owed him, he was deeply moved, and replied that he did not deserve such sentiments, and that he had only done justice. Since the settlement of our affairs I have let no occasion pass to express our gratitude to those who have befriended us; and as for Cardinal Barnabo, Monsignor Bedini, Bishop Connolly, and Doctor Bernard Smith, Benedictine monk, they should be put at the head of the list of our spiritual benefactors and remembered in all our prayers. Now that we are a body, I would advise this to be done at once. The Holy Father stands No. 1; that is understood.

How much I have to relate to you on my return! Many things I did not venture to write down on paper, and many I can communicate to no one else but you. How great is my desire to see you!—it seems that I have no other.

I have taken passage for Marseilles on Tuesday after Easter, the 6th of April, and intend to take passage on the Vanderbilt, which leaves Havre on the 28th. * * * I saw the General on Tuesday of this week, to take leave of him. After some conversation we left in good feeling, promising to pray *pro invicem*. God bless him!

**(The decree of the Congregation of
Bishops and Regulars.)**

Nuper nonnulli ex Presbyteris Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris in provinciis Americae Septentrionalis foederatis existentibus SSmmum D. N. Pium PP. IX. supplici prece deprecabantur, ut eis ob speciales circumstantias concederet ab auctoritate et jurisdictione Rectoris Majoris subtrahi, ac a proprio Superiore Apostolice Sedi immediate subjecto juxta regulam a Benedicto XIV., sanctae memoriae, approbatam gubernari. Quod si id eis datum non esset, dispensationem a votis in dicta Congregatione emissis, humillime expostulabant. Re sedulo perpensa, Sanctitas Sua existimavit hujusmodi separationem unitati Congregationis officere et S. Alphonsi instituto minime respondere ideoque haud permittendum esse. Cum autem relatum sit oratores nulli labori parcere in sacris expeditionibus peragendis, et in proximorum conversione, Christianaque institutione curanda, et idcirco a pluribus Antistibus commendentur, visum est SSmo Domino magis expedire eos a praefata Congregatione eximi, ut in sacri ministerii opera promovenda sub directione Antistitum locorum incumbere possint. Quapropter Sanctitas Sua presbyteros Clarentium Walworth, Augustinum Hewit, Georgium Deshon, et Franciscum Baker, una cum presbytero Isaac Hecker, qui eorundem postulationibus quoad dispensationem a votis adhaesit, a votis simplicibus, etiam permanentiae in Congregatione SSrni Redemptoris emissis, hujus Decreti tenore, Apostolica auctoritate dispensat, et dispensatos, ac prorsus solutos esse declarat, ita ut ad eamden Congregationem amplius non pertineant. Confidit vero Sanctitas Sua memoratos Presbyteros, qua opere, qua exemplo, qua ser-

mone, in vinea Domini sub directione et jurisdictione Antistitum locorum, ad praescriptum SS. Canonum adlaboraturos, ut aeternam animarum salutem alacriter curent, atque proximorum sanctificationem pro viribus promoveant.

Datum Romae, ex Secretaria Sacrae Congregationis Episcoporum et Regularium, Die 6 Martii, 1858.

[L + S] G. Card. Della Genga, Praef.

A., Archiepiscopus Philippen, Sec.

[TRANSLATION.]

Certain priests of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in the United States of North America recently presented their most humble petition to our Most Holy Lord Pope Pius IX., that in view of certain special reasons he would grant that they might be withdrawn from the authority and jurisdiction of the Rector Major and be governed by a superior of their own, immediately subject to the Apostolic See, and according to the [Redemptorist] Rule approved by Benedict XIV, of holy memory. If, however, this should not be granted to them, they most humbly asked for dispensation from their vows in the said Congregation. After having carefully considered the matter, it appeared to his Holiness that a separation of this kind would be prejudicial to the unity of the Congregation and by no means accord with the Institute of St. Alphonsus, and therefore should not be permitted. Since, however, it was represented to his Holiness that the petitioners spare no labor in the prosecution of the holy missions in the conversion of souls, and in the dissemination of Christian doctrine,

and are for this reason commended by many bishops, it seemed more expedient to his Holiness to withdraw them from the said Congregation, that they might apply themselves to the prosecution of the works of the sacred ministry under the direction of the local bishops. Wherefore his Holiness by the tenor of this decree, and by his Apostolic authority, does dispense from their simple vows and from that of permanence in the Congregation the said priests, viz: Clarence Walworth, Augustine Hewit, George Deshon, and Francis Baker, together with the priest Isaac Hecker, who has joined himself to their petition in respect to dispensation from the vows, and declares them to be dispensed and entirely released, so that they no longer belong to the said Congregation. And his Holiness confidently trusts that under the direction and jurisdiction of the local bishops, according to the prescription of the sacred Canons, the above-mentioned priests will labor by work, example, and word in the vineyard of the Lord, and give themselves with alacrity to the eternal salvation of souls, and promote with all their power the sanctification of their neighbor.

Given at Rome, in the office of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, the 6th day of March, 1858.

[L. + S.] G. Cardinal Della Genga, Prefect.
A., Archbishop of Philippi, *Secretary*.

NOTE.—I wish to add to this, that the relations between the Redemptorists and Paulists are, and I trust will continue to be, most amicable.

Aug. F. Hewit, C.S.P., Superior, [dated in 1890.]

(Cardinal Barnabo's letter of recommendation.)

Alexander Cardinal Barnabo, Priest of the Holy Roman Church, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation "De Propaganda Fide."

To each and everyone who will read this letter of ours, we declare and testify that the Reverend Isaac Hecker, secular priest, is free from all ecclesiastical censure, and that he is a man most illustrious for his religious zeal and sacerdotal virtues, most active in cultivating the vineyard of the Lord, especially in the United States of North America, and for that reason especially beloved, not only by very many bishops there, but also by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.

We commend him most strongly in the Lord to the American bishops, now that he is leaving Rome for America, and ask that they receive him kindly; that they allow him to celebrate the most holy sacrifice of the mass, and that they do him all those good offices of charity which they think worthy a man who is truly religious and a great worker for the salvation of souls.

Given at Rome, House of Cong. de Prop. Fide, April 5, 1858.

Al C. Barnabo, *Pref.*

*(From a letter to the American Fathers,
dated Paris, April 18, 1858.)*

Rev. and Dear Brethren: Your note of March 15, Saratoga, has just arrived here via Rome. There is no

need of my answering it, as matters are now all sealed, signed, and settled. Thank God and our blessed Lady.

Rome has done for us all it could, and is ready to do for us all it can, provided we do our part and present ourselves in proper shape. I feel that your position is a delicate one, and I am most desirous to be with you. * * *

I have just received a most kind and encouraging note from Reverend Father de Buggenoms. His whole sympathy is with us, and he promised to pray daily for us all. He salutes Father Walworth and each one of you. * * *.

Courage, boys! Keep close to God, and His blessing will be always with us, and He will strengthen us to do His work. God blesses me with strong convictions that *He is with us*, and great hopes for our future, and if we are good boys, won't He help us! * * *

Devotedly yours in Jesus and Mary.

*(From a letter to George V. Hecker,
dated Paris, April 18, 1858.)*

How much I long once more to be at home and settled, you can scarcely imagine. I return from Rome with my views unchanged, my enthusiasm unchilled, and my resolution to labor for the conversion of our people intensified and strengthened. I feel that the knowledge and experience which I have acquired are most necessary for the American Fathers in their present delicate position.

CHAPTER 6

After the Founding

Letters and other documents show the growing understanding of Father Hecker concerning the Paulist calling and the appreciation of important church leaders of Hecker's work.



(From a letter to a friend, written after returning from Rome to New York, 1858.)

Before leaving Rome our Holy Father Pius IX. gave us his special blessing for the commencement of our new organization, promised us any privileges we might need to carry on our missionary labors, and held out the hope of his sanction, in proper time, of the rules which we might make. In my last visit to his Eminence Cardinal Barnabo he gave me advice how to organize, what steps were to be taken from time to time, and expressed a most lively interest in our undertaking. The same did Monsignor Bedini. On my return we organized as advised, wrote out an outline of our new institution, and submitted it the ordinary of this diocese—the initiatory step of all such undertakings. He gave it his cordial approbation, and said that he found no word to alter, to add, or improve. Thus we are so far regularly canonically instituted.

Our aim is to lead a strict religious life in community, starting with the voluntary principle; leaving the question of vows to further experience, counsel, and indications of Divine Providence. Our principal work is the missions, such as we have hitherto given, but we are not excluded from other apostolic labors as the wants of the Church may demand or develop. * * * We begin early this fall our campaign of missions, and we never had before us so fine a list. One thing I may say, and I trust without boasting, we are of one mind and heart, resolved to labor and die for Jesus Christ, for the good of His Holy Church, for the advancement of the Catholic faith. We have the encouragement of a number of bishops, and also, we trust, the prayers, sympathy, and assistance of the faithful. We shall have to face obstacles, opposition from friends and foes; but if we are the right kind of men and have the virtues which such a position as ours demands, our trials will only strengthen us and make us the better Christians. Every good work must expect opposition from pious men, and our minds are made up to that.

(From a letter dated New York, January 23, 1860.)

Yesterday I preached at St. Francis Xavier's, in this city, in favor of our building. Subject: The accomplishment of our duties in regard to our age, country, and circumstances. By degrees I find my future work open up before me. I begin to see into the future, and feel impressed that God will in His providence make use of our community for the conversion of this country. My mind was obscure concerning this work, but still

convinced that in some way He would make use of us. I can say now that I see that this will take place.

The mission of the Catholic Church in the United States, which implies the whole Western continent, is the question of questions.

The mission of the Catholic faith politically, is to sustain the character of our institutions, and inspire our people to attain the highest possible results under them.

(From a letter dated New York, August 2, 1864.)

To-day is the twentieth anniversary of my baptism and reception into the Holy Church. To me my life has been one continued growth; and hence I have never had any desire to return to any part or period of it. This applies as well to my life before I was received into the Church as after. My best life was always in the present. It is also the nineteenth anniversary of my leaving for Europe to enter on my studies for the priesthood and missionary life.

In looking back on this lapse of time, I find no step to regret, and those of importance in their bearing on my life seem to me now providential. I cannot do better than trust to that guidance which has brought me thus far, to be its agent. This is my daily, hourly, and only study; to surrender myself more completely to the guidance of God. This is my sole exercise in all that I do and suffer. God's will makes all actions equally great, all results of the same importance. Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Let us be united in doing His will, and in letting it be done in us!

*(From a letter to George V. Hecker,
dated Rome, April 4, 1870.)*

I had a most pleasant interview a few evenings past with Cardinal Barnabo. Among other things which he said was this: "You ought to be grateful to God for three reasons: 1. He drew you out of heresy. 2. He saved you from shipwreck in Rome. 3. He has given you talents, etc., to do great things for His Church in your country."

He takes great interest in the Paulists, thinks highly of the *Catholic World*, and is gratified to hear of our labors and success.

(Letters from Cardinal Newman.)

I.

The Oratory, Birmingham, February 28, 1889.

My dear Father Hewit: I was very sorrowful at hearing of Father Hecker's death. I have ever felt that there was this sort of unity in our lives—that we had both begun a work of the same kind, he in America and I in England, and I know how zealous he was in promoting it. It is not many months since I received a vigorous and striking proof of it in the book he sent me [*The Church and the Age*]. Now I am left with one friend less, and it remains with me to convey through

you my best condolment to all the members of your society.

Hoping that you do not forget me in your prayers,
I am, dear Father Hewit, most truly yours,

John H. Card. Newman.

II.

The Oratory, Birmingham, March 15, 1890.

Dear Father Hewit: In answer to your letter I am glad to be told what is so interesting to me, viz., that the Life of Father Hecker is in preparation. I had a great affection and reverence towards him, and felt that which so many good Catholics must have felt with me on hearing of his illness and death. I wish, as you ask me, that I could say something more definite than this of his life and writings, but my own correspondence with friends, and especially the infirmities of my age, burden me and make it impossible for me to venture upon it. This, alas! is all that I have left me now by my years towards the fulfillment of welcome duties to the grateful memory of an effective Catholic writer (I do not forget his work in England) and a benefactor, if I may use the term, to the Catholic Religion, whose name will ever be held in honor by the Catholic Church.

Yours most
truly,
J. H. N.

(Three extracts from different letters to the Fathers in America, written from Rome during the Vatican Council, 1870.)

To Father Hewit—Indeed I pray much for each member of the Community, and for light to guide it in the way of God. Within a short period much light has been given to me and the importance of our work, and its greatness have impressed me greatly more than ever before. Yesterday I went to the basilica of St. Paul, being the feast of his conversion, especially to invoke his aid. I felt that my visit was not in vain. Your own conversion on that day was fresh in my memory, and I forgot no one of our Community.

To Father Deshon—Look out for our young Paulists. There is a big work ahead for us. The work we have to do for our own country is the work in substance that will be needed for Europe.

To Father Hewit—The work that Divine Providence has called us to do in our own country, were its Spirit extended throughout Europe, would be the focus and element of regeneration. Our country has a providential position in our century in view of Europe, and our baptizing and efforts to Catholicize and sanctify it gives it an importance in a religious aspect of a most interesting and significant character.

(From a letter to George V. Hecker from Rome, January 27, 1870.)

Father Hewit has written me about the necessity of giving our young men a thorough course of studies

if we as a body are to take a leading part in the work of our day. This has been my own conviction for several years. My own mind becomes day by day more clear concerning the nature of our work and the importance of our position. As to my sight, its influence is to extend not only to our own country but to the whole world.

What does religion require for its renewal? To be placed on its true foundation, personal conviction, and personal sacrifices. Either this or apostasy. Religion renews its life and flourishes on this basis.

...

These views may now appear visionary and extravagant. They are only the explanation of the sentence I repeatedly affirmed in Europe three years ago: The mission of the United States in the order of Divine Providence is to solve in advance the problems of Europe. They may be extravagant, but I have outlived the time when views which appeared in their day more extravagant than these do now have become common convictions.

But to come back to our community. If the civilization of our country is to play so important a part in the present and future of the world, our community * * * has a work before it in character and extent not easy to exaggerate.

This movement, if we had a sufficient number of Paulists to preach, work, etc., with the spirit of our community, and could send them to England, France, Germany, and Italy, they would effect a change no one even dreams of. They would be an element of reconciliation, renewal, and regeneration.

These things were heretofore mere matters of instinct and feeling with me; now they are clear conceptions and settled convictions. So far, the steps taken in our community have been in the right direction, and others for the future are now clearly before my mind, and as God's providence directs, will also be taken.

(From letters during his illness, 1874–5, written from Europe to friends in America.)

Here in Geneva I have met several distinguished persons, both Protestant and Catholic, and the light and profit which they have derived, according to their own acknowledgment, from the views which I have expressed, ought to be to me the source of great consolation and support. It appears to me that Divine Providence is employing me in a larger field and a more important one than my past, and that by and by this will become more and more clear. However this may be, all is in His hands. He will do as He will.

...

In 1857 I made out a programme while in Rome, and submitted it to intelligent and wise persons for counsel, and it was approved, and I returned and acted on it. It is my intention to make out a programme again, an outline of my views of the present state of things, etc., place it before those best able to judge and criticize, and hear what they may say. In Geneva and Turin I met prominent persons, Catholics, and, in the first place, Protestants, too, and what I had to say made so deep and marked an impression on

their minds that it gave me no little encouragement. In Turin a very learned priest and writer took up the matter earnestly, and urged me to publish my views and to undertake a review for the purpose, offering his services, etc.

Sometimes it appears to me as if the views which it [the Programme or Exposition of the Church] contains have great value; then, again, nothing seems to me of much importance. However, it will be published, and judged, and have its course. So many, and persons in high authority, have insisted upon my writing and publishing my views, that I felt it to be a duty. The editor of the *Civiltà Cattolica* said it was important that I should communicate them to the Pope. I have not gone to see him yet; I prefer waiting until the programme is published. It is in English, and afterwards, if it is considered worth while, I shall have it put into French and Italian.

(From private memoranda, made in Europe during his illness, 1874–5.)

What is the fundamental idea of the Paulists? It is the idea of organizing the practical side of the Church in view of the needs of the age and the triumph of religion, for the greatest expansion of the ideal Christian life possible. What is the ideal Christian life? It is human nature in its entire force, sanctified and transformed by Christianity.

This is the idea which underlies the Paulist movement, which idea needs to be practically organized in Europe in harmony with the instincts and disposi-

tions of its different races, nationalities, and needs, in order to renew Christian life and prepare the way for the triumph of the Church.

Whatever light, grace, strength, impulse God may have given and does give me, all turns to this point.

...

Supposing the liberty of my own personality, everything else possible—counsel, co-operation, sympathy, love—all I could, would, should give to the Paulist Community in New York, would be given freely, cheerfully.

...

Such a vocation is not without examples in the history of the Church. St. Columbanus.

Shall the influence of the American political institutions penetrate and change, as it is doing, the political institutions of Europe; and the influence of heresy from the United States give new life to the heresy of Europe—for instance, Moody and Sankey in London, and Smith in Boston—and the Holy Church in her hour of trial and need receive no spiritual help from its fresh and vigorous offspring in the same country? Shall their action be confined solely to pecuniary assistance?

...

There is an approaching conflict between the society of the nineteenth century and the Church—which has already begun. It is more threatening than that of the sixteenth century. This requires a new awakening of the spirit of Christianity, recurrence to the renewing Spirit, new arms, new adaptations. Where are the men sensible of this? Preparing for it? My whole soul

is alive to this great work. My conviction of its necessity is complete and irresistible. My intimate conviction that the voice of God calls me to labor in this direction is equally complete and irresistible.

"Preparatus sum et non conturbatus custodire mendata tua."

In God's hands are my being, my soul, and all my faculties, to do and direct as He pleases. To return to New York and there arrange things to His pleasure, or to leave me here and direct affairs. I am indifferent, quiet, ready entirely either not to act or to act.

An act of entire faith in the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit, and complete confidence in its action in all things—in its infinite love, wisdom, power; that it is under its influence and promptings up to now my life has been led. Though not clearly seen or known, He has directed every step. On this faith, on this principle, promised to act now and in time to come. To be above fear, doubt, hesitation, or timidity, but patient, obedient, and stable.

...

What else has been my exile from home for unless to prepare my soul to make my life-experience applicable to the general condition of the Church and the world in its present crisis? The past was for the United States, the future, for the world. To this end all particular attachments to persons, places, labors, had to be cut off, not to give a bias to the judgment, and not to interfere with my action. It was with a deeper meaning than at first sight appeared to me that I now see why I called myself "An International Catholic."

...

When I began to speak and labor for the conversion of the United States as a point to be aimed at, twenty-five years ago, it was thought an extravagant idea, born of a heated imagination and enthusiasm. Now it would be considered a lack of faith and zeal not to think so. May not the same be true of my present views and aims?

CHAPTER 7

Later Thoughts

Father Hecker's reflections, from various later points in his life, on the Paulist vocation, the possibility of exporting its spirit to Europe, and its extension to a community of women.



Ash Wednesday [1875].—The aim is expressed in the Programme, “An Exposition.” The Holy Spirit is preparing the Church for an increased infusion of Himself in the hearts of the faithful. This increased action of the Holy Spirit will renew the whole face of the earth—Religion and Society.

The question is: How shall we cooperate with this preparation?

The inspiration and desire and strength to cooperate and associate in assisting this preparation must come from the Holy Spirit to each soul.

If it be so, that the Holy Spirit is preparing the Church for His increased action, souls will be inspired by Him to this end.

What will be the nature of this association and the special character of its work?

Men who will have that universal synthesis of truth which will solve the problems, eliminate the

antagonisms, and meet the great needs of the age. Men who will defend and uphold the Church against the attacks which now threaten her destruction, with weapons suitable to the times. Men who will turn all the genuine aspirations of the age in science, in socialism, politics, spiritism, in religion, which are now perverted against the Church, into means of her defense and universal triumph.

1. To set on foot a means of co-operation with the Church in the conquest of the whole world to Christ. To have this end in view in all. Renewal of the Apostolic spirit, life.

2. Relying on the bond of the Holy Spirit, and His inspirations, for unity, action, and means.

3. The central truth, the kingdom of heaven within the soul. This should be the burden of all sermons, etc. How, also, it is to be gained now. The kingdom of God is at hand.

...

March 11.—How, or in what way, is the cooperation with the new phase of the Church in the increase of intensity and expansion of its divine life in the souls of the faithful, to be instituted?

...

April 5.—May not a movement similar, but not the same, as the Paulists in the United States, be what is required in Europe? Springing from the synthesis of the most exalted faith with all the good and true in the elements now placed in antagonism with the Church, thus eliminating antagonisms and vacating controversies?

...

May 1.—Cardinal Deschamps before leaving, about three weeks ago, to whom I had completely opened my mind and given an entire account of my life, said: "Evidently Divine Providence is preparing you for a greater work in the future, but not inconsistent with your past work. You must do nothing which will separate you from what you have done."

...

Yesterday I had a conversation with Bishop Vaughan, of Salford. His conclusion was: "Do whatever may be before you through the Paulists. Establish a house in Europe. Say get two or three to come to Europe.

"Return to New York; place before the community your views. Let them decide. Follow their decision. This is the only way of escaping illuminism and self-will. If this is done by correspondence, it will end in a diplomatic separation."

My answer: "The work to be done in Europe is similar to that of the Paulists in the United States, but not the same. Their organization and rules, etc., are not what would answer here, perhaps."

...

[Viscovano,] *May 31.*—The Church in Europe—Italy, Spain, France, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, etc.—is passing through a transition from which she may emerge prepared for a future triumph in these countries or immediate defeat and ultimate disappearance. At least two-thirds of what now constitutes the Church is now in this crisis. Here is her battlefield at the present hour. This is evident to all observing minds. All who believe in the Church and are inter-

ested in her welfare, from the Pope downward, see and acknowledge this. All the aid possible she has need of to pass through this crisis in Europe safely. The interests of Europe in the future, the good of humanity, the greater glory of God, are involved in this present transition.

In the United States the Church is advancing gradually and surely to a great triumph. It is in this work of the Church in Europe at the present moment that I am conscious with an overwhelming conviction that Divine Providence calls me to labor.

The Church in the United States is the offspring of the zeal, sacrifices, and blood of the Church in Europe, and shall not the child in gratitude repay the parent in the time of her trial, distress, and danger?

...

In former days the Holy Spirit inspired souls with the vocation to go to the wilderness of America and plant the Church among the Indians. Why, in our day, should He not inspire souls with the vocation to aid the Church to recover Europe?

...

June 2.—Can a certain number of souls be found actuated by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, the genius of grace, to form an associative effort in the special work to be done at the present time?

If there be such a work, and an associative effort be necessary, will not the Holy Spirit produce in souls, certain ones at least, such a vocation? Is not that bond of unity in the Holy Spirit which will unite such souls, all that is needed in the present state of things to do this work?

One may be engaged in a good work, but of an inferior order, more on the circumference; but as it is a good work, and he sees no better, he should act where he is and be contented.

Suppose, however, it is given to a soul the light to see a good of a much higher order, more essential, more efficacious, more general, more universal, including the former; and this light draws him from the former, all his interest as such in it has expired, and he lives in this higher and more universal light; can he do other wise than follow it?

Suppose that he cannot resist this light—has not the strength to do so—his conscience also restraining him; and this new path is contrary to all selfish, worldly, human views; what then?

Suppose all his efforts to remain in former labors have failed, and had no other effect than to place him still further away from them?

Suppose that he has no further strength to resist, that his conscience tells him he is resisting the Holy Spirit; what then?

Suppose this is not the first, but that several times previously this has happened, and always ended in submission and in following this attrait, and it had proven by its fruits that it was the guidance of the Holy Spirit; what then?

I do not wish to cross the Atlantic ever again and therefore wish to finish with Europe and Italy. As for the notable men of the day, I have seen many and sufficiently. My present experience in one way and another seems to have prepared me to lay a foundation

for action that will suit centuries. No one of my previous convictions has been disturbed, but much strengthened and enlarged and settled. I see nothing practically in which I am engaged that were it in my power now I would wish to alter or abandon. I shall return with the resolution to continue them with more confidence, more zeal, more energy.

...

*(From memoranda made in America after
final return from Europe.)*

August 26 [1876].—Returned from a visit to the Community at Lake George; remained a fortnight with it. Had a full explanation and account of [my] interior to Father Hewit as my director. Gave an idea of the Congregation in its development in Europe. He said he would “make no opposition to the idea,” etc.

June [1885], Lake George.—I formerly thought that we should not make new foundations because our Fathers were divided on some points, and for other reasons. But when I considered how others in our circumstances had made ventures in past ages of the Church, relying on God, then I began to think differently. And if you should ask me where we should make the new foundations, I should say Dublin and London, and then France and Rome, and in Germany, having regard to the races. And if it be said that a new foundation taking five or six men would badly cripple us, I answer that God would supply the want; we would rely blindly on God.

September 9 [1885].—I have had Bishop Keane prepare a letter to Cardinal Manning applying in my name for permission to establish a Paulist house in London. I would have the house wholly missionary, without any public church or oratory, and I would engage that the Fathers would not be any financial burden on the Catholics, lay or clerical, of the diocese. I am in favor of extension into Europe, and I say, emphatically, I cannot help it.

November 2 [1885].—(While walking in the Park Father Hecker said): Bishop Keane and I consulted together (while the Bishop was here at the Cardinal's funeral) about his letter asking Cardinal Manning to receive a colony of Paulists. He did not change its wording, but added a statement that, since its date, Father Hecker had been thinking and praying over the matter, and this was the final conclusion.

[Richmond] *December 29* [1885].—My Dear Father Hecker: The enclosed from Cardinal Manning has reached me this moment. Though I can well guess how you will see and adore the will of God, still I will not acknowledge his letter till I hear from you. If you think of anything to say in the way of following up the proposition made, I am quite ready to put it before him. This looks like the ending of the matter as far as he is concerned; but if any different light comes to you, speak and your servant heareth.

From my heart I wish you and yours a blessed and happy New Year.

Affectionately in Xto,
John J. Keane

[Richmond] *January 15* [1886].—My Dear Father Hecker: After mature deliberation I have written again to Cardinal Manning, giving him the substance of your letter in your very words. I felt it due to the object in view, that the further word should be said, and it could not be better said than you had put it in your letter to me. So it is gone on its errand, and may God guide all.

I will be with you, please God, next Friday evening.

Ever affectionately,

John J. Keane

(Extract from a letter to a friend.)

How does Father Hecker? In body? Not so well for several months, but now improving. In spirit? Living and working in the dawning light of an approaching, brighter, more glorious future for God's Holy Church. A future whose sun will first rise on this continent and spread its light over the world.

(Extract from a letter to Mrs. Josephine M. Hecker.)

On the morning of the 21st of January [1870], St. Agnes' feast, which was a beautiful morning, at eight we left for the catacombs, three miles from the city. There were upwards of twenty of my acquaintances or friends. About ten I said Holy Mass in the chapel of Our Lady. Flowers were strewed in the places where the martyrs had lain. A temporary altar was erected. Several had lighted tapers in their hands. The place, the silence, and the whole scene made the most

solemn impression on every one present. During mass I gave eleven communions.

What did I pray for? For you all. Especially for the future. What future? How shall I name it? The association of women in our country to aid in the work of God through the Holy Church for its conversion. My conviction has become fixed, and my determination to begin the work consecrated.

*(From a memorandum made near
the end of his life.)*

I always intended that our community should have a body of women associated with it in our apostolic works, especially those of the press. I tried two or three times to accomplish this, but always failed from lack of the right kind of women to begin the new community.

PART II



**Writings about
Religious Life and
the Paulists**



Isaac Hecker as a lecturer in 1867.

CHAPTER 8

The Aspirations to a Higher Life

Father Hecker's conviction that certain persons are called to higher aspirations arising from their relationship with God and their potential to contribute to society.



Man is here for a clear and evident purpose, and it is his first duty to know it. There are some who are honest at first, but who, after a faint resistance, sink down on a lower range of feelings, and yield themselves up to an ignoble life.

But there is a class of souls who cannot set aside their higher aspirations if they would; nor would they set them aside if they had the power. They believe that the highest prerogative of man's reason is to know what his destiny is, and that the holiest employment of the energies of his will is to be directed to the realization of the great gift of his existence. These souls would rather choose hungering, and then death, than to sink down into lower forms of life which can never satisfy them. Until these problems of life are settled

no other thought, no other object, can divert their attention. They would rather go and hide themselves in the wild forest, and live upon roots and water, than to profane the soul and its energies that were given for divine purposes. Is it not better to save the integrity and truthfulness of the soul by dying, than to live in profaning the soul?

Now it is not fancy, but an interesting fact of history, both ancient and modern, that there is a class of men, and of women, too, who cannot find their happiness in the common aims and pursuits of men. A hidden principle leads them to seek a better and more spiritual life. The longing after the infinite predominates in these souls, and all other ties must be loosed and sacrificed, if needs be, to its growth and full development. The world loses all its charms, the sweet ties of human friendship are snapped asunder; the heart's affections are torn up by their roots with a ruthless hand.

Many thoughts come to these souls which stretch far beyond the limits of man's reason; noble hopes and aspirations, heroic deeds of sacrifice, and bright dreams of a holy life, awake them from their midnight slumbers, indicating a life beyond mere human strength. Such are the hidden ways of God's providence in preparing that class of souls which He has chosen to do a great work, to live above the race and the common life of men, and to act upon society with a divine energy. The soul may languish for a time in darkness. One thing it knows amidst its darkness, and that is, that to resist the power that leads it on would

be its death. One thing it is sure of amidst its uncertainties; that the path it has entered on will terminate in a plenitude of life.

Listen to thoughts which not infrequently occupy their minds and absorb all their energies:

"All ties that are not divine must be severed.

"I would be free, and stand only in eternal relations with others, and with all things around me. What must go at death, why not now?

"You talk to me of home, and I have nothing in my heart that answers to the meaning of the word. My home is everywhere, and nowhere; my home is in my own bosom, in my own consciousness. The earth is my bed, a rock is my pillow, the sky my canopy, the fruit of the trees and the water of the brook my meat and drink."

Questions that concern not only religion but society agitate these souls, finding answer only in the Gospel life of renunciation:

"We would devote all our energies to the relief of the poor, the downtrodden, those in prison, and the labor for the extinction of vice, crime, and error, like the Divine Master.

"We tell the world that we despise its wealth, we detest its pleasures, we condemn its maxims, and are heedless of its opinions, whether of praise or blame. We say this not in a sour, crabbed, and angry spirit, but in pity, commiseration, and love."

What does all this prove, but that certain souls are so constituted that the common life and objects of men have no attractions for them, and that they look for nobler modes of being, and a more spiritual life?

CHAPTER 9

Divine Origin and Sanction of Life in Community

*Father Hecker's reflections on the phenomenon
of religious life throughout the ages
of the Church.*



We read that once when Christ was teaching in Judea, a young man came to Him and asked the following question: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Christ answered: "Keep the Commandments." The young man replied: "All these have I kept from my youth."

Now, one might imagine that this young man was answered, and should have been contented. To obtain life everlasting, it was sufficient to keep the Commandments, and these he had kept. What more could he ask for? What else was there for him to trouble himself about? Was not further asking superfluous? Not so thought the young man; and not so thought Christ.

The young man started the question the answer to

which solves the problem we are now considering. "What is yet wanting to me?" We can imagine his humility, his breathless attention when the question of questions came up. Doubtless he had been thinking on the subject. Ah! he went away sad. Yes! his dreams had fled. Does the Gospel hold out a higher aim than the keeping of the Commandments of God? Listen: "Jesus said to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

"If thou wilt be perfect." Christ does not command. He leaves it to the option of the young man. He opens a door and invites those who desire to reach the heights of Christian perfection to leave all, and come and follow Him.

What is it to follow Christ? What an invitation! Did you ever reflect upon the life of Christ?, what it is? Jesus was poor. Jesus was a virgin. The life of Jesus was one of self-denial. Here we have in the Gospel not only the sanction of the life of the class of men we spoke of, but, in the Founder of Christianity the Model of that life.

What do we find? We find that this invitation to follow Him was not given in vain. It was accepted from the commencement of Christianity to the present time. The earliest record we have is that of the first Christian community, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Here we see Christians under the direction of the Apostles themselves, uniting, forming only one family, having one heart and soul.

This life was never wholly interrupted; there were always some fervent Christians who continued it.

When the time of persecution came, they retired into the solitudes of Egypt and the rocks of Arabia. The herbs of the earth were their only food, water their only drink, the labor of their hands procured for them the scanty resources they required. Their lips were opened only to pronounce a prayer, their voices only heard in a hymn of praise to God. They had left all to follow Christ. The Holy Scripture was the nourishment of their minds; they carried the counsels of Christ to their highest perfection. The deserts were peopled by Christians of both sexes; they formed in some places large cities of men and women thus absorbed in God; and such was their hospitality that they vied with each other in entertaining strangers, some of them stayed one or two years with them.

In the fifth century we find St. Benedict on the silent summit of Monte Cassino, forming under wise rules of Christian perfection an institution that centuries have not shaken: the Benedictine monks. Its aim was no less social than religious. Sons of the most illustrious families of the Empire came there, some to remain, some to secure a good education. Wherever these monasteries spread—and they spread everywhere—they were the centers of civilization and of great activity. The monks pursued learning, cultivated lands, dried up marshes, constructed roads, restrained rivers within their beds, and built bridges.

In the thirteenth century a new kind of men appears. They put on coarse clothes, renounce all wealth, accept poverty, and devote themselves to preaching the Gospel. They are unlike the solitaries of the East, or the sons of St. Benedict. They arise not in a desert

but in the midst of society. Their object is not to live shut up in monasteries, but to penetrate society, and their voices are heard as well in the cottage as in the palace of the monarch. They spread over Italy, Germany, France, Spain, England. At the head of these were St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic de Guzman. Ask them what object they have in view. They will tell you it is a life pure, holy, heroic, in all things conformable to the Gospel. It is to preach the Gospel truth, to destroy error, to reform morals, to devote their lives to remedy the evils of the Church and the State, to renew the Gospel spirit so much forgotten in their time. These men came from the people, their communities were strongly democratic, models of our own, their superiors were elected by ballot, and rotation in office was a fundamental rule.

In the sixteenth century springs up another class of men. They differ in many respects from all others who preceded them, except in keeping in view the practice of the sublime counsels of perfection of Christ. They wear no distinctive dress, nor do they practice any peculiar exterior mortifications. They place themselves at the head of the science and literature of their age, and are the great travelers of their time. I speak of St. Ignatius and his companions: the Society of Jesus.

These religious institutions, more or less resembling each other, are like branches springing from a trunk on all sides. When religious aspirations of such high importance are realized in many different countries, and for centuries, and still continue to be real-

ized, this fact must have its root in the essence of things.

Christianity has always provided for this class of men. The Church has always upheld them, and encouraged them in their sublime vocation. She recognizes them as the most perfect representatives of the life of her Founder, and she cherishes them. Catholicity has know how to unite faith, morality, and the counsels of a Divine Religion with all that is intimate, delicate, and noble in our hearts.

Thus man has a destiny; his end is God; his destiny is divine. Jesus Christ is the complement of man, the Restorer of the race. The Catholic Church is the manifestation of Jesus Christ, the organ by which Jesus Christ perpetuates Himself upon earth, and the organ of man's restoration, and of nature's restoration to God.

CHAPTER 10

The Catholic Church and Life in Community

Father Hecker's essays reflect on the meaning of religious life; excerpts from his letters during his novitiate year (1846) reveal his own quest for religious fulfillment.



The Church of Christ must not only answer in general to the wants of the soul, she must also provide in a special manner for those privileged souls that her Divine Founder has called to represent His life and virtues in an eminent degree; who, unlike the young man spoken of in the Gospel, are bold with divine affection, and ready to follow the invitation of the Divine Master in humble obedience, angelic purity, and willing poverty; in a word, to copy His virtues and life of self-denial.

She must provide for such the means to lead this life; to realize the visions of truth, of love, of beauty, which feed their souls with a divine enthusiasm and a heroic courage.

Such souls as these need solitude, silence, protection from the world, freedom from its excessive toils and depressing cares; a roof to shelter them, experi-

enced guides, and a wise discipline to direct them aright in their sublime vocation.

Thousands of hearts seek such a home, such a retreat and school of virtue, where they can devote themselves entirely to the development and growth of the divine life, enkindled in their bosoms.

To such souls as are so happily constituted that they feel compelled to obey the command of Our Lord: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you"; to those who would follow in the footsteps of their Divine Master, and are bold enough to trust His promise that in leaving father and mother and all, for His sake, they shall receive a hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting; to all these the Catholic Church opens her religious orders, her monasteries and convents. In these blessed abodes each will find all he ever sought, and more than he ever anticipated or hoped. He will exclaim at the first glance: "Behold the dreams of my youth! Oh, did I ever anticipate that it would be possible for me to see this day, to have this privilege! Did I ever believe that such a life was possible upon the earth! Behold the path lies open before me which I have yearned for so long! I am free; all that I can desire is here, a roof to shelter me, a cell where I can be alone, my bodily wants provided for. Here I have leisure to read, to study, meditate and pray; here I have a guide and friend, brother and father, in my spiritual director; companions with me in the same holy aims; and all that is demanded of me is to be true to these aims, and to the hopes that God has awakened in my bosom! How changed is all!

Instead of opposition, discouragement and contempt, I have sympathy, friendship and love. Here I am told that my hopes are the inspirations of God, that my bright dreams of a pure and holy life were divine favors. What a change! These things seemed once a dream, but they are not. Can I believe it? All my wishes are realized. Here for the first time, and with open heart, I taste that pure joy promised by the Lord: "He that leaveth house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My sake, shall receive an hundredfold now in this time; and in the world to come, life everlasting" (Mark 10:29–30).

And it is in monasteries, under wise and experienced masters of the spiritual life, in silence and solitude, that the discipline of asceticism is practiced, and the restoration of man, and his reconciliation and union with God, are effected. The God-Man, Jesus Christ, is held up as the example, the source and end of all strivings, the crown of our humanity, and the final scope of all our energies.

The object of religious orders is no other than to remove all obstacles to the fulfillment of our destiny, and to furnish us with all, and the most speedy means to attain it. Duty and pleasure thus become one; and this is paradise, so far as paradise can exist, in the present state of things.

What was attempted by those engaged in such movements as Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and other places of a similar character, the religious orders in the Catholic Church have always realized. Their most brilliant dreams do not present a fair picture of a religious life in the Catholic Church. Their hopes and highest

aims were but glimmerings of the reality existing in her bosom, and that for ages. It is a happy moment indeed when we find that the inmost sentiments of our hearts, the lovely dreams of our youth, and desire of our manhood for self-sacrifice and heroism, are not only understood, but fully appreciated, and that all the means to their fulfillment are offered to us in abundance. Happy are they who find out in their youth what all men discover at some period of life, that God, and God alone, can satisfy the inmost wants of the soul, and who consecrate themselves to His service with all the freshness and purity of their youthful energy.

This is the most beautiful experiment in life: to pass from the service of the world to that of God!—to give one's youth to Heaven!

To those who seek for true greatness, and a permanent basis for action, a divine basis for life; a basis that will give to the intellect ever brighter visions of truth, to the heart irresistible impulses to love and heroism, and to the arm an unailing strength; a life that will render them independent of all ties of kindred and friendship, and make them conquerors of the world and masters of themselves; it is here, in these schools of religious discipline, they will find it, and all the means to make such a life their own. Out of these schools came the Jeromes, Augustines, Gregories, Bernards, Francis, the Vincent de Pauls, the Xaviers, and other great doctors and missionaries of the Church. Yes, the Catholic Church is the mother of great men, the nurse of heroes, and of an unailing succession of saints and martyrs. It is the very nature

of the Catholic faith when it takes root in the heart, to make men superior to nature, and true heroes.

...

*(From letters to his family during
his novitiate, 1846.)*

I have been here at St. Trond upwards of a fortnight, and the reason why I did not write to you sooner is that it required me to be here some few days before I could speak with any certainty of the character of the place, and how I am pleased with it. Now I can say with some degree of certainty that I have found all that I have ever sought. All my seeking is now ended. The most that I can wish for each one of you is that you can say the same thing. If you cannot, Christ has said: "Seek and ye shall find." Can any one say more than this? Mother, I have sought, and I have found. Does not this embrace all, all riches, spiritual and temporal? All that a mother can wish for her child, when her wishes are in accordance with God's will, as yours are. You should all rejoice for me. If you harbor any suspicions or fears, even the least, you act contrary to the will of God. It is only your sorrow that makes mine. My path is one of love to God, and all my work is cheerful labor. The day is not far distant, I trust, when you will rejoice over this step which I have been led to take. . . .

You can scarce imagine the happiness I felt on my arrival here. For three days my heart was filled with joy and gladness. I was like one who had been transported to a lovelier, purer, and better world. I have

found that love which makes mother, father, sister, brother, and is above them all. Not that I love you the less on that account, but more, greatly more. Would those that are here remain a moment if they did not find here something greater than the world can give or take away? Some who have despised their noble birth, riches, all that the world can give. Believe me, they are neither fools nor crazy, but in love with God, and God with them. . . .

I have now nearly eight weeks until the time of taking the vows. O that it were but eight days, nay, eight minutes, when I shall be permitted by the favor and grace of God to consecrate my whole being and life to His sole service! Millions of worlds, put on top of one another, could not purchase from me my vocation. . . .

It is not necessary for all to take the vows of a religious, but it is necessary for all to live holily in order to gain heaven, whoever or wherever they may be. Their souls cannot let them rest where they are; they will go on to better, or plunge in to worse. . . .

CHAPTER 11

Divine Vocation to Life in Community

Father Hecker reflects on the mystery of the individual's call to religious vocation, rooted in God's call but also in the particular gifts of the individual.



Man not only has a destiny, but each individual of the race has a special destiny, a definite work to do; and this work is a great, an important, a divine work. For, whatever God appoints is great—great in its purpose, important in its accomplishment, divine in its results.

At the same time that God gave to each soul a definite work to do, and marked out for it a special path in life, which, following faithfully, it will attain to its beatitude, He gave also to the soul the strength, courage, talent, grace, to do the work well; and more, to do it with a certain degree of facility and pleasure.

Can the purposes of God, in the case of particular individuals, be so clearly discovered as that each Christian may be matched, so to say, with the state, whether higher or lower, to which God has called him?

The Church answers this question in the affirmative—that is, with the necessary allowance for human error and weakness. The providential destination of individuals in the kingdom of God can be discovered by certain signs and tokens which reach, abstractly speaking, to the certainty of *criteria*. The diagnosis of these signs is a main part of the science of Spiritual Direction. The experienced confessor, if but allowed the means of arriving at his decision, can pronounce upon the vocation of his penitent with far greater security than the skillful physician can determine the climate which is suited to the bodily constitution of a patient.

The marks of vocation will betray themselves from earliest years with a distinctness which it will be out of the power of dissimulation to conceal, or of hypocrisy to feign. The boy whose favorite post is the altar; his second father the priest; his beloved study the lives of the saints; his stolen pastime the mimic Mass; the maiden who seeks retirement and shuns admiration; who meekly endures restraint or lovingly undertakes as a duty rather than courts for their own sake the vain amusements of the world: these are the souls elect of God and precious, who, tenderly nurtured and duly tried, are apt to ripen, as time proceeds, into the holy priest or the devoted nun.

It is the will of God that each one of us should strive to find his vocation and should follow it with fidelity.

To learn our vocation, and by what road God has destined us to walk, is one of the most important tasks of our life. It is, nevertheless, one about which

men are often mistaken; and the great majority of these err in the first step.

Before all, we must have a just and distinct idea of our vocation, a knowledge of its particular duties, and a due sense of our obligations, if we would make progress in our perfection. Because, as St. Thomas says: "*Finem oportet esse praecognitum hominibus, qui suas intentiones et actiones, debent ordinare in finem.*" It is useless therefore to act before we have acquired this knowledge. It is better to do nothing than to do what God would not have us to do. It is better to remain ignorant than to learn what God would not have us know. It is better to keep silence than to say what God would not have us say. In vain do they act, learn, and talk, who do so without God. The wisest man goes astray when he takes a single step without God. Let us then seek first what God wishes of us, our vocation; for it were better to be a swineherd in the order of God, than to occupy the throne of emperors without it.

The clearer our destiny appears, the more we are aware and convinced that its realization depends less upon our action than upon our unconditional abandonment to the conduct of divine providence and a blind obedience to our superiors.

If we were more peaceful, calm, and resigned, we would see more and more clearly what God wishes of us in particular, and perceive better the supreme wisdom of His providence in its disposition of us.

A Religious vocation is a permanent grace which lifts a soul above the ordinary conditions of life.

The common road to heaven for Christians is in fulfilling the common duties of daily life, and there is

no easier way, in itself considered, than this. The Religious life secures us paradise with greater certainly and speed, but not with less difficulty. For the common life is more in accordance with our nature and its wants, while the Religious life imposes entire renunciation of the gratification of certain of these wants, and greater restraint upon them all.

It is something important to know one's vocation, but it is not all. St. Philip Neri, St. Francis de Sales, St. Alphonsus Liguori, were all called to the priesthood. This was their vocation. But their ways of life in the priesthood were quite unlike each other. And until one has come to the knowledge of the way in which he is called to reach his vocation, he cannot be said to be in the way of his perfection. In a great measure he is like a man who in sowing scatters seed where it will not grow; or, if it grows, he will not be able to reap its fruit.

The order the most advantageous, and at the same time best for each person who has a Religious vocation, is that to which it has pleased God to call him. It is that order which is the most in harmony, or rather, the only one in connection with the views of Divine Providence upon His creature—with his needs, and the degree of perfection to which God calls him. It is that one, consequently, in which each one can most easily and most surely arrive at that measure and perfection of charity that God knows and demands of him.

CHAPTER 12

Personal Sanctification of the Paulist and His Standard of Perfection

The call of the Paulist priesthood implies a particular calling for personal perfection, rooted in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and also a pronounced zeal for souls through apostolic and missionary works. The importance of individuality in the Paulist vocation.



My God, what purity is not required for the priesthood? Who is worthy to be a member of that supernatural organism by which the graces of the sacraments are dispensed to the human race? An angel? No; no other medium was worthy of being employed as a means of dispensing Thy love to men but Thy own pure body, taken from the immaculate womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. True, the priesthood is independent of the state or virtue of the individuals who compose it, so that the sacraments have the same virtue intrinsically from the hands of a miserable as from those of a holy priest. Yet there is something besides the mere grace of the sacraments which the holiness

*"Father Hecker reading
Goethe," sketched by
John LaFarge
in 1866.*



of the priest adds accidentally, and this addition is worthy of consideration.

By virtue of ordination the priest becomes a conductor of God's grace to the people, *ex opere operato*, through the means of the sacraments, and aids them by such other rites and ceremonies as the Church ordains. But besides this, as an individual the priest, the same as any other person in the state of grace, is personally, through baptism and his other graces, in communion with God, and thereby, according to his perfection, *ex opere operantis*, becomes a channel of grace to others. In this lies the weight of the addition-

al grace he contributes to the sacraments and other holy rites of the Church in his own person.

Therefore, this accessory virtue may be more or less according to the personal virtue of the priest. That it is of no small value there are many facts to show. Once myself I received a benediction from a great missionary, considered as a holy man, and I was sensible of it for at least three days. I have received thousands of blessings from other priests, and better prepared than for that one, and why did I not receive the same grace? The grace that a benediction of a priest conveys is always infallibly given, yet none had conveyed such graces to me.

When the person of the priest, like that of St. Philip Neri, is, so to speak, transformed into the supernatural organism, then the graces conveyed *ex opere operato* are rendered as it were visible and sensible. If, as St. Chrysostom says: "*Medius est sacerdos inter Deum et naturam humanam, illius beneficia ad nos deferens,*" how much more blessing will he add besides, if he can impart the weight of his own perfection! "*Oratio citius exauditur in ecclesia in praesentia sacerdotis celebrantis.*" This seems to indicate that the priest performs the function not only of a mediator between God and man, but that also of a mediator between man and God. Each Paulist must have a divine vocation to the Community.

Our vocation is the consecration of ourselves to God with full intelligence and uttermost sincerity.

Are the Paulists Religious? Yes, and no. Yes, of their age. No, of the past; the words in neither case being taken in an exclusive meaning. The ideal is the

same in all orders of religion: perfection, union with God, all that that implies. The means are substantially the same: interior fidelity to grace, prayer, detachment, mortification, all that that implies.

Though we do not take vows, yet we are none the less wholly given up to the divine service. The true Paulist should be a man fitted to take the solemn vows at any moment.

The two poles of the Paulist character are: *first*, personal perfection. He must respond to the principles of perfection as laid down by spiritual writers. The backbone of a religious community is the desire for personal perfection actuating its members. The desire for personal perfection is the foundation stone of a religious community; when this fails, it crumbles to pieces; when this ceases to be the dominant desire, the community is tottering. Too great care cannot be taken (a) In examining on this point those who are to be admitted. (b) In instructing them how to apply this principle. (c) In seeing to its practical application. Missionary works, parochial work, etc., are, and must be made, subordinate to personal perfection. These works must be done in view of personal perfection. (See Lalemant, French edition, p. 114, on the desire of perfection and the vows.)

The main purpose of each Paulist must be the attainment of personal perfection by the practice of those virtues without which it cannot be secured—mortification, self-denial, detachment, and the like. By the use of these means the grace of God makes the soul perfect. The perfect soul is one which is guided

instinctively by the indwelling Holy Spirit. To attain to this is the end always to be aimed at in the practice of the virtues just named.

Second, zeal for souls: to labor for the conversion of the country to the Catholic faith by apostolic work. Parish work is a part, an integral part, of Paulist work, but not its principal or chief work; and parish work should be done so as to form a part of the main aim, the conversion of the non-Catholic people of the country. In this manner we can labor to raise the standard of Catholic life here and throughout the world as a means of the general triumph of the Catholic faith.

I do not think that the principal characteristic of our Fathers and of our life should be poverty or obedience or any other special and secondary virtue, or even a cardinal virtue, but zeal for apostolic works. Our vocation is apostolic: conversion of souls to the faith, of sinners to repentance, giving missions, defense of the Christian religion by conferences, lectures, sermons, the pen, the press, and the like works; and in the interior, to propagate among men a higher and more spiritual life.

Our power will be in presenting the same old truths in new forms, fresh new tone and air and spirit.

The Religious vocation consists in this: that the aspiration of the soul after Christian perfection is its dominant tendency. This springs from a conception of God more clear than is common—a grace. To this perfection the Religious life makes everything subordinate, and in all things aims at its attainment.

It is therefore necessary to keep this idea steadily

in view, and to apply this principle faithfully in practice. Without this idea there is no vocation; without this principle there is no Religious life.

The virtues are, so to speak, the doors to the sanctuary of perfection. The end of perfection is the immediate guidance of the Indwelling Holy Spirit. If one in our Congregation finds that poverty, or obedience, or contemplation, or liberty of spirit, or any other way, is the way that God leads him, he is free to enter by that door. Great fidelity in action, with a great and large freedom of action, should be the spirit of our Community.

The Paulists are not a Community capable of keeping a man who does not aspire to a perfect life. "He amongst us who can not go on without making a disturbance, either about the meals, or the work in the church or elsewhere, had better far ask permission to leave the Congregation as soon as he can; otherwise, after the first or second offense, his dismissal will be given him. My Fathers, I am most firmly resolved not to have in the house men who will not observe the few rules, and do the few duties assigned them." (Words of St. Philip Neri. *Capecilatro*, v. 2, p. 66.)

The conception of a movement of the nature of the Paulists was one which preoccupied my mind a long while. It was of a community in which the elements of self-control, conscience, and the internal guidance of the Holy Spirit should take the lead, and should be relied on for attaining perfection more than the control of discipline, rules, and external authority. The result would be a type of perfection more in accord-

ance with that of St. Philip Neri than with that of St. Ignatius.

A Paulist is a Christian man who aims at Christian perfection consistently with his natural characteristics and the type of civilization of his country.

A Paulist is to emphasize individuality; that is, to make individual liberty an essential element in every judgment that touches the life and welfare of the community and that of its members. Those who emphasize the community element are inclined to look upon this as a dangerous and impracticable experiment.

Individuality is an integral and conspicuous element in the life of the Paulist. This must be felt. One of the natural signs of the true Paulist is that he would prefer to suffer from the excesses of liberty rather than from the arbitrary actions of tyranny.

The individuality of a man cannot be too strong, or his liberty too great, when he is guided by the Spirit of God. But when one is easily influenced from below rather than from above, it is an evidence of the spirit of pride and that of the flesh, and not "the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

What we need today is men whose spirit is that of the early martyrs. We shall get them in proportion as Catholics cultivate a spirit of independence and personal conviction. The highest development of religion in the soul is when it is assisted by free contemplation of the ultimate causes of things. Intelligence and liberty are the human environments most favorable to the deepening of personal conviction of religious

truth, and obedience to the interior movements of an enlightened conscience. To a well-ordered mind the question of the hour is how the soul which aspires to the supernatural life shall utilize the advantages of liberty and intelligence.

What a member of another Religious community might do from that divine guidance which is external, the Paulist does from the promptings of the Indwelling Holy Spirit.

If it is asked, What preparation should be required for our work, I answer that the general principle would be this: The One who called you has got to do the big work both in you and in the one to whom you come. The common factor is the One who called all. As to myself, I have been only a little more sensitive than you; only preceded you in point of time. If He does not do it, *vanum est*. In that case, leave us. If men are going to depend on any routine, set form of direction, devotion or study, as a substitute for this inward guidance, they had better go where such things are willingly supplied.—These are the pedal notes of the Paulist Community.

If I am asked, What training I would give our men? What process or method I would put them through to fit them for their apostolic work? I answer: No other than my own. What made me what I am? What gave me my light and grace for working for God? Any process or method? No.

*(From a letter to Mrs. George V. Hecker,
dated Rome, November 7, 1857.)*

Wednesday I said Mass in the Mamertine prison, in which St. Peter was confined by order of Nero; and also St. Paul. The pillar is there to which they were chained, and the fountain remains which sprang up miraculously at their feet, in whose waters they baptized their jailors and twenty-seven soldiers. There were with me four American students, and you can easily imagine that I prayed earnestly in Holy Mass to obtain for us all the zeal of the Apostles for the conversion of our country.

CHAPTER 13

The Guidance of the Holy Spirit

The relationship of church and sacrament to the growth in holiness that results from the working of the Holy Spirit on the individual.



The whole aim of the science of Christian perfection is to instruct men how to remove the hindrances in the way of the action of the Holy Spirit, and how to cultivate those virtues which are most favorable to His sollicitations and inspirations. "Thus the sum of spiritual life consists in observing and yielding to the movements of the Spirit of God in our soul, employing for this purpose the sacraments, all the exercises of prayer, spiritual reading, the practice of virtues, and good works." (Lalemant.)

That divine action which is the immediate and principal cause of the salvation and perfection of the soul, claims by right the soul's direct and main attention. From this source within the soul there will gradually come to birth the consciousness of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, out of which will

spring a force surpassing all human strength, a courage higher than all human heroism, a sense of dignity excelling all human greatness.

If it be asked how the Holy Spirit is received, the answer is, sacramentally. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." As man by nature is a being of both outer and inner life, so, when made a new man by the Spirit of God and elevated into a supernatural state, God deals with him by both outer and inner methods. The Holy Spirit is received by the sacramental grace of baptism, and renewed by the other sacraments; also in prayer, vocal or mental, hearing sermons, reading the Scriptures or devout books, and on occasions, extraordinary or ordinary, in the course of daily life; and when once received, every act of the soul that merits heaven is done by the inspiration of that Divine Guide dwelling within us. Even though unperceived, though indistinguishable from impulses of natural virtue, though imperceptibly multiplied as often as the instants are, yet each movement of heaven-winning virtue, and especially love, hope, faith and repentance, is made because the Holy Spirit has acted upon the soul in an efficacious manner.

It is not to induce a strained outlook for the particular cases of the action of the Spirit of God on us, or the signs of it, that these words are written.

Not an anxious search, least of all a craving for extraordinary lights; but a constant readiness to perceive the Divine guidance in the secret ways of the soul, and

then to act with decision and a noble and generous courage—this is true wisdom.

The sacraments, prayer and holy reading, and hearing sermons and instructions, are the plain external instruments and accompaniments of the visitations of God, and, together with spiritual direction, are sufficient landmarks for the journey of the soul, unless it be led in a way altogether extraordinary. And apart from these external marks, no matter how one watches for God, His visitations are best known by their effects; it is after the cause has been placed, perhaps some considerable time after, that the faith, hope, love, or sorrow becomes perceptibly increased—always excepting extraordinary cases. Not to “resist the Spirit” is the first duty. Fidelity to the Divine guidance, yielding one’s self up lovingly to the impulses of virtue as they gently claim control of our thoughts—this is the simple duty.

Exterior mortifications are aids to interior life. What we take from the body we give to the spirit. If we will look at it closely, two-thirds of our time is taken up with what we shall eat, and how we shall sleep, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. Two-thirds of our life and more is animal—including sleep. We do not despise the animal in man, but we go in for fair play for the soul. The better part should have the greater share. The right order of things has been reversed; conversion is necessary. Read the lives of the old Fathers of the Desert: they determined on leading a rational and divine life. How little are they known or appreciated in our day! Their lives are more interesting than a novel, and stranger than a romance.

Humility and obedience are also absolutely essential to the interior rule of the Holy Spirit. Self-love, self-activity, self-hood, is something not easily destroyed. It is like a cancer which has its roots extending to the most delicate fibers of our mental and moral nature. Divine grace can draw them all out. But how slowly! And how exquisitely painful is the process! The more subtle the self-love, the more painful the cure. But mortification of a considerable character is never to be practiced without counsel. The devil, when he can no longer keep us back, aims at driving us too far and too fast.

How can the intellect be brought under the direction of divine grace, except by reducing it to its nothingness?—and how can this be done except by placing it in utter darkness? How can the heart be filled with the spirit of divine love while it contains any other? How can it be purified of all other inordinate love except by dryness and bitterness? God wishes to fill our intelligence and our heart with divine light and love, and thus to deify our whole nature—to make us one with what we represent—God. And how can He do this otherwise than by removing from our soul and its faculties all that is contrary to the divine order?

All our difficulties are favors from God; we see them on the wrong side, and speak as the block of marble would while being chiseled by the sculptor. When God purifies the soul, it cries out just like little children do when their faces are washed. The soul's attention must be withdrawn from external, created things, and turned inward towards God exclusively before its union with Him; and this transformation is

a great, painful, and wonderful work, and so much the more difficult and painful as the soul's attention has been attracted and attached to transitory things.

All the sacraments of the Church, her authority, prayer both mental and vocal, spiritual reading, exercises of mortification and of devotion, have for their end and purpose to lead the soul to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. St. Alphonsus says in his letters that the first director of the soul is the Holy Ghost Himself.

CHAPTER 14

The Paulist Life in Community

*The relationship of individuality and the needs
of community in Father Hecker's thought;
the role of Paulist superiors in creating
harmony and evoking zeal.*



The true Paulist is a religious man entirely dependent on God for his spiritual life; he lives in community for the greater security of his own salvation and perfection, and to meet more efficiently the pressing needs of the Church and of humanity in his day.

Many other communities lay the chief stress on community life as the chief element, giving it control as far as is consistent with fundamental individual right; the Paulists, on the contrary, give the element of individuality the first place, and put it in control as far as is consistent with the common life.

The spirit of the age has a tendency to run into extreme individuality, into eccentricity, license, revolution. But the typical life shows how individuality is consistent with community life. This is the aim of the United States in the political order, an aim and tend-

ency which we have to guide, and not to check or sacrifice.

The element of individuality is taken into account in the Paulist essentially, integrally, practically. But when it comes into conflict with the common right, the individual must yield to the community: the common life outranks the individual life in case of conflict. But the individual life should be regarded as sacred and never to be effaced. How this is to operate in particular cases belongs, where it is not a matter of rule, to the virtue of prudence to decide.

When the personality of the individual comes into conflict with the life of the community, the personal side must not be sacrificed, but made to yield to the common. In the case of conflict, as before said, common life and interests outrank personal life and interests.

It may be asked how, in the ordinary regulation and government of a community of this kind, the individual and common element are to be made to harmonize? The answer is, that the one at the head of affairs must be a true Paulist; that is to say, keenly sensitive of personal rights as well as appreciative of such as are common: where the question is not a point of rule, its decision is dependent on the practical sagacity and prudence of the superior more than on any minute regulations which can be given. He who interprets the acts of legitimate authority as an attack on his personal liberty, is as far out of the way as he who looks upon the exercise of reason as an attack on authority.

You ask, How about persons of dull minds or of



*The Old Church-Convent (Rectory) of 1859 at West 59th Street, New York,
with the first extension of 1861.*

little spiritual ambition coming into the use of this freedom? First, no such person should be allowed to enter into the community: such persons should be excluded. Second, a full-fledged Paulist should have passed a long enough novitiate to have acquired the special virtues which are necessary for his vocation. Absence of supernatural light is the cause why a man is not fit to be a Paulist, for he cannot understand rightly or appreciate the value of the liberties he enjoys. He either is or he becomes a turbulent element in the community.

A Paulist, seeing that he has so much individuality, should have a strong, nay, a very strong attrait for community life; he should be fond of the company of the Fathers, prefer them and their society when seeking proper recreation, feel the house to be his home, and the community and its surroundings very dear to him; in the routine of the day, all the exercises and labors are, in his judgment, of paramount obligation and importance.

The civil and political state of things in our age, particularly in the United States, fosters the individual life. But it should do so without weakening the community life: this is true individualism. The problem is to make the synthesis. The joint product is the Paulist.

A Paulist should cultivate personal freedom without detriment to the community spirit, and, *vice versa*, the community spirit should not be allowed to be detrimental to personal freedom. But when the individual life runs into eccentricity, license, and revolution, that is a violation and sacrifice of the community life.

The duty of the Paulist Superior is to elicit the spontaneous zeal of the Fathers, and to further it with his authority. For lack of one's own initiative that of another may be used, and herein the Superior offers a constant help. But the center of action is the individual, is the soul moved by the Holy Ghost; not in the Superior of the community or in the authorities of the Church. And if he be moved by the Holy Spirit, he will be most obedient to his superior; and he will not only be submissive to the authority of the Church, but careful to follow out her spirit.

As to the routine of daily life, I say that any member of a community who does not make the common exercises of religion his first care is derelict in his duty. A common exercise should be preferred to all other devotional practices or occupations whatsoever; as far as possible all other exercises ought to be made subordinate to common ones, which should never be omitted without permission of the superior.

You ask me which I would prefer: to have a rule and manner of life adapted to a large number of men, embracing many of a uniform type, men good enough for average work, intended to include and seeking to retain persons of mediocre spirit, and having a dim understanding of our peculiar institute? Or would I prefer the rule to be made only for a select body? I answer: I should prefer the rule to be made for the smaller and more select body of men. I think our Community should not be numerous. It should be a *corps d'elite*. I think this must be the case with all religious communities of the future. Religious vocations

are not common, but special. It is a fatal mistake for religious to take the place of secular priests.

There is room for but a few dull and mediocre men in our Community. The apostolic vocation requires men of natural ability: if not, then men of good sense and profound spirituality.

Put more trust in self-control than in outward coercion; of that, the least amount possible consistent with community life, with our personal habits and character. Hence cultivate greater personal responsibility for the good of the Community; greater care in asking dispensations. God gives us grace for this standard; fidelity to this is our only means of perseverance. Father Sherwood Healy took dinner with us after he got home from Rome, and he said to me afterwards: "There is something singular about your men. You have a Community, and you live and work together in harmony; but I notice that every man holds his own individuality of view and of character generally." I told him that I was glad he had noticed that, because it was just what ought to be.

CHAPTER 15

The Safeguards of the Paulist

*Father Hecker elaborates on those resources
and attitudes that help a Paulist
remain faithful to the Church.*



A Paulist must know how to reconcile the greatest fidelity to the interior attract and guidance of the Holy Spirit with perfect filial obedience to the external and divine authority of the Holy Church.

The practical aim of all true religion is to bring each individual soul under the immediate guidance of the Divine Spirit. The Divine Spirit communicates Himself to the soul by means of the sacraments of the Church. The Divine Spirit acts as the interpreter and criterion of revealed truth by the authority of the Church.

Although we must never forget that the immediate means of Christian perfection is the interior direction of the Holy Spirit, neither must we forget that the test of our being directed by the Holy Spirit, and not

by our fancies and prejudices, is our filial obedience to the divine external authority of the Church.

When authority and liberty are intelligently understood, and when both aim at the same end, then the universal reign of God's authority will be near, and the kingdom of God, the Church, be established universally.

The Holy Spirit in the external authority of the Church acts as the infallible interpreter and criterion of divine revelation. The Holy Spirit in the soul acts as the Divine Life-Giver and Sanctifier. The supposition that there can be any opposition or contradiction between the action of the Holy Spirit in the supreme decisions of the authority of the Church, and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in the soul, can never enter the mind of an enlightened and sincere Christian. The Holy Spirit which through the authority of the Church teaches divine truth, is the same Spirit which prompts the soul to receive the divine truths which He teaches. The measure of our love for the Holy Spirit is the measure of our obedience to the authority of the Church. There is one Spirit, which acts in two different offices concurring to the same end: the regeneration and sanctification of the soul.

In case of obscurity or doubt concerning what is the divinely revealed truth, or whether what prompts the soul is or is not an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recourse must be had to the Divine Teacher or criterion, the authority of the Church. For it must be borne in mind that to the Church, as represented in the first instance by St. Peter, and subsequently by his successors, was made the promise of her Divine Founder,

that "the gates of hell should never prevail against her." No such promise was ever made by Christ to each individual believer. "The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth."

From the above plain truths the following practical rule of conduct may be drawn: The Holy Spirit is the immediate guide of the soul in the way of salvation and sanctification; and the criterion, or test, that the soul is guided by the Holy Spirit, is its ready obedience to the authority of the Church. This rule removes all danger whatever, and with it the soul can walk, run, or fly if it chooses, in the greatest safety and with perfect liberty in the ways of sanctity.

*Rules for the Guidance of Writers, Lecturers,
and Others Engaged in Public Life*

1. Absolute and unswerving loyalty to the authority of the Church, wherever and however expressed, as God's authority upon earth and for all time.

2. To seek in the same dispositions the true spirit of the Church, and to be unreservedly governed by it as the wisdom of the Most High.

3. To keep our minds and hearts free from all attachments to schools, parties, or persons in the Church, so that nothing within us may hinder the light and direction of the Holy Spirit.

4. In case any conflict arises concerning what we may have spoken or written, or any work or movement in which we may be engaged, to re-examine. If wrong, we must retract at once. If not, then ask: Is the question of that importance that it requires defense,

and the upsetting of attacks? If not of this importance, then not to delay and perhaps jeopardize the progress of other works; and therefore we must condemn ourselves to simple silence.

5. In the midst of the imperfections, abuses, scandals, etc., of the human side of the Church, never to allow ourselves to think or to express a word which might seem to place a truth of the Catholic faith in doubt, or to savor of the spirit of disobedience.

6. With all this in view, to be the most earnest and ardent friends of all true progress, and to work with all our might for its promotion through existing organizations and authorities.

CHAPTER 16

External Mission of the Paulist Community

*The reason for new religious communities
and the attitude of the Paulists with reference
to the needs of the age.*



The Holy Spirit is preparing the Church for an increased infusion of Himself in the hearts of the faithful. This increased action of the Holy Spirit will renew the whole face of the earth, in religion and in society. Souls will be inspired by Him to assist in bringing about this end.

The question is, How shall such souls co-operate with Him in preparation for this extraordinary outpouring of divine grace? The law of all extensive and effectual work is that of association. The inspiration and desire and strength to co-operate and associate in facilitating this preparation for the Holy Spirit must come to each soul from the Holy Spirit Himself.

What will be the nature of this association and the special character of its work? The end to be had in view will be to set on foot a means of co-operation with the Church in the conquest of the whole world to Christ, the renewal of the apostolic spirit and life.

THE
CATHOLIC WORLD.

VOL. I., NO. 1.—APRIL, 1865.

From Le Correspondant.

THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

BY E. RAMEAU.

[THE following article will no doubt be interesting to our readers, not only for its intrinsic merit and its store of valuable information, but also as a record of the impressions made upon an intelligent foreign Catholic, during a visit to this country. As might have been expected, the author has not escaped some errors in his historical and statistical statements—most of which we have noted in their appropriate places. It will also be observed that while exaggerating the importance of the early French settlements in the development of Catholicism in the United States, he has not given the Irish immigrants as much credit as they deserve. But despite these faults, which are such as a Frenchman might readily commit, the article will amply repay reading.—ED. CATHOLIC WORLD.]

AFTER the Spaniards had discovered the New World, and while they were fighting against the Pagan civilization of the southern portions of the continent, the French made the first [permanent] European settlement on the shores of America. They founded Port Royal, in Acadia, in 1604, and from that time their missionaries began to go forth among the savages of

the North. It was not until 1620 that the first colony of English Puritans landed in Massachusetts, and it then seemed not improbable that Catholicism was destined to be the dominant religion of the New World; but subsequent Anglo-Saxon immigration and political vicissitudes so changed matters, that by the end of the last century one might well have believed that Protestantism was finally and completely established throughout North America. God, however, prepares his ways according to his own good pleasure; and he knows how to bring about secret and unforeseen changes, which set at naught all the calculations of man. The weakness and internal disorders of the Catholic nations, in the eighteenth century, retarded only for a moment the progress of the Catholic Church; and Providence, combining the despised efforts of those who seemed weak with the faults of those who seemed strong, confounded the superficial judgments of philosophers, and prepared the way for a speedy religious transformation of America.

This transformation is going on in our own times with a vigor which seems to increase every year. The

The first issue of The Catholic World in April 1865.

For unity, activity, and the choice of means, reliance should be had upon the bond of charity in the Holy Spirit, and upon His inspirations.

The central truth to actuate the members should be the Kingdom of Heaven within the soul, which should be made the burden of all sermons, explaining how it is to be gained now.

Men will be called for who have that universal synthesis of truth which will solve the problems, eliminate the antagonisms, and meet the great needs of the age; men who will defend and uphold the Church against the attacks which threaten her destruction, with weapons suitable to the times; men who will turn all the genuine aspirations of the age, in science, in socialism, in politics, in spiritism, in religion, which are now perverted against the Church, into means of her defense and universal triumph.

If it be asked, therefore, in what way the co-operation with the new phase of the Church in the increase of intensity and expansion of her divine life in the souls of men is to be instituted, the answer is as follows: By a movement springing from the synthesis of the most exalted faith with all the good and true in the elements now placed in antagonism to the Church, thus eliminating antagonisms and vacating controversies.

Can a certain number of souls be found who are actuated by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, the genius of grace, to form an associative effort in the special work of the present time? If there be such a work, and an associative effort be necessary, will not the Holy Spirit produce in souls, certain ones at least, such a

vocation? Is not the bond of unity in the Holy Spirit which will unite such souls all that is needed in the present state of things to do this work?

A new Religious Order is an evidence and expression of an uncommon or special grace given to a certain number of souls, so that they may be sanctified by the practice of particular virtues to meet the special needs of their epoch, and in this way to renew the spiritual life of the members of the Church and to extend her fold. A new Community is this, or it has no reason for its existence. The means to accomplish its special work are both new and old. It should lay stress on the new, and not despise but also make use of the old. "The wise householder bringeth forth from his treasury *new* things and old."

The Church always finds in her wonderful fecundity wherewith to supply the new wants which arise in every distinct epoch of society.

A new Religious Community, unless its activity is directed chiefly to supplying the special needs of its time, wears itself out at the expense of its true mission, and will decline and fail.

We must realize the necessity of more explicitly bringing out our ideal if we would give a sufficient motive for our students and members, keep them in the community, bring about unity of action, and accomplish the good which the Holy Spirit demands at our hands. A Paulist, as a distinct species of a religious man, is one who is alive to the pressing needs of the Church at the present time, and feels called to labor specially with the means fitted to supply them.

So far as it is compatible with faith and piety, I am for accepting the American civilization with its usages and customs; leaving aside other reasons, it is the only way by which Catholicity can become the religion of our people. The character and spirit of our people, and of their institutions, must find themselves at home in our Church in the way those of other nations have done; and it is on this basis alone that the Catholic religion can make progress in our country.

To supply the special element the age and each country demands, this is the special, peculiar work of Religious Communities: this is their field. It is a fatal mistake when religious attempt to do the ordinary work of the Church. Let religious practice prayer and study; there will always be enough of the work to which they are called.

The needs of the times call for virtues among Catholics which shall display the personal force of Catholic life no less than that which is organic.

The light the age requires for its renewal can only come from the same source, the cultivation of the Holy Spirit in the individual soul. The renewal of the age depends on the renewal of religion. The renewal of religion depends upon the greater effusion of the creative and renewing power of the Holy Spirit. The greater effusion of the Holy Spirit depends on the giving of increased attention to His movements and inspirations in the soul. The radical and adequate remedy for all the evils of our age, and the source of all true progress, consist in increased attention and fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul.

“Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created: and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.”

An exposition of Christianity showing the union of its internal with its external notes of credibility, is calculated to produce a more enlightened and intense conviction of its divine truth in the faithful, to stimulate them to a more energetic personal action; and, what is more, it would open the door to many straying children, for their return to the fold of the Church. The increased action of the Holy Spirit, with a more vigorous co-operation on the part of the faithful, which is in process of realization, will elevate the human personality to an intensity of force and grandeur productive of a new era in the Church and to society; an era difficult for the imagination to grasp, and still more difficult to describe in words, unless we have recourse to the prophetic language of the inspired Scriptures.

I am in favor of no sudden changes, but am in favor of that liberty which will leave the way open to the application of these principles as the case may demand and the Providence of God direct. That many important changes will be required is a fact that I do not wish to conceal. Such, at least, is my opinion.

As to the growth of the Paulist, he must develop in an apostolic vocation—that is, in apostolic works, Catholic, universal; not in works which confine his life’s energies to a locality. He must do the work of the Church. The work of the Church, as Church, is to render her note of universality more and more con-

spicuous—to render it sensible, palpable. This is the spirit of the Church in our country.

An apostolic vocation consists in calling the attention of mankind to the great truths of Divine Revelation. An apostolic vocation practically consists in demonstrating the synthesis between the truths of Divine Revelation and those already held by the class addressed, be these truths few or many, immediate or remote.

CHAPTER 17

The European Apostolate

*Extracts from a diary and from letters
expanding on Father Hecker's ideas about the
possibility of a Paulist movement in Europe.*



(From a diary)

Rome, Jan. 20, 1870.—Ideas that for a long time have been confusedly before my mind become distinct—regarding the state of things in Europe, and the remedy.

Europe needs men who from a fresh view and contemplation of truth, and a deeper love springing therefrom, should consecrate themselves to the propagation of the faith and the good of humanity. Men who are, from this higher view of truth, free from all parties, schools, or prejudices.

Feb. 24, 1870.—The work that Divine Providence has called us as a religious community to do in our own country, were its spirit extended throughout

Europe, would be the focus and element of its regeneration. For our country has a providential position in view of Europe, and our baptizing it, and our efforts to Catholicize and sanctify it, give it an importance in a religious aspect of a most interesting and significant character.

Were there a sufficient number of Paulists, I should like to see a community established in every center of Europe; in London, Paris, Vienna, Madrid, Berlin, Florence, Rome. They would be an element of reconciliation of the past and the future, and of reconstruction.

I never felt so much like quitting myself as a Christian and a man. The convictions which have hitherto directed my course have been deepened, confirmed, and strengthened by recent experience here, and I return to my country a better Catholic and more of an American.

(From a letter to George V. Hecker, dated Rome, February 24, 1870, during the Vatican Council)

My distance from home enables me better to judge and appreciate the value of the work in which I am engaged in our own country. American civilization has a providential mission in view of Europe, and our efforts to Catholicize and sanctify it give to our enterprise in a religious aspect a most significant character. My position here gives me the opportunity of measuring my thoughts convictions, views and plans with the most experienced and best minds in the Church,

and many such outside the Church, and according to my sight, the work of the Paulists is not for one country only, but its spirit, extended over all Europe, would be an element of reconciliation and reconstruction.

*(From his diary, dated Ragatz, Switzerland,
August 4, 1875)*

The idea of the Paulists is one with which God's grace inspired my soul for the United States. Its present form is not so much mine as that of those who associated themselves with the idea. My relations with their aim and with them may remain unbroken while I am in another work and country. While engaged in another, wider and greater work, my aid, my sympathies, and whatever else I can do, will be given to them. There is but one thing before me: God, the interests of His Holy Church, and the preparation for the renewal of its strength and triumph in Europe.

If this matter is placed quietly and completely, with all the reasons, before the mind of the Community, it seems to me that Divine Providence will open their eyes to see His will and freely let me strive to follow it. Suppose it to be only a limited, temporary absence at first.

*(From a letter to one of the fathers
in answer to a letter of encouragement
about the European apostolate)*

Lake George, *August* (1885). My Dear Father: Thanks for your consoling and kind letter of the 4th.

Perhaps I never was more conscious and felt more the need of personal sympathy and co-operation in what I believe deliberately and am fully convinced is my duty. I have for some time past felt tested by God to the very roots of my being.

The dominant thought of my mind for years, many years, has been that “a body of free men who love God with all their might and yet cling together, could conquer this modern world of ours.” I have felt deeply ashamed at the example of men who have worked for error—how much they have done!

CHAPTER 18

Attitudes towards Studies

*Dispositions of humility and searching that are
essential in the pursuit of theological study.*



He who is not in his place in the order of things established by God, will see all things in disorder. The being in one's place in the order of grace is humility; humility is therefore necessary for science and true wisdom. For science is the knowledge of the relation of things, and wisdom the contemplation of ultimate causes.

As nothing can be said to be thoroughly known till we find out its cause, so he who is ignorant of God understands nothing thoroughly. He that does not recognize God in His creatures and the creation is an atheist. The value of time is unknown to him who knows not God, as he who has not God in view will never judge and esteem things at their true value.

Ignorance is the effect of intellectual blindness caused chiefly by the sin of pride. Humility is the antidote to pride, and restores to the soul the light of God



Fruitlands, Bronson Alcott's Transcendental Community, 1843, from a drawing by Charles H. Overly.

in and by which we see things as they are, and in their true relations.

"What does he know," says the prophet, "who has not suffered temptations?" Temptations discover to us what we are, and thus teach us humility. And St. Augustine says: "*Domine noverim me, noverim te.*" And he only who knows God can be called truly wise, according to the words of St. Thomas: "*Ille qui considerat simpliciter altissimam causam totius universi quae Deus est, maxime sapiens dicitur.*" If, then, we would be wise, we must drink from the fountain source. How blind and foolish are those who arrest themselves at anything, however precious and good it may appear, when they can obtain possession of Him who is the Creator and God of all, the Infinite! Who can behold God and

desire to regard anything else? Who that knows God can study anything else? Who that has tasted of God's love can desire any other? Who that has experienced His presence can wish for anything but solitude?

We are truly wise when we have arrived at the knowledge of the fact that we are fools; and truly learned when we acknowledge that we are ignorant.

Ah, does all around us mean no more than it seems, the shadow of a cloud, a dream? And what, myself too? Is this all to pass away and leave no trace of its being? O Thou, O Lord, art All, and all else is nothing. And have we no other lesson to learn than this? "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was void and nothing: and the heavens, and there was no light in them" (Jeremiah 4:25).

(From a letter)

Jan. 17, 1867.—My Dear Friend: The intellect when inordinate is like a woman who puts on fine dresses rather to display them than to enhance her own personal beauty. The object of all knowledge is to increase love, and where it fails to produce this result it is pernicious; the same as if one should eat too much food, the excess remains only to torment and weaken the stomach. Knowledge is not an end; hence we may sin either by excess or defect of it. The first is a waste of vital energy, loss of time and abuse of capacity; the other implies the sin of ignorance and all its consequences. To know in order to know is vanity. Many men of our day are crazy on science because they

know so little. It is better to appropriate the little we know, than to learn more and appropriate less. Let us take our stand and say: "Here will I remain and not move from the spot until I realize what I know." This would elevate us to the third heaven before we would learn the whole lesson.

Some souls are destined to study and learn, like St. Bernard, among the rocks, the murmuring rivulets and the profound solitude of forests; or, like St. Bonaventure, to draw wisdom and eloquence from the feet of the Crucifix by adoring and kissing it. And, after all, is not this way more in harmony with the order of Christianity? For the wisdom of Christianity consists in the knowledge of a super natural order of things which cannot be acquired by our unaided reason and the study of natural sciences, but only by the help of divine grace and contemplation. The confession of the greatest light of the Christian world, St. Thomas Aquinas, is applicable here: "*Quidquid novit, non tam studio aut labore suo se peperisse, quam divinitus traditum accepisse.*" And when our studies are undertaken with the view of God alone, they will always tend to make us depend more and more upon the Holy Ghost and the simple teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed is the man whom God reduces to his own ignorance and keeps him there; for it is a proof that God Himself would become his wisdom and knowledge and understanding.

(About the Curé of Ars)

A saintly man indeed, and one gifted with a supernatural character to an extraordinary degree. But it seems to me that his biographer misunderstood him somewhat. He seems to admit that the Curé of Ars had a naturally stupid mind, because he had so much difficulty in getting through his studies for the priesthood. The truth, probably, was that just at that time the supernatural action of the Holy Spirit came upon him and incapacitated him for his studies. But everything about his after life shows that, though a rustic man, he had a good mind, a keen native wit, quick and dear perception.

I had something the same difficulty myself. During my novitiate and my studies one of my great troubles was the relation between infused knowledge and acquired knowledge; how much one's education should be by prayer and how much by study; the relation between the Holy Ghost and professors.

I am persuaded that in the study of divinity not enough room is given to prayer and not enough account made of infused science.

PART III:



**Themes of
Father Hecker on
Spirituality and on
the Church and
Its Mission**



*The Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York City,
the Paulist “Mother” Church.*

CHAPTER 19

The Holy Spirit and the Paulists*



A. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Power of the Spirit in Us

Are we once born of the spirit we shall be led by it in all reforms to do and to abstain from all things which are an hindrance an obstruction to the full and complete harmonious life of the spirit in us. And he who cannot see the enemies of the spirit which he indulges proves only his own blindness consequent on his faithlessness, for there is no virtue which the spirit does not teach if we would hear its whispering voice in our hearts. The miser is an outward example of what the Christian should cheerfully do from the spirit of God living within. What does not the miser

*References to the *Diary* are to Isaac T. Hecker, *The Diary: Romantic Religion in Ante-Bellum America*, ed. John Farina (Paulist Press, Mahwah, 1988). Note there are some references to later diaries of Father Hecker which have not been published.

do for his God Mammon? Should not the Christian be willing to do the same for his God, Love and Wisdom? Ah would only Christians take the example of the miser in his abstinence, in his sacrificing all things to the one object. Do for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom upon Earth what he does for money. (*Diary*, November 1, 1843)

The Power of the Spirit

It is the life that flows through us that refines elevates & ennobles our being, not that which we use of another.

He who is spirit-born quickens the spirit birth in those who meet him.

He who is spirit-led has all things needful. He who gives up his natural life will find his spiritual life.

We learn the Scriptures not by reading them but by the Holy Ghost in us.

We shall know more, love more, & do more, if we be more. It is Being which will give us knowing, loving, & doing. With the natural water we cannot quench the spiritual thirst.

Spiritual gifts are irreconcilable with natural wealth.

The only permanent wealth are spiritual goods; spirit never dies, but the body does.

The Spirit must give birth to Celestial love as the Soul gives birth to the Spirit.

Spirit is the body of celestial love, as the soul is the body of the Spirit, as the flesh is the body of the soul.

As the fallen soul is possessed by demons so must the divine soul be possessed by Angels.

It is easier to write history, sacred spiritual history, than it is to be sacred spiritual.

There is a greater degree of difference between the celestial and spiritual birth than there is between the spiritual & natural.

The body needs bread that it may live; the soul, spirit-truth; the spirit, celestial love.

There are much fewer who have celestial birth than there are those who have spiritual birth.

The spirit craves for love as the soul craves for the spirit. Spirit enlightens; Love enlivens. (*Diary*, April 7, 1844)

On the Three Comings of Christ

Now it was given me to understand, that there is a Threefold coming of Christ. His first coming was in the flesh. After which, before he left the world he engaged that he would come again in spirit to his own that were in it. *This has been accomplished*. This was his Second Coming. Upon which we have lived, and spent upon this stock of Life ever since his departure. I mean such, who for this worthy gift have *with great seeking* obtained it. This the Apostles had *more* richly and abundantly, as to the manifold working by powers and gifts, than any since. But yet they were still looking for his next coming; for, by his Spirit he was to make meet and ready; that the inward Spirit, with his Mind, Will, and Senses, should be all internally transformed; (as the new Testament runs much upon

it) to be *found sinless*; spotless, and blameless, against the coming of the Lord.

And what is to be done at his third coming, *but to change our vile bodies, and to fashion them like unto his own Glorious Body* by that power which shall open the Element (the Eternal Nature) which the Celestial Body shall evermore consist of: Christ's third coming will be to this purpose. *To redeem bodies* out from all those evil events that sin brought in, so that every spirit may come to have its own Native Body, and the spirit may no longer draw one way and the flesh another. (*Diary*, May 18, 1844, from *Divine Revelation and Prophecy* by Jane Lead)

On Divine Guidance in Life

Humbly and freely I confess with a deep sense of humility that all my labour is useless and my ability to benefit or accomplish any thing in the view of the world Christian or worldly is daily becoming to me fainter and fainter. The Spirit which guides and controls me I have no disposition to rebel against but would meekly submit to its supreme and perfect guidance and do feel that in this my life, light, and love is the greatest, however small and insignificant it may seem to the world, and in reality it may be. It is all that I can be, and attempt to be more would end in making me less. It would seem that I am doing very little indeed here, but this is no criterion for what I feel conscious, of what I feel is being done for me, and through me, and, if this be a delusion, how to awaken myself from it is to me unknown. O, I would submit

to be guided by a little child, be willing to obey a stranger in the street, to do anything if the Spirit permitted me to do it, but unless so, there seems nothing so impossible for me to do as to disobey it. I have no fear but that a holy pure trust in God will do more than any other, than all other efforts, have the power of doing. (*Diary*, May 30, 1844)

Inward Action of the Spirit

What would the spirit have me to do? To say? It seems to give me no rest, would it have me to be still, quiet and peaceful?

What is the work that the spirit is doing now within me?

The Spirit draws me ever inward and will not permit me to read, think, or do anything else but attend to it. It is like a young bride; it would have me ever in its presence speaking of its charms. (*Diary*, June 6, 1844)

Holy Spirit—Inspiration

The genius of religion is divine inspiration. The influence of the Church is divine excitement. (*Diary*, January 14, 1845)

Fidelity to the Spirit's Guidance

Surely all things in the Holy Church are good; but good when we keep in view the aim of all things—the bringing of the soul nearer and nearer to God, & in

more perfect union with Him. What does this for our soul, we should be faithful to; & not be led astray by taking up anything else. Perhaps my love for simplicity, or sincerity, in devotion, is too strict for many souls. Let each soul study the way in which the Holy Ghost attracts it, be faithful to that attrait, & not depart on any account from it. Fidelity to the “solicitations” of God’s grace, recollection in order to obtain this knowledge, & mortification, purity of heart, in order to remove whatever may hinder the operation of grace in the soul—*Viola tout!*

What you say of the Sacrament of Penance seems to me most true. It is a miracle of grace, no less for priest than for penitent. Nowhere & in no function, it seems to me, does the priest represent our Lord in His Divine character so literally as in this Holy Sacrament. It is indeed a wonder how two souls, entire strangers to each other, can at once be knit into holy bonds of friendship, so close, so sincere, so sacred.

Sometimes when I speak to souls in this Holy Sacrament, I realize the words of Our Lord to be literally true: “He that heareth you, heareth Me.” For it seems to me that I am only the passive, yet conscious organ of His Divine voice to their souls. (Letter to Mrs. King, March 25, 1863)

The Purpose of Christianity

There are two ways of false action—Self-activity and self-passivity—the Western man is the type of one, the Eastern man the type of the other. Finding their centre in self instead of the Divine action, they

both are equally false, and separate the soul further from God. The highest action consists in cooperating with, and suffering the divine action, in the soul. Wherever the activity of the soul, either active or passive, has not in view the divine action as its motive, or its term, it is false and deteriorating.

The supposition that the aim of Christianity was to impose upon the race, or any individuals of the race, a human personality, arises from a false view of the purpose of Christianity; the aim of the Incarnation was to elevate our human personality to the capacity of receiving in a higher degree the Divine Personality, man's Archetype. "God became man that man might become God."

Let us remember also that God gave man intelligence to see the truth and it naturally seeks after it, and inclination of our will, when the truth is seen, to embrace, love and follow the truth. All life, strength, and salvation to souls, to society, and to nations lies in that direction. Would not more be gained by relying more on the positive side of religion, in making known the beatitudes, than on its woes? It is from this source that renewal of the life of the soul and regeneration of society will follow.

The Holy Spirit is at work among Chinese, Moslems, and all nations, peoples and tribes, in every rational soul. The love of God, so to speak, compels this. We may not see or understand its secret operations, but the truth of this is none the less true for that. We may be nearer to the conversion of these races, & the unity of the race, & the triumph of Christianity, than any one of us is aware of. . . .

“The Holy Spirit fills the whole earth,” acts everywhere & in all things, more directly on the minds & hearts of rational creatures, dwells substantially in the souls of the faithful, and is the light, life, soul of the Church. This all-wise, all-powerful action now guides, as He ever has & ever will, all men & events to His complete manifestation and glory. Pentecostal days! Were the promise of His universal triumph.

The eternal authority is like, in some respects, to the compass—rather the North star—conscience the compass. The North star is not the cause of the movement of the ship—that is the wind—but as long as it can be seen with clearness & certitude, the ship can sail with all the wind her sails are capable of carrying—but obscure the star by clouds, so that the captain cannot be sure of his course, he will have to take in sail, move cautiously lest he should make shipwreck, until the North star again appears distinctly. The wind is the Holy Spirit—the North star is the eternal authority of the Church, the compass is the light of faith. . . .

To wish to enlarge the action of the Holy Spirit in the Soul, independently of, or without the knowledge & appreciation of the necessity of the external authority of the Church, her discipline, her laws, her worship, etc. & the spirit of obedience, would only be opening the door to eccentricity, schism, heresy, & spiritual death.

He who does not see the external authority of the Church, and the internal action of the Holy Spirit in an inseparable synthesis, has not a right or just conception of either.

To view the external authority, discipline, etc. of the Church independently of its purpose, & without appreciation of that purpose which is to communicate the Divine Spirit to the soul, & to perfect it by the operations of that Spirit is to make religion a formality & mechanism, dry & irksome, creating a dislike, destructive of liberty, manliness & sanctity.

Suppose the time has come for a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit in the Church & her members, and thus a great increase of the sanctity with all that flows from sanctity takes place, will not this be the means best adapted, most efficacious in the conversion of those traces which are not yet Christians?

The Church is the substitute for the body of Christ. Its continuance & expansion in time & space. The Holy Spirit speaking by the mouths of the prophets, "*locutus est per prophetas*," prepared the way for the Incarnation; the Holy Spirit prepared the body of Christ by overshadowing the Blessed Virgin, "*adumbrabit tibi*"—The Holy Spirit, after the death & ascension of Christ, came down from above, "*descendit de coelis*," and established the church.

The great work of the Holy Spirit is the salvation, the sanctification of mankind upon earth and their glorification hereafter *by means* of the Church. (When the Church is spoken of as an object in itself to be upheld & glorified, instead of a means to an end, we misplace it, and many minds are misled, and antipathies and resistance are created when this might & should be avoided, and thus with the best intentions the Church and souls are injured, the very cause at heart is hindered.) It is not enough to take up a right

position, it must be kept in view in all our words and deeds.

By the authority of the Church the Holy Spirit is the teacher & criterion of Truth. Through the Sacraments He communicates Himself to the soul, according to its peculiar needs. By the worship of the Church He adores and gives expression to the religious life of the soul. By its discipline He is the guardian of the divine life of the soul. The Church is therefore the organ by which the work of man's redemption, begun by Christ on earth, is continued & completed.

It is the Holy Spirit who, through the sacrament of ordination, is in the priest who consecrates the Body and Blood of Christ, who pardons sins, who blesses, teaches the word of God, and dispenses grace. Not the man. *Sacerdos est alter Christus* ("The priest is another Christ"). It is the Holy Spirit who teaches and judges in the head of the Church. *Christus locutus est per papam* ("Christ speaks through the pope"). The Holy Spirit is therefore the soul, life, indwelling in the Church. (*Diary begun in Egypt, 1873*)

Notes on the Holy Spirit (1870s–1880s)

Primary attention should be directed to the Divine direction of the Holy Ghost within the Soul, as it is the immediate means of salvation and perfection, and not to the teaching of the Divine outward authority. In few words are contained the entire change for the better of the whole present aspect of Christian life &

perfection. The Holy Spirit is the primary motor of all Christian actions.

The Soul directed by the spirit of Truth accepts with alacrity and unreserve the definitions and teachings of the Divine External Authority of the Holy Church *because true obedience springs from an interior, based upon faith, hope & love*. It is the Holy Ghost that guides the Church and the same spirit of Truth is the guide of the Soul. . . .

These are the marks of the Holy Ghost directing the Soul that it cheerfully embraces and thirsts after the truth taught by the Holy Church, and obeys readily and with joy her legitimate authority.

The Holy Ghost dwelling in & directing the Church, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in and directing the Soul, is the same Divine Spirit, and recognize each other instinctively and are one and the same. . . .

The Holy Spirit which dwells in the Church, the Holy Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, is contained in tradition, the Holy Spirit which dwells in and directs the Christian Soul, is one and the same, and when we recognize this, we have the Catholic spirit, that is the universal spirit. Like the principle of gravitation. Love is gravitation in the spiritual order.

All schism and heresy comes from not recognizing this primary truth. To know it gives peace and joy, for there is no fear that there will be error concealed or found in any of these channels of truth. This unity is that of authority. To separate from the Church under the pretext of greater liberty, is as absurd as if a planet

should force itself from its course around the sun, to follow its own movement.

The Creative Spirit who made all things in nature which is the light of reason in every man, and the light of Divine inspiration in Holy Writ, and the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church, are one and the same spirit & light. They all teach the same divine truth which Truth in its source is One—God. In Christ all was made—*omnia facta sunt*—all restored.

The primary attention of the soul should be directed, not to the Divine external authority of the Church, as that is not the immediate means of its sanctification, but to the primary act of its Sanctifier, the operation of the Holy Spirit. In that simple statement is contained a principle of action that will change the whole front of the Church and renew the pentecostal days. It is from the Holy Spirit we are to look for the renewal of the life and strength and glory of the Church. He is the Life—Light—Strength giver. “Thou shalt send forth Thy spirit and Thou shalt renew the earth.”

So it is with the Soul. The guide, the authority of the Church, is not the life of the Christian soul or its force. The Holy Ghost is the life giver, sanctifier, the strength & support of the Soul.

They therefore have entirely mistaken notions of the authority of the Church who suppose that it is a substitute for the Holy Ghost, that it crushes reason, enervates the soul and kills its life. On the contrary, with the divine external authority of the Church the Christian soul follows the inspiration of the Holy

Ghost with perfect safety, and confidence, knowing he cannot go astray, make a mistake by any self-delusions, or fall into the snares of Satan while watched over by this divinely appointed guide. . . .

Religion cannot regain her former position by simply repeating and in the same words, what men have already abandoned in great measure. Present the same old truths in a new and attractive aspect to win their admiration and gain their acceptance. . . . The wise man brings out of his treasury *new* things and old.

In proportion as the Holy Spirit takes possession and direction of our soul will our intelligence increase in light (Jn. 16:13), our hearts in love, and our will in liberty (2 Cor. 3:17); action, humility, obedience and every virtue will be practiced.

Liberty is the full glory of all our faculties in their proper objects—the consequence of our living up to and in harmony with the great end of our being. Liberty consists in conforming our intelligence and conduct with the Truth. Authority derives its right to govern only from Truth. Authority and liberty, therefore, are one, and their source and cannot be contradictory. Tyranny and slavery are the result of falsehood; untruth, a swerving from truth, arbitrary use of authority, or its neglect. . . .

God nowhere acts directly except in the Christian human soul. Grace is the direct influence of God operating in the Human Soul. This primary action of God in the Soul demands our primary attention. There is nothing else that does. The Church, all her institu-

tions, sacraments, are means to communicate & increase this primary action of God in the Soul. They are means, not ends. None of them, therefore, has the right to demand the primary attention of the soul. . . .

The hierarchy is not God, the Sacraments are not God, the whole Church is not God, but [only] the means instituted by God to bring this divine action into the soul, to increase it, to perfect it. To bring souls to God. . . .

What, then, is the Church? On the visible side, the human side, the Church is that company of men whose souls are united to God through Christ. The Church is that body authorized by Christ to convey to souls the grace, the divine actions, which He came down from heaven to convey to men. The Church is that institution which exists from the time of Christ, established by His authority, to continue the work for which he came down upon earth and became man in the womb of the Virgin Mary. . . .

The Church is for man. The church in her militant aspect, and in her suffering condition, will disappear in the triumphant Church, and that in glorified souls.

The Soul of the Church is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as a saving grace manifests and communicates himself to souls ordinarily by means of the Church only. Through her divine authority in guiding them to truth and keeping them from error; in her Sacraments communicating by each special grace meeting the different needs of the soul. . . .

Once the Holy Spirit has taken up His dwelling in a soul, the whole work of the Church in all her sacraments, worship, and discipline, and authority, has

nothing else in view than the strengthening of the soul in following the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in cultivating those dispositions which are most favorable to the designs of the Holy Spirit. . . .

The work of the Holy Ghost began on the day of Pentecost, when He descended visibly to the Apostles and disciples. It is in this dispensation we live, and when He reigns on earth, the work of the Holy Spirit will be finished. When is realized the petition of the Saviour, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Through the Holy Spirit the world was called out of chaos.

Through Him the patriarchs and prophets were inspired.

Through Him the way to the Incarnation was prepared.

Through Him the Church was established.

Through Him every Christian soul is regenerated.

Through Him all things receive their perfection and are glorified.

Through the Holy Spirit the martyrs received the strength to sustain triumphantly their sufferings.

Through Him the apostles of nations were filled with zeal and power to convert nations.

Through Him the innumerable litany of the Saints were sanctified.

Through the Holy Spirit we receive all that is Holy, Good, True and Beautiful.

Sanctity is the result of the primary or immediate action of the Holy Spirit in the individual soul and its faithful correspondence with this inspiration.

Religion is primary, and if there is to be a renewal

of human society in all its relations, to have a stable basis it must spring from and begin a renewal of Religion, as all man's actions should be directed to the attainment of his true destiny. . . .

The aim of the Church is to impart birth to this Divine Spirit in each individual soul.

Her liturgy, worship, sacraments and hierarchy aim at the *completion* of this divine birth.

Her authority aims at teaching the ways of the Divine Spirit and at keeping men from going astray from them.

The work of the Church is nothing else than the introduction of the Divine Spirit into the soul and the establishment of its reign therein, which is the Kingdom of heaven.

But you say that this is the ideal Church and it is nowhere actualized.

We reply that it is actualized in the Catholic Church; and that it is not seen because of ignorance, perverted education, or prejudice.

But the Catholic Church, to be the ideal Church, has much to reform and much to give up.

(Statements sent to Dr. Vaughan to show to Archbishop Manning, September 15, 1872, and inserted in "Notes on the Holy Spirit")

1. The Church on its human side consists of those souls who are united to God through Christ.

2. The divine external authority of the Church is the criterion of supernatural truth.

3. The interior inspirations of the Holy Spirit are the immediate guide and proximate means of the sanctification of the soul.

4. The immediate aim of the authority of the Church is to teach supernatural truth and the paths of the Holy Spirit, and to keep men from going astray.

5. The Papal authority having been defined and fixed forever by the Church in the Vatican Council, her work now is to turn the attention of souls primarily to the interior operations of the Holy Spirit.

6. This will give rise to the increase of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, the renewal of the face of the Church, and the regeneration of society.

Notes on the Holy Spirit continued

To escape from heresy, fanaticism, eccentricity and atheism we must be careful to avoid the opposite extreme of servility, indifference, stupidity and indolence. . . .

In the present order of things the exclusive guidance of external authority as a substitute for the interior would suffocate all personal life; an exclusive guidance by interior authority would lead into every extravagance and fanaticism.

You cannot make a tree grow by binding and pruning it. External restrains and discipline cannot originate or make life. It can direct life into fruitful channels but it can make nothing live. The Kingdom of God is within. . . .

We must elevate our minds to the higher region where all truth is found in unity exclusive of all diver-

gency, to bring about an entire union which will be lasting. We must look beneath all outward divergencies and find out the central truth of all religions, and the immediate truths depending on that, if we would bring about unity of belief and unity of action. . . .

The necessity of reform and renewal on the human side of the Church must be in the nature of things called for at all times to a greater or lesser extent. Christianity is a revelation of divine truths and the communication of a divine life. And to whom? To Angels? No! but to men, fallen men, to whom to err and to deviate from the path which leads to their true destiny is a common occurrence. The heathen knew & acknowledged that to err is human. And we Christians with all the gracious aids it has pleased God to bestow upon us, must acknowledge the same truth as a daily and hourly experience. . . .

Every motive that can induce one to become a Christian, is also an argument for obedience to the Church, as independent of her authority, and action; there is no other appointed way by which we can learn what Christianity is, and for becoming Christians and keeping so. "He who has not the Church for his Mother has not God for his Father." . . .

Renewal of Christian Life (December, 1875)

Religious institutions repeat the history of the Church. They start from a Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. Placing souls thus more and more under the immediate guidance of the Divine Spirit will have far reaching and practical results. An advantage to the

soul being guided immediately by the divine light, it will increase individual action, liberty and energy. They will take the direction as the natural leaders of all the great enterprises of society and embracing also in their view and actions the whole world.

An advantage to the priesthood freeing it from the care and solicitude of minute and over direction of souls. Thus priests will have the leisure to devote themselves to the study of theological science and solution of the great problems of the age. Freed from all entanglements of the family relations by the grace of their vocation and placed in intimate relation with the universal interest of the Church whose house is the whole world and whose interest is the whole human race, who are better calculated by their very position to study and solve the religious, intellectual and social problems of their age and give further impulse to every true progress? The priesthood will become what it ought always to be, the channel of light and inspiration to the world. . . .

These institutions will be first to practice what they teach to others—for ordinarily the power of a preacher depends on the correspondence of his own life to what he teaches—by increased attention and fidelity of its members and greater reliance for strength on the inspirations and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This will develop in their members greater activity of the intelligence and increased energy of will and spontaneity of life. These qualities render them attractive and popular everywhere throughout the world. Christianity was not intended to be confined in its actions exclusively to those virtues which will

secure the soul's salvation; it was intended to exercise and develop all moral virtues and make great men, great Christian heroic men. Its chief aim is to sanctify the soul by the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. It was not its primary work to free men from sin, this was a condition to the result. . . .

By a sublime synthesis of the natural and supernatural, of the union of the most thorough manhood with the most exalted faith, of the most perfect liberty of the human will, with the action of Divine grace, they will make manifest the highest ideal of the Christian life and character. They will know how to secure both at the same time, salvation and manhood, humility and dignity, faith and science, *ante and post mortem* happiness, obedience and liberty, outward act with inward guidance, perfect intelligence, republicanism and catholicity in synthesis, natural and supernatural in one. For perfect God and perfect man in one personality, hypostatic union, constituted Christ so he who unites the perfect action of Divine grace with the perfect operation of human nature in one personality is a complete Christian. A saint is a man who is prompted in all his action by the divine instinct of the Holy Spirit. A divine-man!

By the sacrament of Baptism, the Holy Spirit communicates Himself to the essence of the soul and substantially dwells within it as in His temple. To this indwelling divine presence is attached certain virtues, gifts and privileges which are infused therewith into the soul. It is by the exercise of these dispositions called habits or virtues and the cooperation with the movements of the Holy Spirit in the soul that the soul

is sanctified. Sanctification is nothing else than the soul acting habitually by the instinct of the divine ideal, the Holy Spirit.

The first of these habits or dispositions infused into the soul relate it directly to God and are therefore called theological virtues—faith, hope and charity. These being the proximate means of uniting the soul to God, all other exercise whatever of the spiritual life is to be directed to their perfection.

The next are the intellectual and moral virtues—intelligence, science, wisdom and prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice; the four latter are the moral or called sometimes the cardinal virtues. The object of the practice of these virtues is to bring the passions, appetites, the will to obey promptly the dictates of reason.

The next in order are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are wisdom, intelligence, science, counsel, piety, fortitude, fear. The object of these gifts is to render reason prompt obeying and following of the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

These virtues and gifts are dispositions and must be practiced and cooperated with to a greater or less extent by every adult, to attain the supernatural end for which he was created. Such is the teaching of the angelic St. Thomas. By the faithful practice of these virtues and docility to the Holy Spirit, man is rendered, as far as this is possible, perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect. While at the same time is established thereby the kingdom of heaven, or God in the soul. The kingdom of God in the soul consists in the possession, to a certain degree of perfection, of the

beatitudes. These are purity of heart—the sight of God; the thirst for justice—its fullness; peacemaker—children of God; merciful—receiving mercy; meekness—inheriting the earth; suffering persecution—great reward; mourn—they shall be comforted; poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. These beatitudes terminate as flowers do into the fruits of the Holy Spirit—to wit charity, joy, peace; patience, benignity; goodness; longanimity, meekness, faith, modesty, continence, chastity.

The Holy Spirit and a New Era

The increased action of the Holy Spirit, with a more vigorous cooperation on the part of the faithful, which is in process of realization, will elevate the human personality to an intensity of force and grandeur productive of a new era to the church and to society—an era difficult for the imagination to grasp, and still more difficult to describe in words, unless we have recourse to the prophetic language of the inspired Scriptures. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 39–40)

B.

THE PAULISTS

Personal Perfection

The backbone of a religious community is the desire of its members for personal perfection. A new religious order is the expression or evidence of an un-

common or special grace given to a certain number of souls in order to sanctify themselves by the practice of certain virtues to meet the special needs of their epoch and in this way to renew the life of the members of the Church and extend her fold. It is this or it is nothing at all; has no reason for its existence. The means to accomplish its special work are both new and old. It should lay stress on the new and not, despite, but make use also of the old. . . .

The true Paulist is a religious entirely depending on God for his spiritual life, living in community, and labors above all to supply the most pressing needs of Church and humanity of his day. ("Stray Thoughts," 1876–1886)

Personal Perfection and the Conversion of America

The individuality of a man cannot be too strong or his liberty too great when he is guided by the Spirit of God. But when these are interpreted as independency from God and license, when impressions are taken too easily from below, instead of those from above, then this is evidence of the spirit of pride and of the flesh, and not of "the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

How to cultivate a strong individuality and acquire great liberty: Not by imitation of the example of others. Especially when that example is "downward and not up." But by looking to God alone—attention to His solicitations. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences" (Rom. 14:14). Become a saint; you will have both. He who aims not at sanctity seeks not his perfection.

The two poles of a Paulist are: First, personal perfection. Zeal to respond to the principles of perfection as laid down by spiritual writers. The desire for personal perfection is the foundation stone of religious communities. When this fails they crumble to pieces. When this ceases to be the dominant desire it is dying.

Too great care cannot be taken: (a) in examining those who are to be admitted on this point; (b) nor in instructing them how to apply this principle; (c) care to see its practical application. Missionary works, parochial work, etc., are, and must be made, subordinate to personal perfection. These works must be done in view of personal perfection.

Rules. Personal perfection by the practice of those virtues without which it cannot be attained. Mortification, self-denial, detachment, etc.

Second, Labor for the conversion of this country to the Catholic faith by apostolic works. Parish work is a part, an integral part, of Paulist work, but not its principal or chief work. And parish work to be done so as to form a part of the main aim: the conversion of the non-Catholic people of the country. Labor to raise the standard of Catholic life here and throughout the world, as a means of the general triumph of the Catholic faith. ("Stray Thoughts," Lake George, August 7, 1882, p. 209; transcription pp. 62–63)

The Spirit of the Paulist Community

There have been from the very beginning of the Community, two tendencies in the Community. The one is represented by those who are with the ordinary

work of the priesthood, in parochial and missionary labours, but with the aim of doing these works more perfectly.

The direction toward which things are turned is one which differs from that which my interior spirit can concur with. This direction consists in employing the members of the Community in those ordinary duties in the parish and on the missions which should be subordinated to the special Paulist vocation.

This constant strain on the minds of the members of the Community as well as my own might be partially (or) at least relieved by some words of explanation on my own part.

The other discernible tendency consists in regarding all the works as secondary or as a base for the employment of the measures which tend primarily to the conversion of the people of the country.

As to the parish, instead of multiplying sonetic devotions and encouraging the frequentation of the sacraments at our church for the members of the parish and extending its work generally in this direction, to have conferences, lectures on religious topics, etc., adapted to the end in view.

This tendency is the dominant and controlling one. All the members are occupied in these duties to the extent of their abilities and strength. Whatever is in harmony with this tendency contributes to the perfection of these duties, aids their development and extension. To encourage the members of this Community in programming sermons, lectures and conferences for delivery in other parishes in this and other cities of the U.S. Make it a point in our own church

and in other churches of this city to give a course of lectures in view of non-Catholics in Advent, Lent or any other suitable occasions.

As to the missions, give to the mission sermons a further development in this direction. To aim at giving a course of conferences after each mission addressed more to an intelligent audience with the same end in view. These measures are not only needed for the conversion of non-Catholics but are every day needed for the strengthening and confirmation of the truths of faith in the minds of our young generations of Catholics whose intellects have been quickened by education and by other causes in the community in which they live.

Who knows, it may be that my usefulness in the Community in the work which it is called to do is ended, and it is the will of God that it should continue the work of God without me, and at the same time (in some other direction) to make use of me or lay me wholly aside for the future. Therefore rather look forward to an international extension of the Community to meet the wants of the Church than a multiplication of houses in this country.

If it be only to die, I am desirous of returning to the Community. But to return to a conflict which can neither do any good and will be as great and perhaps greater than ever, would be injurious to both (the Community and myself). It has been not only my prayer but my hope that God would show to me the way out, and between the desire of the community for my return and my inability to encounter this struggle. I have been waiting upon God for light and the action of His Divine Providence on the minds of the mem-

bers of the community and my own. This constant and urgent desire of some of the members of the community for my immediate return is what compels me to make this present statement and submit the following consideration:

1. I am willing to continue to wait on Divine Providence as things are, with constant prayer for light and strength, and continue to do as I am now doing, all I can for the Community.

2. Also ready to resign everything with unfeigned charity and to continue to do all in my power for the good of the country.

There is no other prospect before me than to be left entirely alone with no one but God.

God's Holy Spirit does inspire souls for their own sanctification and that of others in different ways. The recognition of this ought to prevent all conflict when one is fully assured that this divine source is the grounds of their convictions.

Conversions to the Catholic faith during the early part of this century were few and isolated instances, but they have within the last twenty-five years become more numerous. Speaking on this subject, a French writer who visited the United States twelve or more years ago says:

"These things are all good, sacred and necessary to salvation—still it is true that St. Paul thanked God that he baptized none of the Corinthians but a few, and the reason for this was that he was sent to preach the gospel." (Miscellaneous Hecker Papers c. 1877; see D. O'Brien, *Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic* [Paulist, Mahwah, 1992] p. 365)

CHAPTER 20

The Spiritual Life



God's Presence Always

My soul is so disquiet, my heart aches. It is as if my soul is weeping continually. Alas what is all this? Tears flow from my eyes involuntarily. My soul is grieved for what? Yesterday, as I was praying, the thought flashed across my mind: Where is God? Is he not here? Why prayest thou as if He is at great distance from thee? Where canst thou place him? Think of it. Where canst thou place him? What locality? Is he not here in thy midst? Is his presence not nearest thee? Oh think of it. God is here. His presence is always, universal and nearest. Am I impious to say that the language used in scripture for Christ's expressed the thoughts of my soul? Oh could we but understand that the Kingdom of Heaven is always at hand to the discernor! (*Diary, Brook Farm, April 18, 1843*)

The Church Helps the Soul to Free Itself from the Sensual

The real effect of the theory of the Church is to isolate ourselves from the outward world, withdraw from its enjoyments and live a life of sacrifice of the

passions. This is one statement. Another would be this: All these things can and should be enjoyed but in a higher, purer, a more exalted state of being than is the present ordinary state of our minds. The only opposition to them is when the soul becomes sensual and falls into their arms and becomes lost to higher and more spiritual objects. Then there is the life of the man of wealth, of pleasure, the scholar, the divine, etc. all of which have their pleasures and griefs. (*Diary*, May 4, 1843)

Life as a Number of Circles Spreading Outward

This morning I awoke with this thought impressed upon my mind: Life is like a knot in the wood. There is a continued series of circles proceeding from the intense consolidated centre until the outer ones are lost into the extremity to sight. So it is with life. How much of it is of this superficial outward circle wherein our centre does scarcely enter. How little do we speak from the centre of life. We exist for the most part in the superficial circles. (*Diary*, May 10, 1843)

Seeking God Is Seeking Christ

God writes. This is his writing: the whole Creation. He proceeds. He is not reflective. To him there is nothing old or new. So is it with him who is one with the Father. There is nothing spoken that shall be lost. There is nothing hid that shall not be revealed is the correlative. Men are seeking for Christ but know it not. The Christian never loses himself. It is not this

thing or that thing he is anxious to build up. Is not God all powerful? They all have a temporary value; nay do they not become letts and hindrances. He is in his Father and does he lose himself in his Creations. Possess thyself. How much in two words!! Understood rightly they are enough. (*Diary*, May 10, 1843)

Living Simply

The question arises in my mind whether it is necessary for me to require the concurrence of my brothers in the views of life which now appear to demand of me their actualization. Can I not live on simple diet and garmenture without their doing it? Must I needs have their concurrence? Can I not leave results to themselves? If my life is purer than those around me, why cannot I trust in its own simple influence. . . . I ask my nature demands not a cent above my immediate necessary wants. What they are must be placed upon my own spirit as I would leave to them to judge for themselves. They may demand 10 times more than myself which to me would be happiness to see them use it. And even did I think they used it wrongfully, all the check I would be willing to exert would be that of love and mutual good feelings. I feel conscious if I remain as I now am, I shall require but very little for myself, but this would still give me greater happiness that I could have the circumstances of showing to them my love. What little I should require should be spent to the benefit and amelioration and help of others. I would diminish my own wants for this purpose. I can at home live a secluded life. I will go home, live

longer there, be true to the spirit with the help of God, and wait until further light and strength. (*Diary*, July 22, 1843)

Prophecy

Prophecy is the enunciation of the divine aspiration of the Soul which is the Soul seeing the glorious becoming which is wrapt up in the dim approaching distance. There is the same certainty in prophecy as there is in science. The Genius of prophecy has not yet been born (but he is presaged) who shall collate prophecy and make it as certain as astronomy or any of the exact sciences. Man will reduce the facts of the inward world to the same certainty as he has done in the outward world as soon as the faculties which take cognizance of the inner eternal world are as fully opened as the faculties which take cognizance of the outward world are. (*Diary*, August 2, 1843)

God's Special Guidance

The belief in the special guidance of God has been the faith of all deeply religious Men. (*Diary*, August 2, 1843)

Sin and Grace, Pain and Joy Together

The glory of our nature opens with our shame. Joy and pain are the twin sisters. Guilt remorse are copulated with innocence peace. Progress is death. He that loves me most gives me the most pain. Oh Love me

not so much I would cry for thou makest me terribly miserable. We are only fully conscious of the real sense of this life in the struggles of death. Life is death. For Life is living and to live is to flow out, to grow to give existence to void, to give extense to the intense. With our Hosannas are mixed lamentations and vice versa. The deepest love is the sign of the capacity of the keenest pain and sorrow. Every spiritual act is a birth, and not without pain and bitter anguish of soul is it born. Existence means the pain of joy and sadness of love. Success and disappointment can and have each killed their equal army of men. The power which can raise a man from the dead can kill, and vice versa. Christ raised the dead by a word; Peter killed by a word. He that has power to forgive necessarily had the right to condemn. Life is successive birth. Being passes through successive circles of being. He that is above sin can forgive & condemn sin & sinners. Light adds not light to light but increases it proportionately; the flame ascends higher like two that love; they both ascend higher from their own love; each give but do not loose but increase each other. The union of the two gives birth to that which is greater than them both. Two streams being joined have by their union their rapidity accelerated. The strength of two combined is more than that of two separately. To be conscious of the dying daily is to be conscious of the highest life that is the fullest. (*Diary*, August 4, 1843)

Prayer for Divine Assistance and To Be Led to God

Oh heavenly Father will thou give me grace and strength to keep getting better to over come all temptations that may beset my path. Oh Lord awaken me more to the divine capacities thou has endowed man with and wilt thou make my sight clearer and my hearing delicater that I may see more and more of thy law, hear more and more of thy divine voice of love. Oh may I become more obedient, meek, humble like Jesus Christ, my master, Lord, and saving Redeemer to whom and to thee and to the holy spirit my soul is indebted wholly without measure. Oh make my heart more devout; inspire my soul; raise my thoughts, and may the spirit dwell in me in fullness to over flowing. Lord help me to over come all self will, to crucify self that there may be nothing of the old man left, and that I may be a new man born begotten in the Lord Jesus Christ who [is] in heaven on the right hand of God giving help to all those who ask in sincerity and truth. Oh Lord, my heart desires thy assistance; in utterable longing it would fly to thee if it had wings and fall at thy feet and ask of thee of that water and meat that would quench and feed indeed unto eternal life. Oh Father why should my heart be so pained after thy loving spirit? Thou hast said ask and it shall be given. Now oh Lord I ask in Jesus' name give unto me more and more of thy loving spirit. Fill my whole being that there may not remain any thing but thy loving kindness. My soul is bowed down before thee oh Lord. Bless and bestow unto me thy gift heavenly Father. Amen. (*Diary*, August 9, 1843)

Male and Female Complementary in Incarnation

The subject of the difference of sexes has of late been a subject which has occupied my attention very much. I differ in my opinions and sentiments very widely from him [Dr. Vethaker, a correspondent]. He holds man is to be more of a man and woman is to be more of a woman so that the two may form a whole. Man is Truth. Woman is Love; and marriage is the union of Truth or wisdom and Love. (He has studied Swedenborg deeply although he does not speak of him.) The delight of marriage consists in the communion of the two natures. Now I am inclined to think the two sexes should be in the same individual being. That the same individual should unite in his own being both sexes. He should be full of grace and truth the same as Jesus Christ. Whose life it was to do the work of His Father. Who had united in him the perfect lovefullness and tenderness of woman with the wisdom and strength of man. The manner of his birth has often struck me as a secret mystery. A male being born of a virgin! What could he be but filled with femality with Love such as no other being had ever been. He was without spot or wrinkle a perfect pattern of a divine being. The second Adam. The manifestation of a holy, (whole) being. (*Diary*, August 26, 1843)

Living on a Simple Diet Close to Nature

I find that I can live, if my past 9 months or more is any evidence, on a very simple diet: grains, fruits, &

nuts. The latter I have just commenced to eat with pure water. The wheat I have yet ground and made with unleavened bread; but as soon as we shall get in a new lot of wheat, I shall try it in the grain which will be perhaps this week. I was under much fearful apprehension that when I would return to the City it would present so many temptations that I should not be able to withstand them and especially the business which I follow being of such which presents temptations every moment. But I feel deeply grateful that so far I had had no reason to be fearful of my being led away. What yet remains? My diet is all purchased and all produced by hired labor. My dress I suppose the most of it by slave labor. And I cannot say that I am rightly conditioned until all that I eat and drink or wear is produced by love. (*Diary*, August 30, 1843)

The Golden Rule and Justice

The measure of injustice that we do unto ourselves is the measure of injustice that is done unto us by others.

This thought was impressed upon my mind this morning in considering some remarks made by the men we have in our employ.

By doing injustice to our own true Nature we place ourselves in such conditions in which we must bear suffering, pain, and injustice with the deprivation of our liberty so far as we have voluntarily done our true nature injustice. Every sin that we commit, every virtue we omit, we are weakened and deprived of that strength which it is our privilege to have and to enjoy.

Every evil that society inflicts upon me, the germ of it is in me; and as I free myself from my vices will I free myself from the evils which society is filled and punishes me with.

Be true to thyself and it follows as the night the day thou can'st not be false to anyone, *verite egale*. Be true to thyself and it follows as the night the day others cannot be false to thee. (*Diary*, January 1844)

The Presence of God

I feel the presence of God where ever I am. I would kneel and praise God in all places. In His presence I walk and feel his breath encompass me. My soul is bourn up on his presence and my Heart is filled with His influence. How thankful ought we to be! How humble and submissive! Let us lay our heads on the pillow of peace and die peacefully in the embrace of God. The performance of duties is the means of opening the portals of heavenly blessing. How cheerfully ought we to accept all the duties which are opened to us. How richfully we are blessed with life from good actions! (*Diary*, March 22, 1844)

Following God's Will for Ourselves

Let us not be daunted by comparing ourselves with others, not be puffed up in so doing. God has given us an individual life which he has not given to any other. This individuality let us live. Why should we fear the judgments of men? Are these always the judgments of God? I fear not. Let us walk fearlessly

before men which we will do if we are pure before God and are sure of his confidence. Be true to God and we cannot fear.

Let us acknowledge our weaknesses our want of certain talents, capacities, gifts. Let us do all this. Let us take the lowest seat in the Temple. Let us be subjects not governors, and submit rather than rule, be despised rather than honored. This we will do and more if we have the sure conviction in us that God is with us. But without God we are cowards, false, and proud. We must forsake all relations and be about our Father's work to do in us. This is proof of our mission that we give up all for God. That which we love we cling to, and if we love the pleasure of the body more than the delights of the soul, the communion with God, then we shall live in the body in this world and far from God. Let us give up to the Spirit and it will move us in the right direction. He that follows the Holy Spirit is never led astray. When the Holy Spirit leads us all, our paths will be paths of pleasantness and all our ways be ways of peace. (*Diary*, March 25, 1844)

Giving All to God's Service

To the Lord I would devote all my soul and all the powers he has given me. They are all His. He gave and for His purpose they should be employed. Oh Heavenly Father teach me to feel that thy way is the way of peace and that all thy paths are paths of pleasantness. O Lord teach me to let thy will be done in me. (*Diary*, May 8, 1844)

Nature's Union with the Soul

The earth heaves and sighs from its very heart with sympathy for man's woes and sorrows; and men rest upon her bosom as upon the bosom of a kind mother, and she drinks up his bitter tears in compassion and extracts the painful poison from his heart and pours in his heart instead the waters of joy and gladness.

We are Sisters to nature: she is a child of God as we are, and she has partaken of the same penalty of sin that we have.

Nature is redeemed by the same Redeemer that we are, and by no other.

Man is the medium of the Redemption of nature as the God-Man was the medium of the redemption of man.

Do we feel the same in the presence of nature as we do in the presence of an immortal Spirit? Should we not?

Does nature shame us from doing evil and prevent us from committing sin in her presence, the same as a virtuous human spirit would?

As the countenance of man shines back the beauty of God when man loves God so does nature reflect our love when we love Her.

Has absolute nature self-consciousness?

The Soul acquires knowledge of nature through the medium of the body as it becomes acquainted with God through the medium of the Spirit. (*Diary*, June 2, 1844)

God's Guidance in Life

I ask no more questions, nor attempt by reason to foreknow the future, but am simply resigned to give all up to the invisible guide who above is the true guider to right issues. Man rules his destiny only by perfect submission to God; or by perfect cooperation with His will.

At present there is no objective purpose before me at which I aim, not that my love for man is less, or that my earnestness is the least abated; this is not so; never have I felt the love I now feel, never have I been conscious of living such an earnest deep effectual life as I am now conscious of living. My very existence seems to be one perpetual act. And every day is filled with life, love and wisdom. 'Tis true this is not the ordinary way in which young men prepare themselves for benefiting man; and I may be labouring under a self delusion; it never has so well counterfeited the truth; and I trust some friendly hand will strip it of its garb, for I trust I am not so far gone as not to recognize it when it stands before me in its naked colours.

There seems to me two points of view from which most men start in life. One sees an object before him which he has the aspiration to sense, and to this end he sacrifices all that is in his way, that he may secure it. The other is the perfect submission to the Will of God and His purposes without the pursuit of an outward end. The first may be successful in the worldly sense, but the latter, if true, must receive the approbation of God. (Letter to Brownson, June 4, 1844)

Grace as Union with Christ

Grace is the free gift of God. God being Universal Love will consequently give his grace to all those who will submit to the love conditions of his universal Love.

The highest object of man's earth existence is to be the same as Jesus, to submit to Christ, to yield to heaven. To labour for the Redemption of man, the establishing of God's kingdom upon earth.

Yield yourself to the absolute all embracing Love and let it act in, through, and with you in its own infinite loveful manner. Co-operate with it in all its loveful purposes and this is your work and none other. He that seeks for a work will never find it, but he that submits himself to the Creator will always be at work. (*Diary*, July 18, 1844, p. 223)

Prayer for God's Comforting Help

Oh Lord I am nothing, nothing, verily nothing. Oh how sensible I am that I am nothing. Yes I am a sinner, a sinner, a guilty sinner. Take me to Thee dear Lord and let me not be in this burning sorrow. My heart is sick and it fain would cry aloud in despair, why oh Lord art Thou not near when I am in distress? Oh where is the Physician, where is the balm of Gilead? Guardian Angel speak comfort to my Soul. My soul mourns after Thee like the turtle dove after its lost mate. Thou art its love and it will not be comforted without Thee. Comfortless, ever sad, weeping unconsolated is my Soul, widowed, parentless, and

forsaken. Oh why has the memory of joys gone by not been taken from me? Thou are merciful, oh Lord, and kind; canst Thou look down upon such a miserable sinner as I am? (*Diary*, September 26, 1844, p. 259)

God's Silence and Our Purpose

What called me into the new existence? What shall call me from it? And whither it will call? We realize not our birth nor do we our exit. At each extreme of Man, the beginning and the end, lies a mystery. (*Diary*, December 18, 1844, p. 272)

Prayer for God's Help

Thou knowest oh Lord my unhappy condition. Shed down Thy mercy upon me. Oh my guardian Angel be with me and direct me. Leave me not to myself. Be Thou ever present with me. If I am left alone, I am most miserable. Without thee I am blind. Whisper to my Soul divine advice. Keep me from all dangers of thought, of words, and actions. Keep me from the influence of the evil ones. Be thou my protector. Let not my ingratitude send thee far from me. Teach me to act so as to please thee. Ah say that thou takest pleasure in me. Oh say that thou wilt not forsake me. That I am thine. Spirit of love! Spirit of Grace! Spirit of beauty! Be thou my only object. Angel of God. Channel of love. Medium of Light. Let me behold thee. Stir up my heart to good. Give me humility. Greater love of God. More wisdom. Devotion. Love towards Men. Self sacrifice. Greater faith. Knowledge

of thee, heaven, and the hidden things of God. I pray thee, I pray thee to be to me what I need, not what I ask. (*Diary*, February 16, 1845, p. 305)

Freedom of Commitment

This, my dear friend, I have attempted to give you a brief statement by which you can form some idea of the past conduct of your friend. It will explain to you many facts which must have been as inexplicable to you as they were to myself. *Deo gratias*, I have left Egypt, passed the Desert, and am now in Israel, the land flowering with milk and honey.

I have said nothing of my having taken the vows. But what can I say? I have them and am free. Free, having never understood that word until now. Render thanks and gratitude to God for my freedom for I know not how. Aid me for the grace is too great and grand for my heart. (Letter to Brownson, Nov. 1, 1846)

Hecker's Religious Experience

But God in His divine providence drew me more or less out of myself to him, until at a certain crisis all my spiritual faculties were turned towards Him as the centre of my soul. Then I felt myself give, absorbed, taken entirely by the good God, and all my confidence was placed in the guidance of Divine Providence. This state may be said to have become constant and natural. I shall attempt, my father, to describe it to you in a few words with the assistance of divine grace.

The immediate effect of this grace I told you and

wrote you at that time; I would see God as a brilliant sun in the centre of my soul, etc. but now I would tell you the result. I cannot otherwise describe it than by saying that it is in some sort a participation of the life of the blessed—for I can hope for nothing further after death than its perfection and continuance. The superior part of the soul seems to be in a sort of continual vision by which it sees God, the blessed, the angels, more or less clearly. It lives, as it were, in their company; and its conversation, as St. Paul says, is in heaven. Imitation of the life of our Saviour Jesus Christ seems, even while in the body, to be its sole delight, the mysteries of Holy Church are its only study, and the eternal truth seem ever present before it.

Now, this is what God seems to have in store for it: I believe that providence calls me to an active life; further, that He calls me to America to convert a certain class of persons amongst whom I found myself before my own conversion; I believe that I shall be the vile instrument which he will make use of for the conversion of a multitude of those unhappy souls who aspire after truth without having the means to arrive at and possess it. But to convince me that this work will not be mine, and that I shall be only the mean instrument for the accomplishment of His designs, He wills me to be deprived of all human means, so that I shall not attribute His glory to myself. Contrary to my first previsions, He has unmistakably shown me that it is by neither learning nor eloquence that He calls me to convert others, but solely by His grace and power. (Letter to Religious Superior, May 30, 1848)

Christian Perfection

There is no other way of perfection for the great mass of Christians than in the performance of the common duties of life with an eye to God. The highest, noblest, and most perfect life is in the fulfillment of those daily duties imposed upon us by Almighty God. This is devotion. I think a larger playground may be given to the action of our natural faculties and instincts without displeasing their Author. I wish to reconcile the idea of sanctity with the completeness of the natural man. Faith does not demand the depression or mutilation of our nature, or its instincts. Religion gives completeness of character. The Church asks for *men*, not ciphers, nor cripples. (Letter to Simpson, February 22, 1861; see *Catholic World* 83 [June 1906] 356–57)

Spirituality and Renewal

The rule of my actions is to wait on Providence until His designs are manifest, & to second these. These are at times so plain to my mind that no light or event can make them more so. At the same time, He must furnish the persons & the means for their accomplishment. He will provide, in His own way, & in His own time, without my seeking or planning.

What I believe to be the work which is needed in our day & in our country, & the part you may be called to take in it, of these things I shall inform you, just so far, & so much as I see myself, & as I find you prepared to receive it. A discoverer of a river cannot lay down its chart, until he has sailed its whole extent; & while

he is sailing, he throws out his sounding line, & changes his course, according to the channel he finds. The *nature* of the work to be done is plain to my mind, & has been for years; & for years I have been approximating to it. I look forward to the union of all that is divine in our holy Faith with the increased activity of intelligence & freedom of action in our country, as destined to re-cast *all* things & give birth to a new & higher form of civilization. In this conviction I have labored, & do labor, & will labor, & in all that I have done it will be found expressed. It is a fixed idea in my mind & steady aim of all my efforts. This is the value that I attach to the Sermon on St. Joseph in the volume for 1863. The *doctrine* contained in that sermon is the groundwork of all my thoughts, actions & plans. The other two sermons in that volume, are only the same doctrine applied to different subjects. The same may be said of the sermon on self-denial & of Renunciation in the last volume, & in a measure, of *Questions of the Soul*.

In regard to spiritual matters, the same view & convictions actuate me. I aim in bringing the Intelligence & will into complete union with Divine Truth, & under its guidance will be brought about, in the individual, that which eventually will be developed in Society. Given the union of the soul with God, preserving at the same time all that is true & genuine in the American character, & you have the special object I am at in personal direction. Now where this identification of our religion with all that is genuine in our character is made, we shall have in such persons a model character, the type of what we may anticipate

in the future, when our religion has become universal in our country. This type of character will be superior to any that can be produced by a false or incomplete form of Christianity, hence attractive, & the means of bringing the truth of our Religion to bear on the minds of our countrymen. *Personal perfection* is the means of the conversion of our country. (Letter to Mrs. King, January 18, 1864)

Contemporary Holiness

Christianity is designed for the sanctification of our whole nature, with all its faculties, powers, and propensities, since it was the entire and complete manhood that was united to the Godhead in Christ; we affirm, therefore, that the more advanced and complete a civilization, the wider will be the sphere for the display of its divine character. Let society advance, with its discoveries in science, its enlarged liberty of thought and action, for these all right-minded men will look upon with a friendly eye, seeing in them but new ways opened for its further progress. Religion has nothing to fear from the “uncoverings of science,” for these will not provide in opposition to her divinely revealed truths, nor identical with them, but will only serve to show more clearly their divine character and origin and their necessity. Religion and sanctity are interested in the advancement of civilization, and concede that civilization is advancing, then the fullest glory of Catholicity is not to be looked for in the past, but in the future. The ideal of Catholicity is the union of religion with intelligence and liberty

in all their completeness. Man renders to God that perfect worship when he offers the homage of his entire intelligence and liberty.

In view of these considerations, the life of St. Joseph is both interesting and instructive. St. Joseph, it is true, was no martyr in spilling his blood for the faith, but he exercised a martyr's fidelity to the convictions of his conscience and the purity of his faith. Unaware of the miraculous conception, while yet unmistakable signs told that Mary was with child, he never faltered in his truth in her spotless innocence and chastity. Called by the voice of God to leave his friends, home and country, he obeys instantly, and without a murmur. What faith! What obedience! What disinterestedness!

To find God and be one with God, a solitary life in the desert was not necessary to St. Joseph. He was in the world, and found God where he was. He sanctified his work by carrying God with him into the workshop. St. Joseph was no flower of the desert, or plant of the cloister, he found the means of perfection in the world, and consecrated it to God by making its cares and duties subservient to divine purposes. The home of St. Joseph was his cloister, and in the bosom of his family he practiced the sublimest virtues. While occupied with the common, daily duties of life, his mind was fixed on the contemplation of divine truths, thus breathing into all his actions a heavenly influence. He attained in society and in human relationships a degree of perfection not surpassed, if equaled, by the martyr's death, the contemplative of the solitude, the cloistered monk, or the missionary hero.

Our age is not an age of martyrdom, nor an age of hermits, nor a monastic age. Although it has its martyrs, its recluses, and its monastic communities, these are not, and are not likely to be, its prevailing types of Christian perfection. Our age lives in its busy marts, in counting-rooms, in work-shops, in homes and in the varied relations that form human society, and it is into these that sanctity is to be introduced. St. Joseph stands forth as an excellent and unsurpassed model of this type of perfection.

These duties and these opportunities must be made instrumental in sanctifying the soul. For it is the difficulties and hindrances that Christians find in their age which give the form to their character and habits, and when mastered, become the means of divine grace and their titles of glory. Indicate these, and you portray that type of sanctity in which the life of the Church will find its actual and living expression.

This, then, is the field of conquest for the heroic Christian of our day. Out of the cares, toils, duties, afflictions, and responsibilities of daily life are to be built the pillars of sanctity of the Stylites of our age. This is the coming form of the triumph of Christian virtue. ("The Saint of Our Day," Sermon VI, *Sermons Preached at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, during the year 1863* [Arno Press, 1978], pp. 99 ff.)

Spirituality Today

We seem to fear intelligence, liberty, energy, and all that goes to make a man a man, when the absence

of these is more to be deplored than the danger of their abuse. . . .

Bravery and not flunkeyism is a Christian virtue. See the martyrs. Not only bravery in just one way of suffering, but also in the active way of fighting. . . .

In direction we need human help. We are human beings, not angelic or divine. Human beings we shall always remain and never be any other. The saints in heaven long for their glorified bodies that their beatitude may be complete! The soul has relations with God, man, and nature, and its sanctification does not consist in breaking off its relations with these, but in the proper ordination of the life in these relations. In this work consists the whole economy of spiritual life. He who loves all things, in view of God, has nothing further to do, than increase his love.

The great thing to be observed in this matter is not to let any inordinate affections to occupy our minds or take root in our hearts. Keep your heart free for God, let him have unbounded freedom in it. The light of God, our conscience, will soon inform us, if we are watchful, when we lean over much towards creatures.

Too little is said about the regenerated man, & too much is said about fallen man. Not sufficient inducement is held out to man to encounter the trials, efforts, & sufferings necessary to be undergone to regenerate our nature. The degradation of man and the means of his elevation by self-denial etc. is fully described and insisted upon, but the fruits of this elevation are not described and presented so as to attract one to spiritual life. . . .

There is a period when we seem to lose all things, but it is only apparent, not real; and spiritual writers dwell too much on that period of transition. They speak, too, of setting aside reason, giving up our liberty, crushing of our nature, etc. which is calculated to mislead and do harm. What is meant is that we must not abuse our reason, freedom & nature, correct its misdirection and perversion. . . .

Many Christians, and really good Christians, as things go, consider that the whole of their religious duties are fulfilled in going regularly to Holy Mass, in approaching the sacrament of confession & in receiving Holy Communion, in fidelity to their daily prayers, and beyond these they seldom look. When they have accomplished these duties they think they will be perfect Christians. Now these Christians are like the one who when asked, why do you eat? And he answers, to support my life & gain strength. True, but what is your life for? To what purpose is your strength? Life and strength is not an end, but the means to an end. That is true, he replies, but I never thought as far as that. So one might say to these Christians, [what] do you go to Holy Mass, make confession, receive holy communion, & say your daily prayers for? You ought to have an aim in all these holy exercises, and keep it steadfastly before your mind, and employ them as means to attain & secure it; and not be like one who is beating the air. . . .

The baptized man is baptized in his whole nature, animal, human and celestial; his whole nature is regenerated. Who dares call that unclean which God has pronounced clean?

It is the interior dispositions of the soul that make it perfect, and these interior dispositions may exist in the soul in every condition of life—in the Pope as well as in the hermit, in the world as well as in the cloister, in the slave as well as in the master, in the rich as well as in the poor, in the married as well as in virgins.

The end of all spiritual exercises is to place the soul in those dispositions which are most favorable to bring down upon it the grace of God and place it under the guidance of His Holy Spirit.

Every soul true to itself & to God has something unusual. This is not to be condemned. The natural must be guided by Divine grace, not suppressed or despised. But Divine grace must be the Master & only guide of the soul. This sure of, we can then say without hesitation—*omnis spiritus Laudet Dominum* [Let every spirit praise the Lord]: or with the Apostle *unusquisque in suo sensu abundet* [Let every man abound in his own sense (Rom. 14:5)].

But this bringing our entire nature with all its propensities & passions under the entire guidance of the Holy Ghost is a great work. It is great in its end, painful, mysterious, dreadful in its operations. Few have any conception of it. Others seem not to have the capacities to conceive even what it is. Many live years and years in religion and do not dream of it. Some see it for a time & aim at it, but from willfulness shut it out of sight again. Some begin, advance, but fail for want of courage. It is no small task indeed to bring all our thoughts, affections & actions, & expressions in accordance with the dictates of the Holy Ghost. How few know what it means to give oneself wholly, &

unreservedly, to God & persist unto the end in not withholding anything of this gift again.

The Quakers in their aim are right in wishing to establish the soul in direct relation with God—but wrong in refusing all external aids to bring this about.

If religion required the destruction of our natural affections what are we to do with the examples of friendship, of David & Jonathan? [T]hen our Lord's love for Lazarus, or his affection for John, or even his love for his own mother are to be condemned. . . .

We only advance in Christian perfection so far as we advance in interior life. It matters not how much we increase our spiritual exercises, if they do not tell of our interior advancement, they are useless or next to being so, if not pernicious. Just as a man injures his health who eats more than he can digest and convert into strength. What a man appropriates is what really does him good, spiritually as well [as] corporeally.

A man who practices spiritual exercises which are not adapted to his spiritual necessities is as much injured as one who eats articles of food that his stomach cannot digest. They may be ever so good, but to him they are pernicious. It is not enough, therefore, that this or that exercise is good, the question is, is it profitable for you?

The aim of direction is not that the way of direction should be imposed upon you, but to discover the ways of God for you, & to point them out to you, & aid you to walk therein.

True direction does not consist in substituting another conscience for our own, but to enlighten, strengthen, & establish our own conscience. The aim

of all true spiritual direction is to place the soul under the great Director of all Souls, Jesus Christ. . . .

If there have been those who have been led astray by exaggerating interior authority, let us not follow their example, nor those who despise all interior authority. Both extremes are pernicious.

A Religion that does not enter into the actions of our daily life, is a religion that is not worth having.

The more numerous are the true relations in life, the more blessings; our blessings are always attached to duties and cares. The more numerous & varied these relations are, the greater opportunity for merit; the greater opportunity for the exercise of virtue, the greater also the happiness of life. How many and how varied and interwoven are the relationships between husband and wife, and parent and children! What opportunities for the practice of every variety of virtue, and the sanctification of the Soul! Do not say that this state does not offer the means of sanctifying the soul, but rather that you are too weak, too cowardly perhaps, with your eyes open, to dare to meet its duties and responsibilities like a Christian.

Let us not forget it, that the first revelation of God external to himself was creation. This is the natural revelation of God. Let us not forget either its value. For it is always God who is revealed, either in nature or in revelation that is above nature (Rom. 1:20). . . .

Let us also remember that God is not in nature or created things as something external, but in them, or rather they in Him, for all things according to the Apostle (Acts 17:28) have in Him their being, movement and life. . . .

It will be found that true religion is also the most human; because its aim is to give to all that is human the development which its Author intended. Only shall we know the full value of our human nature, when we find it acting in accordance with the intentions of its divine Author. The intention of religions is not to set aside our human instincts but [to] direct them aright; direct them in accordance with the ends for which their Author designed them.

Renunciation etc. means all irregular attachment to created things; not their abandonment. It means abandonment when these things are between God and the soul; it means abandonment if there be no other way for one's conquering inordinate desire. Christian perfection truly considered, calls no one to give up any things whatsoever, but the right use of all things.

The Kingdom of heaven is brought about not by the alteration of one's circumstances, but of one's self.

It is the part of true religion to teach us how and to enable us to control our tendencies and passions, and not to extinguish them; to direct them into right channels and not to pervert and abuse them. . . .

Paradise is not lost, it still exists upon earth. The lily is as sweet, the rose as beautiful, the sun as bright, the sky as glorious, as they were before Adam sinned. Paradise still exists, but is hidden from eyes that are lost to innocence, piety, and faith. The earth is still God's earth; and His creation is still very good, but man has lost the vision of Paradise by reason of sin. We have eyes and see not. . . .

Most of our troubles arise from unreal causes. They are the effects of exaggerations, or inordinate desires, or mistaken views of honor or duty. Would we only be willing to see things as they are, and be willing to be just what we are, we should find more good in the world, and in creation, than some religious writers would be willing to acknowledge. (*Thoughts on the Spiritual Life*, 1865, passim)

Christian Life

There are three different kinds of forces which go to make up a Christian life & perfection: Personal—Sacerdotal—Sacramental.

In the early stages of this life, the sacerdotal and sacramental predominate. The sacramental conveys the grace to the soul which is the source of the supernatural life of the soul. The sacerdotal action assists the soul in following the action and solicitations of Divine Grace. The personal is expanded in cooperation with the action of grace.

When grace has taken a deep hold of the soul, and its action becomes constant and powerful, personal action takes the predominance over the other two. Such may be the force of divine grace in its operations in the soul that it may occupy all its attention and energy almost exclusively of sacerdotal & sacramental action. Vocation of the solitaries of the desert.

Our conscious life sometimes enters into the primary sphere of all existence. There it appreciates the absolute dependence of all existence upon the abso-

lute being. In this appreciation all other consciousness is eliminated. The consciousness of self-hood, as well as the consciousness of co-operative power with the absolute being. It no longer says "I can" or "I will" or "I shall." It suffers the Divine actions. It cannot say even "Thy will be done" or "Do unto me according to Thy will." The simple consciousness of the absolute fills all & overpowers all. Its language is "He who is all wisdom, all goodness, all power, he will do it." *"Ipse facit."*

Whether we cooperate [with] or oppose the absolute, it is and will be all the same. He will do it. To be conscious of the Absolute always, and to cooperate with it, this is the highest action of the rational creature. This can be reached in a two-fold manner: First, by the light of reason; Second, by the additional light of Grace which are one in their source. (*Diary*, New York, December 17, 1875)

On Working with the Church

The prime postulate of a sound Catholic is this: the Church is divine, moved by the instinct of the Holy Spirit in all her supreme and vital acts. The Catholic who does not hold this as a firm and immovable basis has lost, or never had, the true conception of the Church, and is in immediate danger of becoming a rebel and a heretic, if he not be one already. Whoso fails to recognize this permanent divine action in the Church, the light of the Holy Spirit has departed from his soul, and he becomes thereby external to the

Church. . . . [T]he Divine Spirit embodied in the Church and the Divine Spirit indwelling in every Christian soul are one and the same Divine Spirit, and they bear testimony to each other, and work together for the same end. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 146)

The Authority of the Holy Spirit

The enlargement of the field of action for the soul, without a true knowledge of the end and scope of the external authority of the Church, would only open the door to delusions, errors, and heresies of every description. . . .

But, on the other hand, the exclusive view of the external authority of the Church, without a proper understanding of the nature and work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, would render the practice of religion formal, obedience servile, and the Church sterile.

The solution of the difficulty is as follows: The action of the Holy Spirit embodied visibly in the authority of the Church, and the action of the Holy Spirit dwelling invisibly in the soul, form one inseparable synthesis; and he who has not a clear conception of this twofold action of the Holy Spirit is in danger of running into one or the other, and sometimes into both, of these extremes, either of which is destructive of the Church.

The Holy Spirit, in the external authority of the Church, acts as the infallible interpreter and criterion of divine revelation. The Holy Spirit in the soul acts as the Divine Life-giver and Sanctifier. It is of the highest

importance that these two distinct offices of the Holy Spirit should not be confounded. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 33–34)

The authority of the Church is no other than the authority of Christ, as He himself has declared, “He that heareth you, heareth Me.” The sacraments are nothing else than channels, or visible means, of communicating the Holy Spirit to the soul. It is the divine action in the Church which gives to its external organization the principal reason for its existence.

And it is equally false, and at the same time absurd, to suppose for a moment that the Holy Spirit indwelling in the Church and embodied in her visible authority, and the same Holy Spirit dwelling in and inspiring the Christian souls, should ever contradict each other or come into collision. . . .

The sincerity of the Christian soul in following the inspirations of the Holy Spirit will be shown, in the case of uncertainty, by its prompt obedience to the voice of the Holy church. It is only when the soul goes astray from the paths of the Holy Spirit it finds trammels to its feet; otherwise it is conscious of perfect liberty in the Church of God.

From the foregoing truths the following practical rule of safe-conduct can be drawn. The immediate guide of the soul to salvation and sanctification is the Holy Spirit, and the criterion or test that the soul is guided by the Holy Spirit is its ready obedience to the authority of the Church. With this rule there can be no danger of going astray, and the soul can walk in absolute security, in the ways of sanctity. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 172)

The Mission of the Spirit

It cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind that the Church is actuated by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, and to discern clearly its action, and to co-operate with it effectually, is the highest employment of our faculties, and at the same time the primary source of the greatest good to society. . . .

The essential and universal principle which saves and sanctifies souls is the Holy Spirit. He it was who called, inspired, and sanctified the patriarchs, the prophets, and the saints of the old dispensation. The same Divine Spirit inspired and sanctified the apostles, the martyrs, and the saints of the new dispensation. The actual and habitual guidance of the soul by the Holy Spirit is the essential principle of all divine life. "I have taught the prophets from the beginning, and even till now I cease not to speak to all" (Thomas à Kempis III, 3). Christ's mission was to give the Holy Spirit more abundantly.

The whole aim of the science of Christian perfection is to instruct men how to remove the hindrances in the way of the action of the Holy Spirit, and how to cultivate those virtues which are most favorable to His solicitations and inspirations. Thus the sum of spiritual life consists in observing and yielding to the movements of the Spirit of God in our soul, employing for this purpose all the exercises of prayer, spiritual reading, sacraments, the practice of virtues and good works.

That divine action which is the immediate and principal cause of the salvation and perfection of the soul claims by right its direct and main attention.

From this source within the soul there will gradually come to birth the consciousness of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, out of which will spring a force surpassing all human strength, a courage higher than all human heroism, a sense of dignity excelling all human greatness. The light the age requires for its renewal can come only from the same source. The renewal of the age depends on the renewal of religion. The renewal of religion depends upon a greater effusion of the creative and renewing power of the Holy Spirit. The greater effusion of the Holy Spirit depends on the giving of increased attention to His movements and inspirations in the soul. The radical and adequate remedy for all the evils of our age, and the source of all true progress, consist in increased attention and fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul. "Thou shalt send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created: and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth." (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 23–26)

The Needs of the Age and the Holy Spirit

Men endowed with these gifts are men for whom, if it but knew it, the age calls. Men whose minds are enlightened and whose wills are strengthened by an increased action of the Holy Spirit. Men whose souls are actuated by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Men whose countenances are lit up with a heavenly joy, who breathe an air of inward peace, and act with a holy liberty and a resistless energy. One such soul does more to advance the kingdom of God than tens of thousands without those gifts. These are the men and

this is the way, if the age could only be made to see and believe it, to universal restoration, universal reconciliation, and universal progress, as far as such boons are attainable. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 27–28)

Holiness

The Catholic idea of Christian perfection as a system is built up, in all its minute parts, upon the central conception of the immediate guidance of the soul by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Catholic Church teaches that the Holy Spirit is infused into the souls of men, accompanied with His heavenly gifts, by the instrumentality of the sacrament of baptism. These are the words of Christ: “Unless a man is born of water and the Holy Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Thus a man becomes a child of God, according to the teaching of Christ, not by right of birth, but by the grace of baptism. By the creative act man is made a creature of God; by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit man is made a Christian. The Holy Spirit, having taken up His abode in the Christian soul and become its abiding guest, enlightens, quickens, and strengthens it to run in the way of perfection. It is also true that this high estate is attained first by the practice of virtue in bringing the appetites of man’s animal nature under the control of the dictates of reason. It is by the practice of virtue that man is rendered, before all, a perfectly rational being. . . . But Christian souls go far beyond this: by the practice of recollection, prayer, fidelity to divine

inspirations, moved and aided by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they render the dictates of reason submissive, pliant, and docile to the teachings and guidance of the Holy Spirit, until this becomes a habit and, as it were, spontaneous. Thus Christian souls, by the interior action of the Holy Spirit, attain perfection—that is, become divine men! This is the ideal Christian man, the saint!

Here, then is the key to all the secrets of the economy of the Catholic Church concerning spiritual life. Hence the reception of the sacraments, the exercise of Church authority, and the practice of virtue are never presented as a substitute for, but as subservient to, the immediate guidance of the soul by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 218–19)

The Role of the Sacraments

Man is not a bodiless spirit; a religion without a sensible sign or medium is not fitted for the two-fold nature of man. Christianity has abjured shadows; and a sacrament is not a symbol of a process, but the very process itself of conveying grace to the soul. If a symbol lacks the grace of Christ, then it is powerless to regenerate and sanctify souls. A sacrament without grace is a fraud. God alone is competent to institute a sacrament. For God alone is the author and source of grace and a sacrament not instituted by Christ has no valid reason for its existence. . . .

But does God's mercy dispense no grace outside the sacraments? God's mercy is not tied to the sacra-

ments. . . . [T]he sacraments were instituted by Christ in order that the more precious gifts of God's mercy might be more freely distributed and more abundantly received. Christ alone is the inward reality of the Church, of her sacraments, of her discipline, of her worship, and the Church exists solely for her inward reality-Christ. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 252–53)

...

True religion, Christianity, in its mission to sanctify human nature, takes it as its Maker made it, and neither seeks its destruction nor to alter its constitution. It is a radical misconception to suppose that the reception of the sacraments abases religion. The sacraments are due to the wise provision of God to convey to men, in a way fitting to their nature, the grace of Christ. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 254)

CHAPTER 21

The Church and Its Modern Challenges



Hecker's Desire to Be Catholic

The Catholic Church alone seems to satisfy my wants, my faith life, soul. These may be baseless fabrics, chimeras, dire anthropomorphagi [anthropomorphisms?] or what you please. I may be laboring under a delusion; any thing you please. Yet my soul is catholic and that faith answers, responds to my soul in its religious aspirations and its longings. I have not wished to make my self catholic but it answers to the wants of my soul. It answers on all sides. It is so rich and full. One is in harmony all over. In unison with heaven the present living in the natural body and the past who have changed. There is a solidarity between them through the Church. (*Diary*, Brook Farm, April 24, 1843)

What I have said here is not in direct opposition to the establishment of a Church. I confess it is so. When I reflect that Christ has not plainly spoken of one, I have no assignable reason why he should not have so done. But has not the Church sprung literally from his



*Brook Farm, Roxbury, Massachusetts, pictured before
fire destroyed the buildings in the 20th century.
Photo courtesy of Illinois Historical Survey.*

life, hence been founded by him? Even if it has not his life in its fullness, it still has more than the world has or can give. Has it not been the channel through which his life has been continued through the past unto this our time? Blot out the Church; have we any conceivable method through which we might have any connection with the life which he brought into the World. None other but a perpetual generation of Messiahs equal to him. Equal to him or else it would benefit us more to fall back upon his life. That we have not had a generation of Messiahs equal to him as some pretend is historically true, for the holy divine men of the past we find in the Church; and they con-

fess they are indebted to Christ in and through the Church for their life. Is it a question which we shall believe: those holy men or our philosophers? I think not. (*Diary*, May 10, 1843)

Church and Democracy

If democracy is a virtue the Church is the School in which it was born. What is the faith in the authority of the Catholic Church but the faith in universal - ity of the inspiration of its members and hence its authority: the very basis of Democracy. All Men are born free and *Vox populi Vox Dei*, etc. etc. ("The Voice of the people is the voice of God"). This is true when limited to the Church being an inspired body. But it is not true in the *highest* sense when applied to secular bodies or masses of Men indiscriminately. It would be true in a political sense if all citizens were members of Christ's body being in full communion with God filled with His Grace and being Christians in every deed but this is not so, and though the Church of God cannot err because she excommunicates all heretics and so preserves the pure life and doctrine, this is not so with the State, hence she is apt to commit mistakes as well as individuals. (*Diary*, May 7, 1844)

Why Be a Catholic?

The Church I have no objections to, & have said repeatedly that the best thing that I could do would be to unite myself to it. To be consistent with my faith,

to be true to my convictions to the extent that I have always been, would lead me to unite myself to the Church and that to the Roman Catholic Church. I have sought in all the numerous protestant sects for that which should satisfy all my wants; and my seeking was all in vain; and having examined the Catholic faith and finding it to answer to all my wants what but willfulness on my part can keep me from joining the Catholic Church? What have I against the Catholic Church? This moment I cannot say that I have anything essentially against her, and She meets all my wants on every side. Oh, this is the deepest event of my past life. I would have united myself to any one of the protestant sects if I had found them to be what would have answered the demands of nature, and why should I now hesitate when I find the Catholic Church will? (*Diary*, June 7, 1844)

Attraction to the Roman Catholic Church

Whatever theories and speculations may be indulged in and cherished by those opposed to the Roman Catholic, their influence, however important they are, is not sufficiently vital and important to prevent me from being united to this Church. This Church satisfies and meets my deepest wants; and on this ground, setting aside any other for the moment, I feel like affirming, in the spirit of the young man whom Christ made to see: I know not whether this Church be or not as certain as men call it, but this I know: it has the life my heart is thirsting for and that my spirit is in great need of. (Letter, June 11, 1844)

Universal Unity of Catholicism

The Catholic Church has preserved unity without encroachment on individual liberty and has preserved individual liberty without the loss of perfect unity. Unity without individual liberty is impossible as individual liberty is without unity. When the tendency is to consolidation, the effect of this is immobility, slavery, death; when to separation we have obstruction, lawlessness, and wild fanaticism. It is only in Catholicism, unity and individuality in divine unity, that progress, liberty, and life is secured and perpetuated. (*Diary* July 14, 1844)

Nature of Catholicism

It never can be too often uttered that Catholicism means the universal good and true and beautiful. That is not worthy to be named Catholicism which does not embrace all truth, all goodness, all beauty. Our allegiance is alone due to God and to Catholicism because it is the universal revelation of God. The measure of Catholicism is the measure of God's love to man. I am a Catholic because I would not reject any of God's truth. . . .

...

The authority of the Church is no more the reflex of the will of the Pope, the members of a council, or the priests than it is that of the humblest member of Christ's body. The heads of the Church yield to the same authority as the members do and no other. We

pronounce all which is not in obedience to the eternal principles of love & right as uncatholic being Catholic.

Christ has promised that his Church should never fall into error; he has left no room for Protestantism. Protestantism is no more nor less than a denial of Christ's promises.

Every protest against the Church is unconditionally false and to be condemned, otherwise the promises of Jesus are to no effect.

There is no half way house between Catholicism and infidelity.

When we join the Roman Catholic Church we do not join the Pope etc. but yield to the same principles he has yielded.

The Catholic Church yields to Christ its head, its life; the members have no authority over each other in what ever station they may be placed.

Is all that the Popes, councils & priests have done in matters of faith truly Catholic? Yes, if received by the Church of Christ.

Whatever is an expression of the universal Church must of necessity be true and incontrovertible as the very words of Jesus Christ, if we believe in him.

Protestantism is the spirit of individualism, antagonism, selfishness, competition, definitiveness; and we hope for no good toward the race from all the measures that are before the public so long as the protestant spirit in the end prevails over the results of their efforts.

All the advantages of science, of important discoveries, so long as the competitive spirit reigns in soci -

ety, tend to accelerate the speed of society towards wretchedness, crime, and increased selfishness.

The Catholic and the Protestant civilizations are antagonistic and wherever they come in contact they must generate war. It is only to the progress of Catholic influence upon the race that we look for any real good to men. We feel quite satisfied that Catholicism is destined again to be the only faith of Christendom. Its progress is progressive, silent, and permanent; on the other hand, Protestantism is unprogressive and must eventually become extinct.

It is a singular fact that protestants imagine that they only are the advocates and friends of progress. Does not the doctrine of private judgment, if men are selfish, tend necessarily to selfishness? If men were pure and universal, which they are not, we would have no objection to this doctrine. The sooner it is known the better that Catholicism and Protestantism can never agree in the same community. Both are productive of entirely different states of society.

We do not wonder that men of culture and breadth of mind should reject Christianity, if that is Christianity that goes by the name of Protestantism. We in our earlier years repudiated this because it did not satisfy all the true and essential wants of the soul.

As soon as we saw Christianity in its Catholic fullness, we did not hesitate, for our motives ever were to accept all that tended to increase our love and give us higher views of truth. We say many men reject Protestantism through the grace of God. This grace is given them in their infancy by means of baptism; and when they have grown to the age of maturity, they reject the

so called Christianity around them because it is not up to grace in them. (*Diary*, December 18, 1844)

Infallibility of the Church

The doctrine of infallibility of the Catholic Church is the only ground upon which there can possibly be any settledness and security in our faith. If the Church may err, if the Councils may, as undoubtedly individuals do, then we have no surety of our faith and consequently of our salvation. We are left orphans and without a guide. The question is not whether we differ from or what are our opinions on matters of faith and morals but what are decisions of the Church, and we must give up if we differ and submit. That is all. The Church is the pillar & ground of truth. Not the Bible as interpreted by private judgment. If the Church has not this infallibility, then where else shall we find it? The Church has it, and for its evidence it produces the promises of its Founder, its own uniform doctrines, and its continuous faith. (*Diary*, July 4, 1945)

Spiritual Resources of the Church

It is by the life and writings of certain holy men and women in the Catholic Church, and with the grace of God, that my own experience has become of late intelligible to me; and, dear Mother, you cannot imagine the desire that I experience for you to enter the Catholic Church in order to receive that spiritual direction which is not found, and cannot be found

anywhere outside of it. When I conceive the consolation it would be to you—for your own experience has been very much the same as mine—to be understood and directed towards that perfection and union with God which your heart earnestly desires, and which the grace of God demands of you, and for which you have sought among those who have it not, I am ready to say: “Lord, open her eyes that she may see, though I shall go blind all my days afterwards.”

Dear Mother, you will pray that God will make you to see, and place you in the paths that He wishes you to go, to direct you towards Him. It is as I have often remarked, not that I doubt, for I know that you enjoy the grace of God, but in a very imperfect degree compared with what you might enjoy, for at present you are deprived of all the holy sacraments of His holy Church and of that spiritual direction which your soul is so much in need of. Dear Mother, pray that you may see and embrace these great blessings of God in His holy Church.

Dear Mother, in half an hour I go to the chapel to consecrate my whole being forever to God and His service. What peace, what happiness this gives me! To live alone for His love, and to love all for His love, in his love, and with His Love! (Letter to his Mother, Oct. 15, 1846)

The Church and Science

It is absurd to suppose that there ever can be a conflict between scientific and revealed truth; and there would be no controversy between theologians

and scientists, if each would keep within their own appropriate spheres, abstain from unscientific assumptions, and confine themselves to truths which are demonstrable.

But this is what neither have done, or do, or probably will do. Each would assume to trace the limits for the other, instead of applying themselves to the demonstration of truth. (*Diary*, c. 1875)

Social Imperatives Today

It is a sad, sad time for religion when the prelates and priests of the Church appear to sympathize more with the oppressors than with the oppressed, and are more concerned in enforcing the duties of the people than in enlightening them in regard to their rights. The work of the Church is "to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke" (Is. 58:6).

It is not to be wondered at that in such a state of society there should spring up a radicalism which is atheistic, revolutionary and destructive.

Intellectual renewal such as Leo XIII aims at will bring about religious, moral, social and political regeneration. But it must not be forgotten that the application of Christianity to the social and political state of society is a part of the duty of the leaders of the Church. This latter needs be brought forward if the Church would not lose its hold on the most numerous classes of society. It was the failing in this duty of the French clergy which led mainly to the Revolution of '98.

The future welfare of religion is dependent in a

great measure on the social application of Christian principles to the solutions of the question of capital and labor, landlordism and the rights of the cultivators of the soul. (*Diary*, October 16, 1880)

Christ and the Church

For Christianity, once the Incarnation is admitted, must somewhere exist as an organic force to be an effective and practical religion. This statement is based upon the truth of the principle that without organism there is no vital force. Christianity is life, and no believer in Christ will for a moment deny that since God became man Christianity is an organic force. Or what believer in Christ will entertain the thought that Christ will yield the advanced position he gained by becoming man? Life, then, to operate upon men effectually must be organic, incorporated, one. That Christ is the true life of men in the highest sense of the word he himself affirmed: "I am the life of the world." To a Christian mind this needs no further proof.

This is why Christ himself, before his ascension, designed his Church. Christ chose and appointed her first officers, conferred upon them their special powers, instituted her sacraments, laid down the principles of her discipline, and formed the main features of her worship. Christ was the architect of his church, and the Holy Spirit incorporated what Christ had designed.

Hence the church of Christ is the logical sequence of the Incarnation, and not an accident or after-

thought of Christ's mission upon earth to men as their Mediator and Saviour. The church may justly be said to be the expansion, prolongation, and perpetuation of the Incarnation. Behold the device by which Christ fulfills his promise to remain upon earth unto the consummation of the world! . . .

We have now found the key of the Catholic position. This gives us the Catholic solution of the problem, Who built the church? A Catholic can claim with confidence as his motto: "Christ yesterday, today, and for ever!"

No other explanation of Christianity than the indwelling Christ in his Church as the absolute and historical religion is tenable. (*Catholic World* 38 [October 1883], p. 8)

Church Role of Continuing Christ

The Catholic idea, then, is this: that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, became man, and, after his ascension, continues his mission upon earth through the instrumentality of his church as really and truly as when he was manifest in the flesh and walked among men, in the country about Judea. And all enlightened and upright men, when they see her as she is, recognize spontaneously the Catholic church as "the Body" or "The Spouse of Christ," just as the Israelites without guile recognized at first sight Christ as the Messiah.

We have seen who made the church and what is the nature of the church; let us see now how Christ, through the instrumentality of the church, makes

Christians. The work of the church of Christ is the continuation of Christ's own work upon earth with men. Christ's work was the communication of life to the world, to give the grace of filiation with God to men, women, and children. As human beings are constituted they can neither act nor be acted upon independently of their bodily organization. Hence life, to be communicated to men, must be organic. But the communication of sonship with God belongs exclusively to the only-begotten Son of God, the God-Man. Hence the power and life of the church can be no other than the indwelling Christ. As the soul is the life of the body, so Christ is the life of the church. That is why St. Paul calls the church "the Body of Christ." This is the reason why he who has not the church for his mother cannot have the Son of God for his brother and he who is not the brother of Christ cannot have God for his father. Therefore he who has not the church for his mother cannot be a child of God. For the object of Christ in the church is not to interpose the church, or her sacraments, or her worship between himself and the soul, but through their instrumentality to come in personal contact with the soul, and by the power of his grace to wash away its sins, communicate to it fellowship with God as the heavenly Father, and thereby to sanctify it. (*Catholic World* 38 [October 1883] p. 9)

Christ as Life and Goal of the Church

But does God's mercy dispense no grace outside of the sacraments? God's mercy is not tied to the sacra-

ments, but ordinarily he operates through their instrumentality. The sacraments were not instituted to hedge in the action of God's mercy. On the contrary, the sacraments were instituted by Christ in order that the precious gifts of God's mercy might be more freely distributed and more abundantly received. Christ alone is the inward reality of the church, of her sacraments, of her discipline, of her worship, and the church exists solely for her inward reality—Christ. (*Catholic World* 38 [October 1883], p. 11)

Need for Inner and Exterior Help of the Church

Neither should it be overlooked that when a church fails to supply sufficient external appliances and supports to spiritual truths and to the inward feelings of devotion awakened by grace, when her worship becomes colorless, then religion fails to exert that influence over the minds and hearts of men which properly belongs to its sphere. And when religion fails to give to the great bulk of mankind that fair share of spiritual comfort and inward satisfaction which men legitimately seek from it, they become restless, sad, and sour. (*Catholic World* 38 [October 1883], p. 11)

The Inner Life

There is a heresy of the spirit, as there is a heresy of the forms, of religion. Both are mischievous, fatal to man's happiness, destructive of human society. Christ stigmatizes the partisans of both extremes as

“fools.” “Ye fools,” he said, “did not He who made that which is without make that which is within also?” All attempts at separating the without from the within, or the within from the without, betray heretical tendencies and end in spiritual death. (*Catholic World* 38 [October 1883], p. 11)

Christ Is the Desire and True Goal of Inner Life

[People], too, misinterpret the promise of the age who look for the solution of its problems to a new coming of Christ. Christ has come. Christ is here, now upon earth. Christ ever abides with men, according to his word. What the age promises is the rending asunder the clouds of error which hinder them from seeing that Christ is here. What the age promises and men most need is the light to enable their eyes to see that the Incarnation involves Christ’s indwelling presence in his church acting upon man and society through her agency until the consummation of the world. Christ is here, and was never more so. (*Catholic World* 38 [October 1883], pp. 12–13)

The faces of upright men who best represent their age are set Christward. False Christianity has been forced to unmask itself. Men seek a closer fellowship with God. They ask to worship God in his very beauty, grandeur, and holiness. Some simply feel this. Some point out the way to it. Others are in the way. Others, again, have reached the goal; these are the early-ripened stalks of the approaching rich harvest of God’s church.

Nothing less can satisfy the inmost desire of the

soul, when once awakened, than truth in its wholeness and fullness. The mists of heresy are lifted up to make way for the glorious vision of the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. The winter is past, the spring has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in the land. (*Catholic World* 38 [October 1883], p. 13)

The Holy Spirit and the Church

Were not a word of divine revelation written, the Church would have none the less existed in all her divine reality; and she would have, none the less accomplished her divine mission upon earth. For God, the indwelling Holy Spirit, is her life, power, guide, and protector. God the Son was incarnate in the man Christ Jesus; so God the Holy Spirit was incorporate in the Holy Catholic Church—*Sanctus Spiritus est anima Ecclesiae* (The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church). (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 276)

Human Sinfulness of the Church

The idea of a church whose members are all saints is an abstraction, and it has never existed upon this earth. It has no record in history, no warrant in Scriptures, and contradicts the prediction of Christ when He said: "Scandals must come." Hence sensible and well-informed persons are not surprised to find abuses, corruptions, scandals among the members of the Church. No instructed Catholic will hesitate to admit, though with grief and sorrow, that there have been men of evil lives in the Church, as popes, as car-

dinals, as bishops, as priests, as people. He who imagines there ever was a time when the members of the Church upon earth were all angels or saints is a dreamer. . . . Conflict with error, abuses and disorders is the lot of the Church of Christ upon earth. It is for this reason she is called the militant Church. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 222–24)

The Bible and the Church

Undoubtedly the Bible is a precious book. It is the most precious of all books. The Bible is “*The Book*.” The reading of the Bible is the most salutary of all reading. We say to Catholic readers: Read the Bible! Read it with prayer, that you may be enlightened by the light of the Holy Spirit to understand what you read. Read it with piety, that you may have the dispositions which will enable you to profit by what you read. Read it with gratitude to God’s Church, which has preserved it and placed it in your hands to be read and to be followed.

The Church and the Bible are, in their divine origin, one; they co-operate together for the same end, and are in their nature inseparable. But the written Word is relative or subsidiary to the Church, having for its aim to enlighten, to strengthen, and to perfect the faithful in that supernatural life of the Spirit in which they were begotten in the laver of regeneration, in the bosom of the holy Church. The purpose of the written Word is, therefore, to effect a more perfect realization of the Church, and to accelerate her true progress in the redemption and sanctification of the

world. Hence the written Word presupposes the existence of the Church, is within and in the keeping of the Church and depends on her divine authority for its authentication and true interpretation. The Church is primary, and not enclosed in the written Word; but the end of the written Word is enclosed in that of the Church. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 275–76)

The Church as Christ's Body

Men build Churches! Churches built by human hands—what else could these be fitly called but towers of Babel?

The Catholic idea, then, is this: that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, has become man, and, after His ascension, continues His mission upon earth through the instrumentality of His Church as really and truly as when he was manifest in the flesh and walked among men, in the country about Judea. And all enlightened and upright men, when they see her as she is, recognize spontaneously the Catholic Church as “the Body” or “the Spouse of Christ,” just as the Israelites without guile recognized at first sight Christ as the Messiah. . . .

We have seen who made the Church and what is the nature of the Church; let us see now how Christ, through the instrumentality of the Church, makes Christians. The work of the Church of Christ is the continuation of Christ's own work upon earth with men. Christ's work was the communication of life to the world, to give the grace of filiation with God to men, women and children. Now, as human beings are consti-

tuted they can neither act nor be acted upon independently of their bodily organization. Hence life, to be communicated to men, must be organic. But the organic communication of sonship with God belongs exclusively to the only-begotten Son of God, the God-Man. Hence the power and life of the Church can be no other than the indwelling Christ. As the soul is the life of the body, so Christ is the life of the Church. This is why St. Paul calls the Church “the Body of Christ.” This is the reason why he who has not the Church for his mother cannot have the Son of God for his brother, and he who is not the brother of Christ cannot have God for his father. Therefore he who has not the Church for his mother cannot be a child of God. For the object of Christ in the Church is not to interpose the Church, or her sacraments, or her worship between Himself and the soul, but through their instrumentality to come in personal contact with the soul, and by the power of His grace to wash away its sins, communicate to it sonship with God as the heavenly Father, and thereby to sanctify it. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 249–50)

Authority and the Essence of the Church

It is an error, and a gross one, to declare that the essence of Christianity is authority. It is no such thing. Authority never was and never can be the essence of anything, much less the essence of the highest and best of all things—religion. The essence of Christianity in its relation to man is the elevation of rational creatures, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to a union with God above that which they enjoy by

their birth. Thus religion communicates to man's soul the indwelling Holy Spirit, who superadds to the relation man received from his Maker in the act of creation one that makes him a participator in the divine nature and which transforms him from a creature into a child of God.

Authority is always secondary to something else as its end, and never an end in itself. Hence authority may be defined in its most general sense as a power subservient to the end for which men are associated together. Thus parental authority is subservient to the proper rearing and education of children. Political authority is subservient to the securing of the general welfare of a people. The authority of the Church is subservient to the attainment of the end for which the Christian religion was revealed—that is, the promotion and safeguard of the action of the indwelling Holy Spirit by which the soul is united to God. Therefore it may be laid down as an axiom of Christianity that the outward authority of the church effaces itself in a direct ratio to the action of the Holy Spirit within the soul. [This is but another way of enunciating St. Augustine's well-known maxim, *Ama Deum et fac quod vis*. Love God and do what you will] (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 197–98)

Contributions of Religious People

What do the history and biography of the religious orders teach us? All that we possess of the classics, and of literature in every department, pagan as well as Christian, prior to the invention of the art of print-

ing, we owe exclusively to the industry and labor of the early monks. Not a slight service. These men were for the most part the founders and professors of the great universities and colleges in England, Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Ireland. The last were not the least, for the monks of Ireland were famous as founders of colleges and seats of learning in their own as well as in foreign countries. Monks were the pioneers in agriculture, and in many industrial and mechanical arts, while their monasteries became the centers of great cities, many of which still retain their names. They were the sowers of those seeds whose fruits, developed by time, men of our day claim under the title of “modern civilization”!

“Idle monks and nuns” were they? They were, as a class, men and women who ate and drank less, worked harder, and did more for intellectual progress, civilization, and social well-being than any other body of men and women whose record can be found on the pages of history, or who can be pointed out in this nineteenth century.

As for their works of mercy, such is and has been their superabundance that it is difficult to know where to begin and how to leave off in reading their records.

The brotherhoods and sisterhoods in the Church, devoted to the care and relief of the sick, the orphan, the aged, the poor, the captive, the prisoner, the insane and other victims of the thousand-and-one ills that human nature is heir to, as well as of those which are self-inflicted—who can count them? (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 174–76)

CHAPTER 22

Aspects of Mission and Relations with Other Believers



A. EVANGELIZATION

Living Christianity

The best sermon upon Christianity is a Christian.
(*Diary*, Brook Farm, May 3, 1843)

Christ's Mission in Time To Redeem Us

There is no such thing as living in Eternity, for living necessarily implies succession and succession measured is time. There is no life without motion for life is motion, emotion, and motion is succession, moving; hence it is in time as in space. What we mean when we speak about living in Eternity or in the All is higher state of being, wherein the past seems as so different that all old things have passed and being so full and dazzled with the present it seems though we



Father Walter Elliott, C.S.P. (1842–1928), founder of the Apostolic Mission House and biographer of Father Hecker.

were out of time & space whereas it is only a higher purer form of both. Time & Space are the recipients of life.

Was the Spirit of Christ large enough to cause the unity the Brotherhood of Man? Every great man has his disciples who are one in being disciples of the spirit which was in the Teacher. Is the mission of Christ to redeem the whole race to bring them into the bonds of Charity and love uniting them with God. We cannot say it is, not until we have lived up to his life. Until then we have no right because we have not the power to know w(h)ether his spirit will lead and be the final dispensation of our Father to his Children. But we can say we do not know what he has in store

for us nor even what he has already given when we have not as yet received in ourselves. How many many joys and rich blessings are waiting for to enter our hearts prevented by our disobedience. Alas we ourselves shut out so many blessings unconsciously. We should pity ourselves more could we see ourselves. With divine capacities still struggling with the animal. (*Diary*, August 10, 1843)

The Fullness of Time

It is often deplored that out of the 1200 million inhabitants of this globe, 900 million are not Christians. May not this delay in the conversion of the entire human race be also part of the action of Divine Providence? Would it not have been more disastrous to have brought them into the fold of the Church and afterwards for them to have left the fold either by schism or heresy? It took 4000 years, more or less, to prepare for the Incarnation.

Before the more perfect development of the external organization of the Church she might not have been able to hold so large a body of uncivilized and partly civilized people together in her fold if converted to Christianity. To bring back into the fold of the Church a people who once were in it, & have strayed from it, is a more difficult task than to convert a people who are ignorant of Christianity. But the organization of the Church completed, her extension could be increased rapidly & with safety. (How comparatively few of the world before Christ were brought to the light of true revelation!)

May not the fullness of time have come, seeing that the Church has been, as an external organization, greatly strengthened by the definition of the Vatican Council, and seeing the great facility of communication throughout the world by electricity & steam, when by a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church the great work of the conversion of the world will be brought about? (*Diary begun in Egypt, 1873, pp. 113–14*)

Contemplation and Action in Spirituality

Again, Christianity does not confine itself to the reign of God in the soul; it seeks to establish the reign of God upon earth. . . . Genuine contemplation and action are inseparable. He who sees truth loves truth, and he who loves truth seeks to spread the knowledge and the practice of truth. Divine love is infinitely active, and, when it has entered the human heart and has set it on fire, it pushes man to all outward perfection and visible justice. No men have labored so zealously and so efficiently for their fellow-men, for the establishment of God's kingdom upon earth, as the saints of God. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 162)

Being Drawn to the Church

If the interior and intelligible side of the Church were exposed to view in such a light that men would be led to see clearly and appreciate her essential character; if it were shown unmistakably that all her externals, when not abused or exaggerated, are strictly

subservient to the securing of her essential end—union of the soul with God—there are better and stronger reasons to hope for a tide to set in toward her fold in the nineteenth century than there was to leave it in the sixteenth. For such a movement has in its favor the aim and power of the Holy Spirit, the noblest aspirations of man's soul—that for common brotherhood—and the operation of that law of unity which reigns throughout all creation. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 205–6)

Evangelization

Let him, therefore, who would serve the Catholic church in this generation, show her in her own true light, in her unity and universality, in all her beauty and majesty. It is this true vision of her divinity that will captivate man's intelligence, secure the unbidden homage of his will, and elicit his most heroic devotedness. Herein lies the mysterious force of her duration for so many centuries, the secret of the power of her sway over more than two hundred millions of souls, and the reason for the never-broken stream of her converts and the capture of the ablest and noblest minds of our century. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 205)

Articulating Catholic Truth

The positive side of truth must be brought out and clothed in all its beauty. The true picture must be presented and contrasted with the false, so as to captivate

the intelligence and enlist the enthusiasm of the active minds of the youth of the age. This is the great work that, in the economy of God, is mainly left to the initiative of individual minds among the members of his Church (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 160)

The Need for Religion Today

The greater part of the intellectual errors of the age arise from a lack of knowledge of the essential relations of the light of faith with the light of reason; of the connection between the mysteries and truth of divine revelation and those discovered and attainable by human reason; of the action of divine grace and the action of the human will. . . .

The explanation of the internal life and constitution of the Church, and of the intelligible side of the mysteries of faith and the intrinsic reasons for the truths of divine revelation, giving to them their due emphasis, combined with the external notes of credibility, would complete the demonstration of Christianity. Such an exposition of Christianity, the union of the internal with the external notes of credibility, is calculated to produce a more enlightened and intense conviction of its divine truth in the faithful, to stimulate them to a more energetic personal action; and, what is more, it would open the door to many straying but not altogether lost children for their return to the Church. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 38–39)

Personal Conviction

What we need today is men whose spirit is that of the early martyrs. We shall get them in proportion as Catholics cultivate a spirit of independence and personal conviction. The highest development of religion in the soul is when it is assisted by free contemplation of the ultimate causes of things. Intelligence and liberty are the human environments most favorable to the deepening of personal convictions of religious truth and obedience to the interior movements of an enlightened conscience. . . . [F]or a well-ordered mind I should say that the question of the hour is how the soul which aspires to the supernatural life shall utilize the advantages of human liberty and intelligence. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 108–9)

Catholic Faith Develops Freedom of Faculties

“Personal liberty and one’s own will” constitute an essential part of our nature, and these faculties are not ours to surrender, if such a surrender were possible or desirable. Were this act in man’s power it would then be possible for him to annihilate himself. Again, this act of surrender always supposes the persistent action of the faculties surrendered; a surrender of this sort is therefore as impossible as it is absurd. Once more, personal liberty and one’s own will constitute man a rational, responsible being, and an invitation to a surrender of them is an insult offered to manhood and dignity, and ought to be treated as such. Catholicity, which is the name for concrete Christianity, makes

no such impossible, absurd, and degrading invitation to men. Her martyrs, rather than make such a surrender, voluntarily underwent the cruelest torments and cheerfully suffered the most ignominious deaths.

Christianity violates no law of our being, asks no surrender of our faculties, and is in perfect harmony with all the genuine instincts of our nature. Christianity is truth, and invites men to exercise their faculties in search after truth, and, when found, to follow the truth and emancipate themselves from all servitude. . . .

Were we to clothe the invitation of the Catholic Church to men of this age with words, it would run somewhat thus: O men, prone by nature to seek knowledge! Seek earnestly to know, and to know all things visible and invisible, above all the Sovereign Truth, to the uttermost of your faculties, for it is unto this end your Creator bestowed them upon you. Exert your will to gain all the good possible in every order of being, above all the Supreme Good; your appetites and aspirations were given for no other end. Maintain your personal liberty, cost what it may; the cost cannot be too great to preserve such a divine treasure. God does not ask of you to surrender your nature or its faculties, for these are fresh from His hands; but to "go on with the same limbs that clad you at your birth to blessedness."

But it may be asked: Does not the invitation of the Gospel require of all men who would enter into eternal life to surrender the *perversion* of their personal liberty and to renounce what is called *self-will*? Most assuredly it does, and this will be found written on

almost every page of the Gospels. If this be your meaning, why not use language that will convey your thought to those whom you address? The time has come to use words in their truest sense, and he who would gain the men of this generation must address their intelligence, acknowledge their liberty, and respect their dignity. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 199–203)

Religious Orders Meet the Needs of Their Age

It is no less true that religious perfection is an integral part of the eternal Gospel of Jesus Christ; but religious institutions and their peculiar forms of acquiring this perfection are adapted to the peculiar needs of their times and other special circumstances. When they have answered the principal needs which called them forth they still continue to exist, and to be serviceable in many ways, but not as the most active and efficient agents of the Church for meeting the pressing wants of the hour. The Church alone is the immortal bride of Christ; but she brings forth at every period children like giants ready to run their course. Herein lies the secret of the succession of her eminent pontiffs, her founders of great religious orders, and her saints both men and women. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 202)

The Role of Women in the Church

We hear much said, and not a little written, in the United States and in England, about the exclusion of

woman from the spheres of action for which her aptitudes make her equal, and in many cases render her superior, to man; of her partial education, and in many cases the inferior position which she is forced to accept in society.

Strange that we hear no such complaints in Catholic society or from Catholic women! Is it because they have been taught to hug the chains which make them slaves? Or that they are denied liberty of speech? Or that their lips are closed by arbitrary authority? Not at all. The reason is plain. Women, no less than men, are free to occupy any position whose duties and functions they have the intelligence or aptitude to fulfill. They have the opportunities and are free to obtain the highest education their capacities are capable of. This every Catholic woman knows and feels, and hence the absence of all consciousness, in the Church, of being deprived of her rights, of oppression and of injustice. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 177–78)

All roads in the Church are open to woman's energies and capacities, and she knows and is conscious of this freedom; and, what is more, she is equally aware that whatever she has ability to do will receive from the Church encouragement, sanction, and that honor which is due to her labor, her devotion, and her genius.

Few great undertakings in the Church have been conceived and carried on to success without the cooperation, in some shape, of women. The great majority of her saints are of their sex, and they are honored

and placed on her altars equally with men. It is not an unheard-of event that women, by their scientific and literary attainments, have won from Catholic universities the title of doctor. St. Teresa is represented as an authorized teacher, with pen in hand, and with a doctor's cap. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 179)

B. ECUMENISM

Bringing Churches Together

The Light, the Faith, is of such influence that if understood it will be preached, and the effect of its being preached will be to bring all the scattered sects into one Church, one Body. And, instead of having to give up any part of their faith which they hold as essential, they will find even more to believe in their own. And as all the churches have somewhat of the Spirit of Christ, and hence are members of his Body, they will come together and march onward as one man.

This appears almost as a mighty and impossible work. So it is, if we contemplate it as to be brought about in the spirit of men. To man it is impossible. How may this be brought about? Simply as that has been which already has been done. Where were all these men a few years ago? Who and what has brought them together? Brownson, like Paul (I make the comparison with reverence), who was the chief in opposing the Church and her priests, is now in the

midst of her enemies, battling alone against them, amidst the laughter of his former friends and the jeers of his enemies, for the Church.

The power that brought about this change can do more. And why should not Providence bring His Church out of the wilderness? Ah, man detects the traces of Satan everywhere! How few detect the finger of God! Is it because we are so irreligious? Does He not guide the affairs of His people now as he did anciently? I had thought that Christ came into the world to draw it closer to God. I sometimes think that man, for these last three centuries, has followed his own nature instead of looking for light to the Source of all knowledge, not seeing that by his sin he became dark.

I confess that I look upon this late movement as Providential. I can not see it in any other light. Neither can I account for it otherwise. It might be supposed that the churches could never agree. No; not as they are now; but the Spirit which will draw them together, even the Spirit of Christ, is sufficient to guide them in all their ways. Are we to suppose that there is always to be this disharmony in the Church? Is not Christ, Unity, Peace, Love? If His Spirit is not more than it is now (and I do not deny it is somewhat now) in the different houses of worship, they never will come to union. But I look on this new movement as the presageful of the dawn of a new and more glorious era for the Church than she has ever had. (Letter "Dear Brothers," Brook Farm, March 1, 1843)

Need of Catholicism and Protestantism for One Another

Catholicism is solidarity. Protestantism is individuality. What we want and are tending to is the unity of them both which [the Evangelist] John's spirit does and in each individual. We want neither the authority of history or of the individual, infallibility or reason but both combined in life. Neither precedent or opinion but being. Neither a written [n]or a preaching Gospel but a living one. First seek the Kingdom of God, then all things will be added. I will give unto you the spirit of truth which shall lead you into all truth. (*Diary, Brook Farm, April 28, 1843*)

Ecumenism and Unity

These things mark the truly Catholic spirit of the faithful children of God's Church, first an unswerving, uncompromising and complete (integral) holding of all the truth that she teaches, and 2nd, the unbounded love for all souls, & with an entire forgetfulness of self—in spreading Christ's Kingdom, and the burning desire to be spent in the labor of establishing its triumph in the whole world. . . .

If we regard all non-Catholics as formal heretics and infidels, and in return they are left to look upon us as bigots & superstitious, the present lines of separation will only be made broader, and we who ought to know better, and break through these lines with the light of truth, and do not, will make ourselves guilty of their error.

The greatest obstacle in the way of the success of the conversion of the world is the divisions existing among Christians. It is these divisions and the controversies, & hatred which they engender that furnish among the most striking objections to the infidel & skeptic against the truth of Christianity, & hinder the spread of Christianity among the Moslems & heathen.

In our intercourse with Protestants, were we to dwell more on the truths which they hold in common with us, & less on those in which they differ from us, the opposite course from that which is commonly taken, we should open the way for the more speedy return of many of them to the fold of the Church, and embrace all that she teaches. Is not this the course pointed out by Holy Scripture when it says: "Study those things which make for peace."

How can one account for the interest and appreciation of a large number of Protestants for such a book as *The Imitation of Christ*, of *The Life of St. Charles*, the character and writings of Fénelon, unless it be that they at bottom sympathize with those truths which constitute the basis of Christianity, and the practice of those Christian virtues which the Church teaches is spirituality. By cultivating those truths which Protestants hold in common with Catholics, they will be insensibly led to see and accept the other truths which the Church teaches, since they are logically connected with them, and rest on the same divine basis as those which they already believe. (*Diary begun in Egypt, 1873*)

The Spiritual Strengths of Protestantism

[T]he larger part of the body of Protestants have a more healthy tone, which is indicated by their willingness to listen to the genuine voice of reason, their enthusiasm for the general diffusion of education and their sacrifices in favor of the higher branches of studies, their love for the fine arts and pursuit of the natural sciences, their instinctive attachment to liberty and desire for progress—these, and other signs of the same nature, are all proofs of the early stages of recovery of that intellectual and moral activity which is the true standard of man's normal health. Therefore, to all whose eyes are not blurred and whose ears are not deaf, it is plain that the main tendencies of the times in which we live are moving the souls of men with increased rapidity and growing harmony towards the great truths of the Catholic faith. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 188–89)

Need for Ecumenism

Who knows? Perhaps the time has come when men will consider impartially the causes which have brought about the deplorable religious dissensions and divisions existing among Christians, and that a movement is about to set it on all sides towards unity, and the prayer of Christ that “all who believe in Him might be made perfect in unity” will find its fulfillment. This is our hope. To contribute to this result we labor.

It is in the spirit of impartiality and charity that the investigation of this subject should be pursued.

Perhaps we shall not succeed in this task as we would wish. Be that as it may, one thing our readers may be assured of: we approach it with the sincerest desire to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. We have nothing to hold back. The man who fears to face the whole truth is a coward. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 235)

The Things That Make for Unity

This is plain to be understood: as between Catholics and Protestants it is more necessary to emphasize the terms of agreement than of disagreement. In that we are in accord with the Christian Union. Would that this had been the temper of men's minds at the start! We should not now have the enormous scandal of a divided Christendom nor the confusion from which non-Catholics suffer. This very confusion has made many souls turn to Catholic unity: they have given up everything worldly for the possession of peace.

Why are such sentiments now uttered? Because the tendency of religious minds is now to unity, as it was to disunion centuries ago; and this is a great blessing of Providence. The necessity for unity is now felt on all sides; the evils of disunion are seen in a thousand different ways. We should be untrue to Providence if we did not take our cue from this. . . .

Let us for the moment ignore the "fundamental differences" and avert to the fundamental agreements—the elements which make for unity and peace. Dare our non-Catholic friends venture with us?

Will they do as much for unity as we will? Let us see. God, the Holy Trinity, the Divinity, Atonement and Grace of Jesus Christ, the necessity of repentance and pardon, the inspiration of Scripture—so far we are one. Now, we emphatically affirm that out of these fundamental unities the objectionable features of Catholicity, the “fundamental” differences, necessarily flow. These objectionable features are the symbolism of the church, *i.e.* the external ordinances of religion, embraced in her sacraments and public worship, and her authority.

The symbolical offices of religion, we admit, may sometimes hinder the perception of the doctrines. There is a way of using the offices of religion so as to overlay the doctrines and to conceal them: the child is smothered by his wrappings. Nevertheless religion must have symbolical clothing. There is a way of making religion so intellectually bare as to unfit it for any but bodiless spirits. . . .

Unity is only maintained by the divine discipline of the church. Fallen human nature is too eccentric to maintain unity without submission to a divine discipline. Divine authority among men is confined in the natural order to the family and the state. When, therefore, Jesus Christ became man and would embrace all men in one family, it followed that he must give us an organic life in addition to family and state. He did that in the church. The church is the inner and outer fellowship of all Christians under the perpetual authority of the apostolic office of the Papacy and the episcopate.

Whoever has got the elementary doctrines which

by their innate tendency make for agreement has the solution of the religious problems of the day. The question is: Can we emphasize the points of agreement, ignoring for the moment the disagreements? Yes, and safely. . . .

This, then, is the relation between honest non-Catholics and ourselves: they are looking for points of agreement, and we are developing liberty and intelligence. The twofold question is: Are Protestants willing to make sacrifices for agreement's sake? Are Catholics willing to make sacrifices for liberty and intelligence in religion? These questions fittingly answered will move us all onward towards a united Christendom. Fools may misinterpret this. But the reconciliation of obedient faith and intelligent liberty is the problem of the age. It is a problem for both parties to help solve.

Let us cultivate the things that make for unity.

There is no reason why a movement towards unity should not set in, under the providence of God, in our own day, just as in the sixteenth century the perversity of men brought about disunion and sects. (*Catholic World* 47 [1888])

C. MISSION TO AMERICA

Hopes for Faith in the New World

Often my mind is served with the idea of a future development of our holy faith in this country. Our people are capable of great enthusiasm, & if once this is turned into the right channel, it must & will produce effects worthy of our faith & our spiritual Mother the Church. Our people are young, & not like Europeans, & were they filled with a lively faith, new ages of faith would spring up on this continent. (Letter to Brownson, July 29, 1851)

Renewal of the Catholic People

Until we have a higher tone of Catholic life in our country we shall do nothing. We shall make some progress in material things, and perhaps in numbers, but in the end we shall do little for the greater glory of God, the good of souls, or for our country. We can do no good without enthusiasm. Religious enthusiasm is the activity of the passions supernaturalized. And this is brought about by a thorough discipline—an ascetic life. If our words have lost their power, it is because there is no power in us to put into them. The Catholic faith alone is capable of giving to people a true permanent and burning enthusiasm fraught with the greatest of deeds. But to enkindle this in others

we must be possessed of it first ourselves. (Letter to Brownson, September 5, 1851)

Catholicism and America

[T]here is no question more worthy to engage the attention of those who have at heart the spread of the Christ's kingdom upon earth, than the question whether the Catholic Church will succeed in Christianizing the American nation, as she has, in times past, the great nations of Europe. This is the great problem of the Catholic Church of this country; for the people of the United States are young, free, energetic and filled with the idea of great enterprises; a people who, of all others, if once Catholic, can give a new, noble, glorious realization to Christianity. The conviction is increasing among its more enlightened citizens, that the Catholic Religion alone is able to give unity to a people occupying so vast an extent of territory, embracing such a diversified population, & of such a variety, & even conflicting interests. They feel also the need of a Religion like its own institutions which embraces the whole human race in one brotherhood, and with its divine sanction and powerful influence, will lead and assist it to realize its great destinies. Was there ever so noble a field offered to the Holy Church as to win a nation composed of upwards of twenty million of free & civilized people to the cause of the Christ? . . .

...

It is now evident, & it is daily become more so to

all impartial men in the United States, that its political government & its institutions are based on principles decidedly in favor of the interests & success of the Catholic Religion. Every enlightened Catholic sees this, the non-Catholics acknowledge it publicly, & the Protestants confess that if things remain as they are, the triumph of the Catholic Faith is inevitable. Divine Providence so singularly watched over the framing of the American government, that it may well be doubted that if the Catholics of that country had it for a task to construct in our day its institutions, whether they would frame one so favorable to the cause of their own faith as the one under which they now live. "No where," said the late Sovereign Pontiff, "am I so much a Pope, as in the United States of North America." . . .

...

One might say that the longing after a more spiritual life is one of the principal characteristics of the American people. So far from being a nation absorbed in commerce and in accumulating material wealth, there is no other people who are so easily kindled to a religious enthusiasm, hence the success of the Methodists among them. And few will be found who are more ready to make sacrifices for the religious convictions, witness their countless churches, their Bible and Tract societies spread over that vast country.

...

...

What a noble conquest for the Church! What a glorious work for the exercise of the apostolic zeal of her missionaries! Never before was there a more noble

and more glorious conquest offered to God's Church. In the Roman Empire, it was the battle of Catholic truth with heathenism & a nation already in decline. In the conversion of Western Europe, it was a struggle of Catholic truth with the elements of barbarism. In this new country, it is the contest of Catholic truth with an already civilized people and a young & energetic nation; one to whom Providence has certainly entrusted important destinies. . . . Is not the triumph of religion more complete & beautiful when united with an enlightened intelligence, and embraced by a free & undivided world? Is it bold to say that Religion, thus combined with intelligence & freedom, promises to furnish the world with a more advanced & Christian civilization?

...

Again, the more energetic & naturally gifted a people, the more grand under the influence of divine grace will be their destiny; for grace does not set aside, but answers, purifies, elevates & invigorates nature. The authority of the Church does not suppress the liberty of the will, but directs it, enlarges its sphere of action, & consecrates its activity to noble enterprises. . . . What will not this young nation accomplish for religion, when the energies which are now spent in her steamships, railroads & vast commercial enterprises, are enkindled by the Catholic faith into a religious enthusiasm! . . .

...

But until now the Church in the United States has been almost, if not exclusively, occupied with the care of her own children: to keep the faith in the adults

who came in crowds to her shores from almost every land, to train up their children in the same holy faith; these were immense labors for an infant Church. . . . The Catholic Church, however, cannot content itself with the mere possession of those born in the faith when there are millions of souls around her wandering into paths of error. Her mission is, as her name imports, Catholic, universal, including her apostolic zeal and embrace of her divine love, like her Divine Founder, all and every soul of the human race. She cannot therefore be content without making most strenuous efforts to win those who are without her fold, especially when the prospect is so promising as in this new & vast country. ("The Present and Future Prospects of the Catholic Faith in the United States of North America," December 1857–January 1858)

The Church in North America

This inspiration has never died out; if the Spanish and French missionaries did not accompany the first discoverers, they followed speedily in their tracks, and the work of the conversion of the aborigines was earnestly begun. In a short time they traversed the whole northern continent from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to California, and from the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson's Bay. Sometimes missionaries were slain, but the fearless soldiers of the cross continued unceasingly their work of converting the natives and bringing them into the fold of Christ. The pages of history which narrate the self-sacrificing labors of the

missionaries to the Indians are among the brightest in the annals of the Church. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 65)

Religious Freedom

Compulsion never gave birth to faith which is “not, by any means, a blind assent of the mind” but essentially an intelligent and voluntary act. Convinced of this, as Catholics, the idea of religious tolerance flowed naturally and consistently in the minds of the first settlers on the shores of the Potomac. It was a noble act on their part to proclaim that within the province and jurisdiction of Maryland, no Christian man should be molested in worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience, and whoever supposes that the Syllabus [of Errors by Pope Pius IX] teaches anything to the contrary seriously mistakes its meaning. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 66)

The American Mind

The American mind in one aspect is unlike the European, in that infidelity, skepticism, materialism, and atheism cannot find a lodgment in it for any length of time. The minds of Americans, like the native soul of their country, have something virginal, and furnish no nourishment for these poisonous weeds, which, failing to take root, soon wither. There is a profound reason for this, and it will bear explanation. The reason may be found here: the denial of any

one truth, carried out to its logical consequences, involves the denial of all truth. The so-called Reformers of the sixteenth century began by denying the supernatural origin and the divine institution of the Church, and by force of logical sequence proceeded to the denial of its divine authority, and this, by progression, to the denial of all supernatural truth; thence the denial descended to philosophy, to politics, to the entire natural order of truth, and, finally, to the denial of Him from whom proceeds all truth, ending in its logical termination—atheism. The dominant intellectual tendency of Europe has, during these last three centuries, followed the law of negative sequence of error to its ultimate logical conclusion.

On the other hand, the affirmation of any one truth, logically followed out, leads to the knowledge and affirmation of all truth. The American republic began afresh in the last century by the declaration of certain evident truths of reason. The law of its progression consists in tracing these truths out to their logical connection with all other truths, and finally coming to the knowledge of all truth, both in the natural and supernatural order, ending in the affirmation of universal truth and the union with the source of all truth—God. The dominant tendency of the American people is towards the law of the positive sequence of truth. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 95–96)

American Character and Persuasion

Those who represent the Catholic religion mainly from the point of view of authority appear not to be

aware of the fact that there is a large class of men, not to say whole nations and races of men, who are sensitive, over-sensitive perhaps, to the exercise of any authority outside themselves in religious matters, or, as for that, in any matters whatsoever; men who are instinctively inclined to look upon every act of such an authority, legitimate or not, as an attack upon their personal liberty, to which they are irresistibly attached; men who are inclined to think that religion which relies chiefly, if not solely, upon its authority must teach doctrines contrary to reason and proclaim precepts repugnant to the best impulses of our nature, or why, they ask, does it require the force of an external authority to impose these upon our acceptance?—finally, men who, if compelled to make a choice, would a thousand times rather suffer from the license of liberty than the despotism of authority. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 196–97)

The Church Relies on the Internal Guidance of the Spirit

How many Protestants who pass for intelligent persons suppose that to make one's salvation secure as a Catholic all that is required is blindly to follow the authority of the Church and abandon one's conscience to the direction of her priests! They imagine the Catholic Church is a sort of easy coach, into which one has only to enter in order to be landed without exertion safely within the portals of paradise! Nothing is further from the truth than this idea, for it can eas-

ily be shown that the internal guidance of the Holy Spirit is thoroughly maintained and faithfully carried out in the Catholic Church only. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 216–17)

Divine Providence and America

When the nature of the American republic is better understood, and the exposition of Christianity is shaped in the light of its own universal principles so as to suit the peculiarities of the American mind, the Catholic Church will not only keep her baptized American children in her fold, but will at the same time remove the prejudices existing in the minds of a large class of non-Catholics, and the dangers apprehended from the influence of republicanism will be turned into the fresh evidences of the Church's divine character.

To sum up: He who does not see the hand of Divine Providence leading to the discovery of the western continent, and directing its settlement and subsequent events toward a more complete application to political society of the universal truths affirmed alike by human reason and Christianity, will fail to interpret rightly and adequately the history of the United States. It is also true that he who sees Heaven's hand in these events, and fails to see that Christ organized a body of men to guard and teach these universal truths to mankind, with the promise of His presence to the end of the world, will fail to interpret rightly and adequately the history of Christianity. . . . The

discerning mind will not fail to see that the republic and the Catholic Church are working together under the same divine guidance, forming the various races of men and nationalities into a homogeneous people, and by their united action giving a bright promise of a broader and higher development of man than has been heretofore accomplished. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 98–99)

The Strength of the American Republic

The Catholic Church will, therefore, flourish all the more in this republican country in proportion as Catholics in their civil life keep to the lines of their republicanism. This proposition will still be true even should the New England mind become the prevailing type among us.

In the light of these principles, it is an error, radical and gross, to say that the basis of the American character is the spirit of political and religious rebellion. The character that is formed by the institutions of our country and the Catholic character are not antagonistic. American institutions tend to develop independence—personal independence and love of liberty. Christianity rightly understood is seen to foster these qualities. For what other object did the martyrs die than to establish their personal convictions against the decrees of emperors? (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p. 107)

Catholics and Citizenship

Our American institutions, in the first place, we owe to God who made us what we are, and in the next place to the Catholic Church, which ever maintained the natural order, man's ability in that order, and his free will. Under God the founders of our institutions . . . owed all to the self-evident truths of reason, to man's native instincts of liberty, to the noble traditions of the human race upheld by God's Church and strengthened by the conviction of these truths; their heroic bravery and their stout arms did the rest.

...

Sincere Catholics are among our foremost patriotic citizens, and, whatever may befall our country, they will not be found among those who would divide her into factions, or who would contract her liberties, or seek to change the popular institutions inherited from our heroic forefathers. Catholic Americans have so learned their religion as to find in it a faithful ally and a firm support of both political and civil liberty. Nowhere, on the other hand, does the Catholic Church reckon among her members more faithful, more fervent, and more devoted children than in the citizens of our republic. (1886, *The Church and the Age*, pp. 126–27)

EPILOGUE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

On the Mission of New Religious Communities

Father Hecker elaborates here his notion of the specially opportune times in which the Church is now living and the role of religious life in responding to the needs of the age.



(Written in 1876)

I.

The essential aim of Christianity is to communicate to the soul a higher, nobler, diviner life than that in which it is born, in order to establish God's kingdom within itself and upon earth, and in this way prepare it for the blessed life after the present state of its existence. This communication is called "the new birth," "regeneration," etc.

The Christian Church dates her birth from the day of Pentecost, when she was endowed from on high with the never failing presence of the Holy Spirit who is her indwelling life and power.

Sanctity is the addition of the Divine Spirit to the



Isaac Hecker during the 1880s.

soul in completion, by the aid of which the reign of God is realized. When so aided the soul is habitually actuated by the instinct of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is essentially and always the same. But the manifestations of the Holy Spirit vary according to the characteristics and dispositions of His rational recipients.

Hence in the history of the Church there are various phases of her life, the characteristics of which are made up of the action of the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and the co-operation and different obstacles met with on the other hand, in the work of the regeneration and sanctification of the human race.

The truth of this is evident: How different in character are the Epistles of St. Peter from those of St. Paul; and these, again, from the Gospel of St. John. But each was equally an Apostle, and wrote by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit.

Once more: The Greeks with their speculative and subtle intellect penetrated into the sublime mysteries and truths of Christianity and clothed them with proper expressions; the Latins with their practical genius for government and law developed the hierarchy and discipline of the Church. As, for instance, the definition of the central mystery of the Christian faith, that of the Most Holy Trinity, is due to the intellectual gifts of the former, and the declaration of Papal Infallibility as an article of Catholic faith, the central point of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and government, is the fruit of the practical genius of the latter, yet in both cases under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Latin-Celts with an imaginative and emotional nature have

contributed to the development of her devotion and aesthetics.

The genius of races or individuals does not modify or add, but serves as an instrument to the development of Christianity. It is the Holy Spirit which finds in their varied capacities the proper appreciation of the revealed truth, and the aptitude of giving them their suitable expression. For the Creator of the human race and the Founder of the Church and the Author of revelation are One; and it is through the Church that God acts immediately or directly on men, and calls individuals and races to come upon the scene and take that part for which He destined them in the great drama of the world's history.

Besides, there are certain general causes which, when found grouped together, produce what may be called epochs in the Church's history. Thus the epoch of the pagan persecutions under the Roman empire; subsequently that of the civilization and conversion of the northern barbarians; Arianism; the contest against Moslemism, the crusades; again, the conflict with the religious revolution of the sixteenth century.

There are many who think we are in "the last days of the world"; however, this is a misapprehension the like of which is not uncommonly made at critical junctures in the history of the Church. We are not in the last days of the world, but in the last days of an epoch which began three centuries ago, and at the opening of a new one.

The epoch which is about to close is characterized on the side of the Church by the more perfect development of her divine external authority, her government

and discipline, evolved by the rebellion of Protestantism. The external and internal are not an antithesis; the external has for its aim the manifestation and realization of the internal. The opening epoch therefore will not be a reactionary movement, there are none such in God's Church; but, by a necessary law of development, an upward and forward movement, characterized by an increase and a greater display of the internal life and glory of the Church.

A movement of this kind involves no change either in the dogmas of Christianity or the liturgies of the Church. That there are good grounds for the hope of such a movement taking place, the following reasons will show.

1. The utterances of the prophets concerning the triumph of the Church upon earth, it may be said, have not been, by even a strict interpretation of them, reasonably fulfilled. Only three hundred millions of the twelve hundred millions of its inhabitants are Christians; and how many of these are merely nominal ones? What earnest believer in Christ will accept this willingly as the fruit of the best, uttermost, and final effort of Christianity?

2. The petitions of Our Lord's Prayer have not as yet received a satisfactory realization. He said: "Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!" Do not these words refer to the triumph of the Church upon earth? And would Christ have addressed these petitions to His Heavenly Father unless it were the Divine Will that they should receive to a reasonable extent their fulfillment?

3. Have not the modern improvements which so

greatly facilitate the communication of thought and increase the rapidity of transit, due to the discoveries of modern science, taken away many intellectual and physical obstacles which formerly lay in the path of the fulfillment of the prophecies, and rendered, even to the light of natural reason, the more complete triumph of the Church not only possible, but made it probable? At no time could the injunction of Our Lord: "Going therefore teach all nations!" be so easily and fully realized as at the present moment.

4. The taking away of her political authority, and the robbery made of her temporal possessions, tend necessarily to increase the reliance of the Church upon God, and to fasten and strengthen her confidence in her spiritual forces and character. This idea has been repeatedly expressed by the Holy Father, and the actual effect throughout the Church has been increased spiritual life and energy. Already many signs of this increased spiritual activity have appeared. Among these are the formation of new associations for prayer, circles for the encouragement of Christian workingmen, societies for the advancement of true science, the utilizing of the press, etc.

5. The persecutions of the Church throughout Europe at this moment will serve, as they have hitherto always done, as stimulants to the renewal and strengthening of the faith in the hearts of her children and be productive of the seeds of future Christians. Had the State, instead of openly persecuting the Church, attempted to deceive and cajole her by flattery, how many of her prelates would have played the part of mere courtiers, betraying the truth and com-

promising the interests entrusted to their vigilant care, who are now her staunch defenders and willing martyrs? How many of her priests and of the faithful who were indifferent and tepid have been rendered by these persecutions earnest and fervent in their attachment to Holy Church and their obedience to her authority? How many who are now in darkness, by the sight of the noble examples of patient suffering and cheerful sacrifices on the part of her children, will be led to see what is now concealed from their view: the profound conviction of their faith and of the divinity of the Church? It will destroy heresy. Some will be led astray—weak men—it is true.

6. The language of the opponents of Christianity makes it plain that these are not ordinary times. Their aim is no less than the entire overthrow of Christianity, and with it the destruction of all religion whatever. "The entire activity and aspiration of the civilized nations of our times," says one of them, "are based on views of life which run directly counter to those entertained by Christ, so that, if we speak as honest and upright men, we must acknowledge that we are no longer Christians." Another and more recent writer tells us that "we have sunk so deep in our worldly interests that we have not even a suspicion of what it is to be religious or Christian." And one who has influenced more than any other the prevailing currents of thought, the author of Positivism, affirms that "theological motives have been exhausted, and there is no other recourse but to human motives to direct society to its true destiny." He therefore starts his philosophy on the following assertion as upon an axiom:

"The gods and God have disappeared and become extinct, and in their place is humanity." How dreadful must be the deprivation of light when a rational creature, who cannot possibly think and think God as not being, puts forth a philosophy whose starting point, whose postulate, is the non-existence of God!

7. Finally, the Church has been prepared for a movement of this nature by the decrees of the Vatican Council on Papal authority, which have settled its rightful position, defined its exercise, and declared these decisions to be articles of the Catholic Faith. This elevation and settlement of the spiritual authority of the Church gave the main stroke to the great task of the Tridentine epoch, and has prepared the Church for a fresh start.

8. The threatening dangers to the intellectual, moral and social order, and the providential preparation of the Church at the present moment; the future triumph predicted by the prophets for the Church upon earth; the preparations for this triumph made by physical progress; the law of persecutions tending to the same end; are not all these solid grounds for the hope that the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to re-create and renew the face of the earth, has at this moment in store such a work? Otherwise would that Providence which watches over the Church permit the Father of the Faithful to express repeatedly in terms like these the firm hope of such a bright future for the Church? Listen to his words so late as this year: "God is now taking the dross out of the crucible, so as to render His people free from all alloy, and once more to clothe the Church for which Our Lord delivered Him-

self up with a beauty resplendent with glory. And when God shall have accomplished this, He will remove the rod of His justice from the Church, and, that His divine Name may no longer be blasphemed, He will give her victory, a victory far more brilliant than her sufferings have been terrible. May this triumph not be delayed." (Letter of Pius IX to Msgr. Lachat, April 27, 1876)

As this movement does not suppose any change in the teaching or the worship of the Church, neither does it anticipate a miraculous interposition or action on the part of the Holy Spirit.

God always protects His Church, and His way of protecting it is ordinarily through human agencies; for this purpose He has placed in their hands all that is needed to confront and overcome the difficulties in the path of her progress. This truth is taught on every page of her past history, and this is the precise lesson which we have to learn in our day. Let us see how.

That we are living at present in such an epoch is obvious. Strange errors are broached and defended. New wants are felt. Error is always the perversion of truth, and new errors require the knowledge and firm grasp of those truths against which they are aimed, in order to give the true and satisfactory refutation. Men are needed, who, devoted to the same good old cause, will go forth in their full strength, aided with new light and fresh love from on high, to battle against the enemies of the Church of God, of society, and of all true progress. The champions in this new arena must be equipped with the weapons of their enemies, arms suitable to their age, and skilled in their tactics if they

are going to win. Error, like vice, is conquered by its opposite, as pride by humility. True science must confound false science, conviction must meet skepticism. Affirmation of the great truths of religion must grapple with their denial, love must overcome hatred, right guidance must supplant wrong guidance, organization must be pitted against organization, international revolution must be counteracted by international action, the bold attempt at subverting the world by error must be met with a bolder effort to captivate the world to Truth. Everywhere and at all points the attack must be met with adequate, if possible with superior, weapons of defense. New errors must be confronted with fresh aspects of old truths, and with new ones. This is in accordance with the words of Christ: "The wise man brings out of his treasures new things and old." This is the work before the Church, to be done in our day; and if done at all, it will be done in the way it has always been done in the days of her trial. The Holy Spirit is to guide us in the work of God, and not we the Holy Spirit.

II.

The pages of the history of the Church teach that in every age she has had her saints and providential men. But in addition to these, at the beginning of every important or critical epoch, the Holy Spirit has called into existence Religious Institutions. The aim of these institutions, appreciating the aspirations and understanding the errors of their day, and guided by the instinct of divine grace, was to establish religious

organizations fitted to direct aright the one and to refute the other. The same pages tell us that in this way these same institutions became most powerful auxiliaries to the Church in accomplishing her divine mission.

The essential element of all religious organizations, it is well to know, has always been the same: a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Their peculiar form depends upon the particular needs of the Church and society at the time when they are called into existence.

This is the explanation of the origin and different characteristics of all the great Religious Orders of the Church; as, for instance, the Benedictines, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Jesuits, etc.

St. Benedict did not plunge into solitude and become a follower in the footsteps of St. Paul, the first hermit, or of St. Anthony, St. Hilarion, and others of the second, third and fourth centuries, but founded a religious community fitted to meet the great needs of the fifth century. For the same good reasons St. Francis and St. Dominic, centuries later, did not enter the great Benedictine Order, but established religious institutions to meet the wants and to refute the errors of their age. Greatly as St. Ignatius and St. Philip Neri admired the Dominicans and Franciscans, they did not become members of their institutions; but, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, they started new religious organizations to suit their time and meet its demands. The contemplative orders are best fitted for one age, and the active orders for another. Each was inspired by the Holy Spirit to do the special work

which had to be done in its own day. All this is too obvious to unbiased minds to need further proof or illustration.

Religious Communities not being called to the accomplishment of ordinary work, they ought therefore to confine their attention and main activity to the one for which they were especially instituted. This distinct work must be kept clearly and always before the minds of their members, and be strongly grasped. It should be the great stimulant of their zeal, and inspire all their actions. All their endeavors should be devoted to it, and in proportion as they are, their effect upon the faithful and the world will prove providential, salutary, and successful. To be satisfied with any other plane of action is to grieve the Holy Spirit, to deviate from the path of perfection, and to become an obstacle in the way instead of a help to the progress of the Church.

This being so, it is easily seen how great must be the loss to the progress of religion in souls, and to the general good of society, when these Institutions fail in their special aim. One of the chief reasons why Protestantism obtained a foothold in several countries was that Religious Orders, deviating from their special aim, took upon themselves the ordinary duties of the secular priesthood. The Religious became relaxed, and they were made the substitutes for the parish priests; and when the communities were destroyed by the State there was not a sufficient parochial clergy or organization to sustain and preserve the faith among the people.

This was particularly the case at the time of the so-

called Reformation, both in England and Scotland. How would the Catholic religion sustain itself in this present crisis in Prussia, where the Religious Orders are abolished and their members banished, were it not for the complete organization and fervor of the secular clergy? Nearly all Religious chose, in view of their particular vocation, to continue as members of their Order and go into exile, rather than, with the secular priesthood, to remain and combat on the spot for the faith, the Church, and their native country.

It will be found that the deviation from the primary aim of Religious Institutions is one of the main causes of their relaxation and weakness, as well as the occasion of the spirit of jealousy which is awakened against them among the secular clergy.

Such being the nature, character, and office of Religious bodies, the question now arises, How will the most efficient aid be given by them to the Church in the present crisis that she may accomplish her divine mission?

The members of new institutions should penetrate more deeply, and possess with a firmer grasp, the great primary truths of philosophy and of natural and revealed theology, in order to recast these in view of refuting the prevalent errors of the age, and to meet satisfactorily its intellectual wants and aspirations. These different branches of knowledge may be viewed in a threefold aspect:

1. The order of Nature;
2. The order of Reason;
3. The order of Grace.

These are three movements having the same origin and end.

This is a great task but not a formidable one, considering that all the essential material is stored up and classified; and as in former epochs so in ours, much of the work has been done by single workers, and is now waiting for the head and hand of an illuminated and encyclopedic genius.

God's Transcendence: The members of new Religious Institutions will be penetrated profoundly with the sense of God's existence and His divine attributes; and, to this end, they will study to live always in His divine presence. For how can one communicate to others what he does not himself possess? This will prepare them for the principal demand of our age. For the age has turned away from and lost God; and Religion has for its object to render God to the soul, and most perfectly.

God's Immanence: They will study especially God's relations with the Creation: God as the Primary Mover, Sustainer, and Upholder of all created things. They will be penetrated with the truth expressed by the great Apostle to the Gentiles: "For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things" (Rom. 11:36). The appreciation of this primary truth will lead them to take a lively interest in all investigations and discoveries of the natural sciences. They will welcome all new truths in every branch of knowledge; for although the theologian and the natural philosopher do not investigate the things of nature in the same aspect, yet the study of created things fortifies faith

and aids in the destruction of the errors concerning God. (See St. Thomas, bk. ii, ch. 3, 4, vol. 1, *Contra Gentiles*.) How can it be otherwise? Is not all true light from on high? All truth one? All knowledge sacred? The study of Nature is also the study of God.

The perception of the great value of this order of truth in religion will prepare the way for the recovery of the torch of the light of the natural sciences, unfortunately snatched by the impious from the hands of the Church.

The neglect of the natural sciences is a sign of the decay of religion, for "the Lord is a God of all knowledge" (1 Kgs. 2:3). Indifference and contempt for the natural sciences spring not from the spirit but from the absence of the spirit of true religion, and betray a mind lacking in a proper appreciation of the existence of God and His glory in all His works. Does not the great Apostle Paul teach us that "the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also and divinity" (Rom. 1:20)? Whence did the Psalmist derive his highest inspiration? Was it not from the contemplation of the visible creation of God? "For Thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in Thy doings; and in the works of Thy hands I shall rejoice" (Ps. 91:5).

There will spring up men of enlarged minds and filled with the sincere love of science; for science, or knowledge, is also one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

By the light of this Gift secrets in nature will be discovered which men in our day do not dream of. For God delights to manifest to those who seek His Glory

with an upright heart the great mysteries of His creation. "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pt. 1:5).

It will always be found in the pages of history that the highest civilization of a people springs from the purest inspirations of its religion, and that its most flourishing period is when these inspirations pervade the whole people. Has not this been included in the promise of Christ when He said: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all other things shall be added to you"? For advancement in the physical sciences and in social economy, unless balanced and guided by the principles of religion and morality, do not ameliorate but deteriorate the condition of the human race.

One of the pre-eminent marks of a true follower of Christ is the love of Truth above all things. Who have loved more deeply, or made greater sacrifices for Truth, than the children of His Church? What is the meaning of the blood of the martyrs, the labors of her missionaries, the toil of her doctors and teachers throughout all ages, unless it be the supreme love of Truth? None have made, none are so willing to make, and none even in our day do make, so great sacrifices for Truth as her children. What else does the death on the Cross testify than the supreme and undying love of the Crucified for the Truth?

In the past, agriculture as well as the transcribing of manuscripts, learning, science, literature, secular education, were almost exclusively in the hands of Religious Orders and the priesthood. The height and depth and breadth of these are unfathomable, and

they contain infinite stores of intellectual riches unexplored, the gaining of which is the noblest employment of our best capacities. Hence the more the priesthood can devote their attention and time to these studies and those immediately connected therewith, the more the honor that will accrue to them, and the greater the benefit to all society.

III.

The question now arises, How, and by what means, these Institutions will give the most efficient co-operation to this renewal of the life of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the faithful; for concentration is force, and the law of all effectual and extensive work is that of association.

These Institutions will place prominently before the minds of their members their special aim: The renewal of the light of faith, the spiritual life of the faithful. They will be the first to practice what they teach to others, by the increased attention and fidelity of their members to, and their reliance for strength on, the inspirations and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Ordinarily the power of one's preaching depends upon the correspondence of one's own life to what he teaches. This will give spontaneity of life, greater activity and increased energy of character. They will become attractive and popular everywhere throughout the world.

These men should awake in our day an enthusiasm similar to that inspired by the Dominicans and Franciscans in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,

and by the Jesuits in the sixteenth. They should attract around them the best youth of the Church, and turn their enthusiasm into those channels necessary to her present development and her defense. On the principle which Our Lord has stated in these words: "Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles be gathered together" (Mt. 24:28). They should renew the apostolic spirit, life, and courage.

The burden of their preaching should be that of Our Lord and His Apostles: "The kingdom of God is at hand." "The kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom of God "is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." In other words, the reign of the Holy Ghost in the soul is the kingdom of God. This was the special mission given by Our Lord to His Apostles: "Go thou, and preach the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:60).

For, increase the action of the Holy Spirit in each soul, develop Its Gifts, and you will sanctify each soul. Then all things will be re-created or regenerated. The whole face of the earth will be renewed. Thus the petition of Our Lord will receive a more perfect realization: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

This increased action of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and its immediate guidance by His divine Gifts, should lead them to penetrate more deeply into the essence of all religion. They should have a clearer and a firmer grasp of its primary truths. Their action and preaching therefore will tend to the elevation of minds, to the reconciliation of differences, and towards unity.

They will see more clearly the omnipresence of

God, His essential relations with all creation as the Lifegiver, Primary Mover and Sustainer of all things. "In Him we live, and move, and are," says St. Paul. On this basis, the rational and natural side of creation will become an object of study, admiration and worship, at the same time with the supernatural side. They will esteem Science as one of the great Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and show a ready and hearty welcome to all truths and discoveries in every branch of knowledge. For all truth is divine.

They will give to the truths underlying human reason an accentuation which the one-sidedness of rationalists renders them incapable of giving. They will encourage all investigations in the natural order. The torch of the natural sciences, unfortunately snatched from the hands of the Church, will be recovered. Religion, true Religion, alone nourishes the genius of true science and art.

This increased infusion of the Holy Ghost in souls, with their faithful correspondence with its inspirations, will recast all human knowledge. New tribute will then be paid to the glory of God in His creation. The greater expansion of man's intelligence in the knowledge of God's works will increase His praise.

These men will possess a more exact knowledge of the real and true condition of human nature, a knowledge embodying the decisions of the Church and all the new light thrown upon this point, especially by the theologians of the last three centuries. From this more exact knowledge will spring a greater confidence in the action of human nature and a readiness to concede a more extensive field for its activity. This

will prepare them to accept, sympathize with and direct aright the social and political tendencies and movements of our age. Intellectually and morally they will take a leading part and direct these movements, which are now turned against the Church through ignorance, and make them means of her defense and more complete triumph. As in the case of the direction given to science, so in this case they will become the true leaders of progress in social and political knowledge, turning them in the way of amelioration and the general well-being of all classes.

God is naturally and necessarily before every rational soul as its (more or less distinctly seen) ultimate object and supreme good. The aim of all religion is to bring the soul under the immediate action of God in order to unite the soul more perfectly with God. The Church is nothing else than a visible means divinely instituted to realize practically this aim for all mankind. The Church is present to every mind as the divine ideal, and it solicits this action, even of those who are violently opposed to it and who aim at its destruction. The aims they seek to realize are fragments of the complete body of its truth, but exaggerated. Their opposition arises from their contracted vision. It is therefore our work to take hold of the truths which underlie false movements, to place them in their true relations with all other truths, and by so doing to give them increased accentuation and more complete expression and development. In this way dangerous and revolutionary tendencies will be transformed into auxiliary forces of progression and advancement.

A particular truth can be properly estimated only in the light of the general truth of which it is a part. By the light of a more universal synthesis of truth members of a new community will find the true solution of the problems of the age, disarm its prejudices and antagonisms, and supply the great needs of society. This is the way to gain the souls of those who are sincere, to disarm the opposition of those who are insincere, and to advance the cause of religion in the world.

This is the true apostolic spirit. This was the spirit and method of St. Paul when he stood and preached in the midst of the Areopagus at Athens. This prompted the prayer of Our Lord on the Cross: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." It is a fresh infusion of this spirit which must inform these new Institutions and breathe in all the actions of their members. It was this new inspiration that in former days gave the reason for the founding of new Religious Orders. The same reason holds good in our day. There is none other. Religious Institutions repeat the history of the Church. They start from a Pentecostal Gift.

This will increase individual action, liberty and energy. This will reverse the present attitude of Catholics throughout the world. Instead of being subject in their political life as they are now to an infidel minority, and sometimes a very feeble one, they will exert an influence outweighing largely their own numbers; they will take the direction as the natural leaders of all the great enterprises of society, and embrace also in their views and actions the whole world.

And, again, the priesthood will devote itself more to the acquiring of all knowledge, especially that of theology, and to the solution of the greatest problems of the age, and will become what it always ought to be, the light and inspiration of the world. This is the true position of the priesthood in the hierarchy of society. In placing themselves in closer relation with the great fundamental truths of both the natural and supernatural order, and in drawing their inspiration from these, they will lead large numbers to see the interior life of the Church in a fresh light, and open the way for their return to the Fold.

By a clearer insight and a more exact appreciation of the economy of Divine Grace they will bring out more distinctly the great practical truth which underlies the whole supernatural order: that there can be no act tending towards our true destiny which is not preceded by a movement of divine grace. By a sublime synthesis of the natural and the supernatural, of the union of the most thorough manhood with the most exalted faith, of the most perfect liberty of the human will with the action of divine grace, they will make manifest the highest ideal of the Christian life and character. For as Christ is perfect God and perfect man in a single Personality, so a perfect Christian is one who unites a complete action of divine grace with a complete co-operation of human nature in one personality. A saint is a man who is prompted in all his actions by the divine instinct of the Holy Spirit.

They will show that the Church in her entire action as a teacher, in her sacraments, in her worship and discipline, is a divinely appointed means for the

realization of this ideal. Having this ideal always before their minds, it will be the end towards which they will turn the attention of the faithful, in all their preaching, their direction of souls, and in every sphere of their activity. This call to a higher and more perfect life will be one of the distinguishing traits of their mission, of their new apostolate.

They will show that the end and practice of self-denial and mortification, as well as the exercise of all moral virtues are preparatory steps towards the increased action of the Holy Ghost in the soul. For the exercise of the moral virtues precedes ordinarily the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the possession of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit should be the aim of all Christians. For we are exhorted by the Apostle Paul to "Be zealous for spiritual gifts" (1 Cor. 14:1). Not only so, but it is the Christian's privilege to enjoy the Beatitudes and Fruits of the Holy Spirit. This exposition of the interior life will be an integral point of their mission. In this way the spiritual life will receive a rational interpretation, and the note of sanctity will receive a more complete expression. For the general work of the priesthood is to place sinners in the way of salvation; but their special mission is to open the way for them and for all Christians to Christian perfection. This increased accentuation of the call to a more perfect life and to the full realization of Christianity will be in addition to their efforts for the propagation of the faith, for the conversion of sinners, and the inculcation of the practical duties of a common Christian life. By no means

will this diminish their zeal in the latter duties, but rather will it increase and crown it.

This was the burden of the Apostles in their preaching, and it should be the burden of their successors in the priesthood.

New Religious Communities, thus embracing an apostolic life, devoted to universal aims, and to the primary principles of both the natural and the supernatural order, and appreciating every truth in its place, it will be impossible for them to be absorbed in special devotions. For Catholicity embraces all ages, extends everywhere, and includes all truth. Nor will they confine their action to any one locality. Like the Apostles, "the sound of their voice will extend over the whole world," and their words will call forth echoes in the souls of all men.

The action of divine grace in the soul, with personal co-operation, will be always kept in view as primary. Sacramental and sacerdotal grace and influence will be esteemed as the means of communicating and strengthening the former. The worship and devotions, both public and private, of Holy Church, will all be made to second the same end. The prediction of the prophet Joel will receive a more literal fulfillment. The day of Pentecost will become more characteristic of the whole world. The note of sanctity will be developed to an astonishing degree throughout the Church. In this way new Religious Institutions will fulfill their special mission.

APPENDIX

The Constitution of the Missionary Society of Saint Paul the Apostle

The first chapter of the Paulist Constitution expresses the nature and purpose of the Paulist Society as articulated in the General Assembly of 1968 and approved in Rome in 1989.



PART ONE NATURE AND PURPOSE

CI THE PAULISTS FIND THEIR IDENTITY AND SPECIFIC PURPOSE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH. As a pilgrim the Church of Christ moves through time. It is a prophetic church which always ponders God's saving activity and probes each age's deepest needs in order to bring a people to the reign of God; a missionary church which communicates God's word and life to the world; a unifying church, inviting everyone to share one Lord, one faith, one baptism. It is led by one Spirit, who distributes His

many gifts to achieve one charity, and who guides it through a universal shepherd and the other bishops in communion with Him.

It is an open church which, since God speaks to men and women in their experiences, learns as well as teaches, listens as well as speaks; a concerned church because its pastors and people must find in its resources a strength for the troubles of the times; a church always in need of purification, striving for a renewed understanding of its mission in order to be the more effective sign to the nations that Christ wills it to be.

C2 Founded by Isaac Thomas Hecker as a religious society within the church, the Paulists seek to be a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit and a prophetic instrument for His sanctifying action. They are called to share in the life and mission of Christ's church as community, servant and witness.

The Paulists are a community, sharing different tasks and gifts in the love of Christ, guided by a unified and participatory government. They are a servant, ministering with work, sacrament and zealous care to the needs not only of "the household of the faith" but also of the vast community of God in the world. They are a witness, bringing the good news of Christ not only to believers but particularly to unbelievers, and exhibiting those unique qualities of freedom and joy which a reflective experience teaches them will best display Christ and his church to the people they serve.

C3 The Paulists, a canonically approved clerical soci-

ety of apostolic life of pontifical right in the Roman Catholic Church, are clergy and laymen who promise to work together in community in order to help each other to grow in grace and to collaborate in their common tasks.

As members they dedicate themselves to an intensive following and manifestation of Jesus Christ by fidelity to a life of gospel simplicity, chastity and obedience.

Finding in St. Paul the model and inspiration of their life and mission, they bear the title *The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle*, and are popularly known as *The Paulist Fathers*, or *The Paulists*.

They welcome as affiliates men and women who are not members of the Society but wish to share in the Society's ideals and work.

C4 The Paulists aim to live their Christian life and experience its growth in service of the whole church and humankind. In the spirit of their founder, who sought to interpret the church to the modern world and the modern world to the church, they strive for openness and discernment as they labor to extend the reign of God.

The mission of the Paulists is to persons, individually and in all social groups in which they live, with a special concern for the peoples of North America. These missionaries help men and women to discover Christ wherever He is acting; all that they do should converge upon the single purpose of assisting Christ to build up His reign on Earth.

C5 Sensitive to the Holy Spirit and true to the insights of Father Hecker, the Paulists seek to carry out their mission in different ways among different peoples. Particular activities are stressed for their current aptness in realizing Paulist objectives:

To those without religious commitment or church affiliation and to nominal Christians, the Paulists try to communicate, with all available means, the good news of salvation.

Ecumenism is a permanent element in the total life and work of the Paulists. Every member should be responsive to the unifying action of the Holy Spirit in other Christians and in their Christian churches, and wherever possible, they should pray and work with them in the one mission of Christ.

At the same time, the Paulists are committed to prepare and receive those persons who, following their conscience, wish full communion with the Roman Catholic Church through the local church.

Regarding the Jewish people, the Paulists recognize our common spiritual patrimony and the continuing action of God in their life and aspirations. The community strives to build mutual Catholic-Jewish understanding and respect through study, dialogue and cooperative action in matters of common concern.

In the case of Roman Catholics, Paulists labor for their renewal and progress in faith and Christian living, so that the church may be a clearer sign to all people. The Paulists strive to make the faithful aware of their own missionary vocation and solidarity with all men and women.

Every Paulist should have a gospel identity with, and concern for, the poor and less privileged, and seek to serve them with Christian generosity.

The social, civil and humanitarian struggle to humanize the world is a sign of God's action in history. Paulists joyfully meet this challenge to serve our neighbor, and thus reflect the love of God in Christ. They should undertake to work with all people of good-will to help build a better world consonant with human dignity and the needs of the age.

C6 The Paulists follow their vocation in a constantly renewing church. The particular works of the community, its foundations and forms of mission are means to the end of disclosing Christ to every person. Therefore, these works are undertaken insofar as they are judged to minister to the needs of those whom the community serves, and the continuance of these works is always subject to that judgment.

Paulists try not only to be attuned to the needs of the present but also to form a vision of tomorrow's

world and to anticipate the needs of the church in the coming age.

C7 Besides individual gifts, the Paulists try to bring to their chosen work qualities of faithfulness to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, zeal, interest in people, intelligent labor, love of liberty, a strong sense of co-responsibility, personal and collective initiative, leadership, flexibility and creative and constructive imagination to devise experiments within the framework of ecclesial and community cooperation.

C8 In keeping with the ideals of their founder, the Paulists work not only in North America, but also in other countries where their capabilities and particular vocation make them useful. From the experience of the universal church, and from the North American experience, both of which have enriched their spirit and enterprise, they have reaped benefits which they want to share with the world that Christ came to save.

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