Some Tributes to The Furrow

"THE FURROW ought to be compulsory reading for all the clergy in this country who have in their parishes any considerable number of recent arrivals from Ireland; and which parish, in an industrial area at any rate, has not? This April number is the third to be mainly devoted to the vast problem of Irish emigration to England. The articles are well written, holding the attention, and not too long. They include one by a young man from County Kildare, Mr. Oliver Reilly, a National Organiser of Muintir na Tire, who spent three weeks working in a factory in Birmingham, and who gives the most vivid and candid impression of the pastoral problem with which the clergy of that city are confronted."

—**THE TABLET,** *London.*

". . . the always interesting Irish magazine, THE FURROW."

—**CATHOLIC WORLD,** *New York.*

"Attention has been called and will be called again to the fine articles on Scripture appearing in the Irish publication, THE FURROW.

"THE FURROW is always worth reading, but this particular issue [*The Liturgy and Death*—October 1957] deserves separate publication in book form . . . what the authors offer on this important subject is simply not available in English elsewhere."

—**WORSHIP,** *Collegeville.*

"Outspoken and self-examining, it has struck an entirely new note with its constructive criticism of the established order."

—**BOOKS ON TRIAL,** *Chicago.*

"THE FURROW not only keeps a high standard but steadily raises it."

—Father J. Putz, S.J., Editor of
THE CLERGY MONTHLY, *India.*

"THE FURROW has always something of interest for the priest dedicated to the service of the people living among the varied pressures of the modern world, as also for the layman who is striving to live at an adult Catholic level."

—**HIBERNIA,** *Dublin.*

THE CHURCH AND THE EMIGRANT

A Symposium

POPE PIUS XII

OLIVER REILLY

GEOFFREY MORLEY-MOWER

WALTER PRICE

DESMOND FISHER

EDWARD MITCHINSON

JAMES REYNOLDS

SEOSAMH Ó NUALLÁIN

JOHN FOSTER

PATRICK BROPHY

A. P. BOLAND

Reprinted from
THE FURROW

1/6

Introducing the Contributors

Oliver Reilly, a young County Kildare man, is National Organiser of Muintir na Tire.

Walter Price is an Englishman and a convert to the Faith. Has lived for many years in China.

Father A. P. Boland is a priest of the archdiocese of Dublin. Seconded to minister to hotel workers in London.

Desmond Fisher is London Editor of THE IRISH PRESS.

Father Edward Mitchinson, an English priest, is Head Chaplain of the Young Christian Workers and Editor of NEW LIFE.

Geoffrey Morley-Mower holds the rank of Wing-Commander in the Royal Air Force.

Father John Foster is an English priest of the archdiocese of Westminster. Contributor to NEW LIFE.

Father Patrick Brophy is a priest of the diocese of Kildare.

Father James Reynolds is a priest of the diocese of Ardagh. For some years has spent his Christmas and Summer vocation as holiday supply in English parishes.

Father Seosamh Ó Nualláin is a Kerry priest. Worked for some time in his native diocese and in England. At present seconded to the Columban Fathers, and engaged in ministering to the Irish in London.

The Church and the Emigrant

A Reprint of the Special Issue of

THE FURROW

of April 1958

MAYNOOTH

THE FURROW

1958

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Foreword

IT IS estimated that 800,000 men and women born in Ireland at present seek a living in Britain. The spiritual problems posed by emigration on so large a scale concern not Ireland alone or Britain alone but vitally affect both countries; solutions along narrow, nationalistic lines offer no real hope. It is the aim of this special issue, the third devoted to the question, to present to our readers the phenomenon of emigration in the broadest context. With that purpose in view an attempt is made to set down the substance of the problem through the eyes of laymen and priests, English and Irish, who are personally involved. Contributors have been requested to express their views in a positive and responsible manner, without evasion or distortion.

The pastoral voice of our Holy Father, as in so many of the problems of our times, has shown the lines of solution. In an address to the Italian Diocesan Committees for Emigration, which has been specially translated for this issue, Pope Pius XII indicates the way of the Good Shepherd, a way seen to be simple and profoundly spiritual.

The solution lies in terms of the Church. Emigrants must recognise "the face of their Mother bent lovingly over them," encounter the Church *before* they leave their native land and be greeted in the land of adoption in *her* name—not Scythian or Greek, not Jamaican or Irish, but Christian, sons of our Mother. It is a matter for pride that the lines of this solution have already been laid in enterprises of collaboration for the benefit of our emigrants to Britain between the hierarchies of Ireland and of England and Wales. Much yet remains to be done to achieve even friendlier collaboration between Irish and English priests. It must not be forgotten that for our 800,00 people we owe the Church in England 800 priests. The holiday supply too offers the Irish priest a pleasant change and valuable experience to guide him in the understanding

of his people "who go over." Seminarists could also find ways of encouraging friendship between our colleges.

When so many Irishmen are depressed at the spectacle of emigration, it is surely cause for gratitude to hear the voice of the Supreme Pastor raising our thoughts to see in faith, even in this human tragedy, a vast missionary opportunity, such a call as Patrick heard by the Wood of Foclut:

> The roads of salvific conquest for Christ are infinite, as history shows. The phenomenon of present-day emigration follows out its own unfaltering laws, but it is the nature of divine wisdom to use human facts, even if sometimes they are sad facts, to realise plans of salvation for the good of humanity as a whole. In this way humble colonies of Christian workers can become nurseries of Christianity where it has never penetrated or where perhaps its meaning has been lost. In this way—it is Our hope and Our prayer—your work fits into the framework of universal redemption.

THE EDITOR

The Church and the Emigrant

On 23 July 1957, five years after the publication of the Apostolic Constitution Exsul Familia, *His Holiness Pope Pius XII received in audience the members of the First Italian National Congress of Diocesan Representatives for Emigration and addressed to them the following allocution, the text of which was published in* L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO *of 24 July 1957. This translation has been specially made for* THE FURROW *by Father Thomas Finan, who has also added the headings.*

YOU, the episcopal representatives on the Italian Diocesan Committees for Emigration, are come to Rome for your first national congress. In welcoming you into Our presence We are pleased to show you the lively confidence We have in your zeal for the welfare of the emigrants—they are all the nearer to Our heart for being far from their country and so much more in need of the anxious care of the Church. You know the solicitude with which the Holy See—in particular the Sacred Consistorial Congregation with its eminent and zealous Cardinal Secretary, whom We greet with joy here present—has dedicated itself to the serious and delicate problem of emigration. You know the care with which, especially in the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia*,[1] it has worked to ensure that the emigrants get effective help. It has made practical regulations to make certain that wherever they are they will readily recognise the face of their Mother the Church bent lovingly over them, hear the throbbing of her heart and be guided by her motherly hand in the dangers and necessities of their anomalous situation.

But what We have wished and always wish to see in those who are called directly or indirectly to consecrate their priestly lives to the service of the emigrants, is the true spirit of the apostolate, indefatigably infusing energy and inspiring action. In reading, under the first title of the Constitution in question, the wonderful work done by the Church in the course of the ages, more particularly in recent times, for those who, for whatever motive, have been constrained to live in a strange land, you will doubtless have asked yourselves what could be the hidden source of this shining story of humane and gracious goodness. Wherever one looks in space or time it finds no equal. The answer is indicated in the document

1. A.A.S., Vol. 44, 1952, p. 649 ff.

itself: the intense love of souls drawn by the Church from the source of charity, Jesus Christ.

Well then! We wish you to impress on your souls the firm conviction that wherever a like spirit is lacking, neither tireless external driving-power nor elaborate organisation nor law itself will be of any avail. Where there is question of souls only the warmth of supernatural charity can stir the flowering of life and ripen lasting fruit of salvation. This visit of yours pleases Us for the further reason that it gives Us a chance to tell you briefly what spirit should animate your work, to show you how this spirit is the source of the interior energy and the guiding rules of your undertakings, and how this spirit alone stamps your work with the seal of a pure and meritorious apostolate.

The spirit of the Good Shepherd

You may learn from the sublime parable of the Good Shepherd[2] what spirit should animate those who are assigned by ecclesiastical authority to help the emigrants. There, as in other instructions inspired by the same comparison[3], it would seem to be the purpose of the divine Redeemer, the "Shepherd of our souls" and the "Prince of Pastors,"[4] to give us an intimate self-portrait. Although the parable deals in general with whoever has the mission of guiding souls, and expresses in a special way the unity of the Church and the will of Christ to save all men, still it offers for your meditation certain moving points of contact with your own function. Such are, among others, the mutual and individual knowledge that binds the shepherd to every sheep; his anxiety for each one individually; his constant care for those that are put in danger by distance from the fold; the eagerness of the shepherd, so different from the hireling, to keep up with them and watch over them and find them sound pastures. You will recall that "it is the will of your Father who is in heaven that not one of these little ones should perish."[5] Consequently it is indispensable to the good shepherd that he be ready to face fatigue, self-denial and heroic ordeals.

Look with the soul of a pastor then on your flock scattered over

2. *John* 10.
3. *Matthew* 18:11; *Luke* 15:3 ff.
4. *Peter* 2:25; 5:4.
5. *Matthew* 18 4.

the whole earth beyond mountains and seas. It was no spirit of adventure, no extraneous force, that led them to walk the roads of the world in the sweat of their brow. Instead they were led in most cases by a sense of personal worth that was determined to win by toil the right to the necessaries of life. Or again they were led by the loving sense of duty felt by a father or a son towards his family. With the emigrant the dream, sweet and good, of coming back some day to the well-loved birth-place with an economic independence sufficient to make the future secure has often outweighed the bitterness of leaving behind "all that love holds dearest." It has given him the rugged courage to face "this first arrow shot from the bow of exile," and to find "how salt the taste of a stranger's bread, how hard the climbing up and down another's stairs."[6]

But how often, particularly at the opening of a new life, the load of sacrifice and self-denial proves heavier than courage had foreseen. The country, the people and things around him, the kind of work he has to do, all seem to conspire against the emigrant and bring on profound crises of homesickness and dejection. The climate seems against him, the unknown tongue seems to shut him into a painful prison; he is hurt by the attitude of the people—indifferent and sometimes, maybe, contemptuous; his scant knowledge of their laws and customs prevents him moving at his ease; in a sort of nightmare he sees himself as one shipwrecked on a desert island. It is not unknown for those painful experiences to continue in great part even after he has found work and stability in a colony of his own countrymen. Those material and moral conditions of emigrants should awaken in the priestly soul the same immense pity that Jesus felt when He saw the hungry crowds about Him—distressed and "lying like sheep that have no shepherd."[7] And if the priest who has a legitimate mandate leaves the ninety-nine sheep in safety and goes to foreign lands to save the one that is strayed far away, he shall taste the intimate joy that Christ shares with his apostles.[8]

The basis then of all your thoughts, and the inspiration of all your actions should be a supernatural love of souls, in extent, intensity and disinterestedness as like as possible to that of the divine Pastor, who does not hesitate to lay down His life for all.

6. Dante: *Paradiso*, 17:55-60.
7. *Matthew* 9:36.
8. *Luke* 15:3 ff.

The natural community of feeling with your countrymen, the spontaneous liking or the duty of obedience felt for this *genre* of the apostolate, every act of assistance that is not in the strict sense spiritual, will be consecrated and elevated by this love—indistinguishable, as it were, from that which you cherish for the Redeemer. From this source of charity you will draw light on the choice of methods, perseverance in fatigue, prudence in your relations with local authorities, religious and civil, and with employers; in other words your procedure will be of the kind that guarantees lasting results to any body of men with serious purpose. In a word, the awareness of being "good shepherds" after the model of Jesus: that should be the presiding spirit in your Committees and in your souls.

Concrete action must follow

However, true charity, following the repeated teaching of the Holy Spirit, cannot remain inactive in the regions of pure contemplation or exhaust itself in sterile sentiment. It hastens rather to come down to concrete action and preserves its divine mark of universality in being directed to all and by every means. That is why the Apostle of the Gentiles, whose incomparable hymn to charity[9] was dictated by a sublime absorption in the spirit of Christ, could say of himself: "To the weak I became weak . . . I became all things to all men that I might save all."[10]

To be all things to all men: there is the practical and daily rule of every apostolate, and of yours in particular in as much as it is aimed for the most part at people who lack everything and expect assistance in everything. We have learned with deep satisfaction that the programme directives of the Italian Organisations for Emigration, and of the Diocesan Committees are guided by this principle. The latter especially are meant to be centres of study for the local problems of emigration, to give the emigrants spiritual, social and technical preparation, to help them develop the techniques essential to the expatriate. In this they are to make use too of the generous help of other laudable Associations like Catholic Action, the A.C.L.I., the Pontifical Relief Organisation, ONARMO, and the Protection of the Young Girl.

There is no doubt that the spiritual and technical preparation

9. I *Corinthians* 13.
10. Ibid. 9:22.

of the emigrant is a valuable service rendered by the Church to her sons through you as intermediaries. To instruct the emigrant in the language, laws and customs of the country to which he goes, to prepare his way, to go with him—this is not only a choice work of charity, but also a means of binding the children to the Church, their Mother, with the unbreakable bond of love. How could one bear the repetition of the shocking and degrading sight that was common in the last century, when bands of emigrants lay on board ship like slaves, deprived of the most elementary accommodation and met with contempt on their arrival—often decimated by want and disease? Thank God for the spark of charity first kindled for them by heroic missionaries like the tireless Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini and his spiritual sons, the Missionaries of Saint Charles, above all by that worthy pioneer of this new apostolate, Saint Francesca Saveria Cabrini. That spark is now become a glowing fire of charity, permanent and organised.

The preparation of the emigrant as envisaged in the programme of the Diocesan Committees is well worth the transfer and expenditure of the best we have in power and personnel, to be drawn as far as possible from other duties, especially in those dioceses where emigration is most widespread. It is obvious that it will not always be easy to devise means of friendly relations with the emigrant who finds himself for the first time in a strange country, attracted maybe by the specious promises of those whose aim is his spiritual ruin.

But if the emigrant before leaving has felt the throb of the Church's maternal heart, he will know her face everywhere and will never leave the lap of her who shielded him in days of sadness. He will jealously guard the memory of the day when, as friends and family said good-bye, the Mother of all stood at the altar with divine consolation to sweeten the bitterness of parting, and assured him of her unfailing protection. And when on the hard road of exile his eye, full of sadness and often moist with hidden tears, chances on the symbol of the Cross, or a chapel, or the outline of a spire rising against the sky like a sentinel of the House of God, his thoughts will take wing to the little church far away—confidant of so many tender and pious memories and affections. True he will feel the pang of nostalgia, but at the same time his heart will at once overflow with hope as though unexpectedly he had met his mother.

Build up your Committees, dear sons. Make them ever more

active and generous. Above all make them quick to achieve their purpose by the close co-ordination of the Central Directory with every local Committee, and of your organisation with the other bodies and confraternities that work in the same field, all in such a way as to earn the respect and the good will of the civil authorities of the nation and of the international organisations that are specially engaged on the problems of emigration. To win their support more readily it is necessary to increase such undertakings as are apt to create a public opinion in favour of the emigrants, their needs and their protection. The "National Emigrants' Day" observed in Italy for some years goes a long way towards this. It is an effective instrument for keeping alive among the faithful an interest in and a love for so many distant sons. See to it that not one emigrant leaves his native sod without a previous knowledge and love of the Church. It will be incumbent on you as the representatives of the Church among the people, to give yourselves entirely to all, to study their problems, to direct them into the work most suited to their ability, to instruct and help them, to be the necessary link between the emigrants and their families at home, so as to sweeten the hardships and avert the dangers of prolonged separation.

The emigrant missionary

The spirit of the Good Shepherd, who raises help inspired by charity to the dignity of an apostolate, should animate principally the priest who lives and works among the emigrants and is himself an emigrant for Christ. In this matter We would dwell on some points, given the fact that the work of the emigrant missionaries by integrating and perfecting your own helps to throw more light upon it.

The importance the Church attaches to missions among the emigrants can be deduced from the ever-growing number of priests who devote themselves to that work. Never has the army of those who share the forced or voluntary exile of their faithful been as numerous as at present. They deserve the recognition and the support of the Church. We for Our part do not hesitate to confirm that recognition and support once again—for We are the first to owe to Christ the duty of being a good Shepherd. We know how much of their life is woven of trouble and want, in how many cases every hour of their day is in itself a sacrifice to God.

That so much generosity may not fail of the purpose proposed by the Church, the emigrant missionary should see to it that his stock of those virtues that are proper to the priesthood is enriched by virtues that are special to his function. Of those We would mention a few, in the first place right intention and perseverance in prayer.

The former will prevent him confusing his priestly mission with any sort of "altruistic" help which, though inspired by worthy motives like love of country, does not rise to the dignity of the apostolate and can never be the spring of a devotion to the neighbour that will be constant, complete and selfless. The flock on the other hand is seldom deceived in its judgment of the rightness of the pastor's intention. It knows well to distinguish the missionary from the mercenary or from him who has set himself the task of promoting the interests of his country in harmony with those of the emigrants. Missionaries, as the very word indicates, are the envoys of God and the Church to make sure of spiritual service to souls.

It is clear that in fact one comes to a right intention only by assiduous prayer—necessary for all and at all times but particularly indispensable to the missionary. In a way of life as busy as his, spent in isolation—even physical isolation—from his companions, burdened with numberless cares that tend to dry up the spirit, prayer is the rest, the society and the food of the priestly soul.

With those interior virtues, hidden springs of energy, the missionary will cultivate too the external virtues to guide his relations with the faithful and with his social and material environment. He will be a vigilant pastor, prudent and patient. He will keep a sharp and watchful eye to prevent false teaching and perverse morals taking root among the emigrants under the pretext of adaptation to local circumstances. Where the host country would like to *assimilate* foreigners the missionary will ensure that this is done without prejudice to natural rights or the sacrifice of religious and moral values. And these are often closely bound up with the traditions of the homeland. He will see too that the workers are not the object of illicit gain, and he will urge them to abide by the prescriptions of the law. On the other hand—especially when there is question of whole families who intend to settle down in the country of their adoption—he will do his best to ensure that the emigrants understand their debt to the people who have given them hospitality and are trying to facilitate their progressive adaptation to a new way of life.

The missionary must also show a keen sense of prudence in his dealings with civil and religious authorities, so as to co-ordinate the interests of the faithful with the particular demands of the law, and if possible with the just desires of those who are vested with power. Occasional cases of friction will arise for which a solution will be beyond his capabilities, but in many cases a prudent moderation in act and word will suffice to establish a *modus vivendi* satisfactory to both sides.

In his direct dealings with the faithful the missionary will be a man of unshakable patience. It is to him they will come to look for services the most varied and humble, at the least opportune times and not always in the most engaging manner. But charity knows no degrees of dedication. He will be ready to act as school-teacher, infirmarian, secretary in negotiations with the civil powers, promoter of just wages—he will taste the deep-felt joy of the Apostles in making himself all things to all men. It is precisely those small services given with a joyous heart that bring home to the emigrant the maternal presence of the Church.

Then the occasion presents itself to the community of the faithful, and in the first place to their pastors, of showing that the unity and catholicity of the common Mother, the Church, are today living and active notes. That is why a courteous tolerance towards the emigrants is not enough, any more than a feeling of pity or of barren sympathy; there is need further of an effectual love such as characterised the fervent Christian communities of the first centuries. To a great number of Catholics, priests and laity, Providence has given today an opportunity of renewing in their parishes this old and undying glory of the Christian, to show to the surrounding world, divided by so many nationalistic conflicts, how deep in the Church goes the sense of universality. She asks no member of the Mystical Body to produce his passport before deciding to admit him to the life of the community and to make him a sharer in her love and her spiritual wealth.

Beloved Sons, in bringing these pastoral thoughts to a close is it necessary to repeat how high and praiseworthy is the function entrusted you by the Church in making you representatives on the Committees for Emigration? Give yourselves whole-heartedly to the work of continuing the splendid tradition of charity and missionary-mindedness, which in the designs of Providence—We believe—does not aim solely at the immediate welfare of individuals. The roads of salvific conquests for Christ are infinite, as history

shows. The phenomenon of present-day emigration follows out its own unfaltering laws, but it is the nature of divine wisdom to use human facts, even if sometimes they are sad facts, to realise plans of salvation for the good of humanity as a whole. In this way humble colonies of Christian workers can become nurseries of Christianity where it has never penetrated or where perhaps its meaning has been lost. In this way—it is Our hope and Our prayer—your work fits into the framework of universal redemption. With this vast and consoling vision before your eyes set to work to make your Committees ever more effective, putting them at the service of God and of souls.

That Our wish may be granted We lift up Our prayers to God and give you all Our paternal apostolic benediction.

A Worker in Birmingham

IN June of last year, with the permission of the National Executive of Muintir na Tire, I set sail for Birmingham, England, to find out for myself the truth about the lot of our people over there. I decided I would go as the thousands of others go, with just a few pounds, accepting their ways of living, working conditions, living conditions, etc., especially the conditions applying to the unskilled workers, who form the greater percentage of the many who go. I set out my experiences for twenty-one days.

I booked my passage Second Class return, Dublin to Birmingham, at a cost of £5 2s (no sleeping). My boat, the *Cambria*, sailed from Dun Laoghaire at 8.40 p.m. My wife and children waved from the shore. A young man and his wife with four children (eldest about eight years) stood beside me. He was from County Carlow; the young mother was crying, the man was silent, just looking as were we all, towards the pier. I saw a woman lift up a child so that the father who was on the ship could see him. The little children were laughing and enjoying the thrill of it all. Men of all ages were there and lots of young girls. I saw five men from County Mayo, two old and grey, old campaigners, who had been over many times, the others were just out of their 'teens. They had bottles of stout in their pockets and a devil-may-care attitude about them. I was near them and asked them what they were going to do, and they answered "Wimpey." I later found out that Wimpey

was one of the biggest builders in England, and thousands of Irish are employed by him. Three boys from Galway under eighteen years of age, one only fifteen years, going to Manchester. An old man and his son from Limerick, father says no work at home. Five girls from Drumshanbo going to factories, two to the buses. Three girls from Aughavas. Men from Carrigallen, one man going to work in a bar. Two men from Dublin, going, as they said, just on spec. Two men in long-sleeved waistcoats speak in Irish at the ship's bar, both from Connemara. One man said: "I have just set my small place, and I am clearing out. Our place is a dead loss. What's the use in killing oneself for nothing? I'll never come back." Ireland better under British rule, no work, no work, no work. We talked outside in the cold moonlight, of the hardship of the underdog, and cast vicious, envious eyes (only pretence, but it made us seem tough and much abused) at the deck of our First Class brethren. We stay outside in the misty rain and watch the lights fade. We talk of work and what lies ahead, and we get advice from one who has been over before. I met a man who was a member of the Muintir na Tire Parish Council of ———, County Limerick. He was in the bar for quite a while and had a decided list to starboard. Off key he sang *My Beauty of Limerick*. We talked of Canon Hayes. "Now, there's a man for you, son," he taps me on the back, "a man who understood you and me, but the rest of them are a dead loss." We eat chips and egg, and solve the problems by being unanimous that the whole shoot are a dead loss. The lights of Holyhead appear; we move for our bags.

I step on English soil. It is 12 o'clock midnight. My adventure begins; I wait for an hour and a half. It is now 1.30 a.m., and our train moves off. The children sleep; the men and girls sit silent with a vague expression on their faces. Their thoughts like mine, I am sure, are on tomorrow, and what the future will bring. We reach Birmingham at 5.10 a.m. It is raining outside. I go to the Irish Centre, but find it closed. I go from place to place looking for somewhere to sleep for a while. My bag seems a ton weight. I search the notice boards on the side-walks, to see where accommodation offered, but no board. At 9 a.m. I get fixed up in a cheap hotel, and did I sleep. I am called at 7.30 p.m., and it is Friday. My feet are blistered, and I long to stay on a while. I smell bacon and eggs, but alas! it is Friday, so I ask for eggs only.

I again start my search for digs and finally I succeed in getting fixed up at £3 10s per week, and pay in advance. My landlord is

from Limerick, and his wife from Belfast. He says he is a Roman Catholic; she says, well she doesn't hold with any of these things. I share a room with a grand lad from Mayo. He drives the buses. He introduces me to his girl friend, also from the West of Ireland. They are engaged and are saving up to get married. She is a lovely girl of twenty-two, and he a fine lad of twenty-four. He earns £15 per week with overtime, and she about £7 or £8. She sleeps next room, and they share food and she washes his shirts. "When will you be married?" I ask, and am told "sometime." "But it is not exactly right living together like this," said I. She says: "you are old-fashioned, Oliver, we are here for the past couple of years, and can take care of ourselves. We do not want to get married for a while as we can not have children in houses; landlords will not allow you to stay." Poor couple, I liked them very much. They send home some money to help their parents each week. They are very bitter against Irish clergy, but speak kindly of priests over here. "The priests in Ireland don't care a hang what happens us, they are snobs."

I went down town. In every area I saw offices of the Communist Party. Tenants' Associations are their big aim, and it is easy to see why the Irish join. The Communists are great psychologists, and, knowing Irish history and the part played by landlords, they realize how the name "landlord" stinks in the nostrils of every Irishman, and the cry "Up and at them, fellows" falls like music on the ears of the gullible Irish. I am amazed at the civility and courtesy and kindness of the English everywhere. England with all its faults is definitely a very friendly country. I meet blacks and browns and yellows, men and women. Everyone, everywhere, men, women and children, are very well dressed. There are churches everywhere. I did not see a Catholic one, no ringing of bells. I miss that homely sound. I go to the Post Office and write a letter while there. I saw some Irish lads register letters home. I leave the hotel and the cost is £1 3s 6d for bed and breakfast and dinner. Plenty of money and lots of work for everyone. Many firms are the property of the Irish lads who have made the grade. "I can truthfully say that where people mind themselves over here there is nothing to stop them reaching the top." So I am told by an Irish foreman.

It is Sunday; I go to Mass. My landlord didn't come; he had the front garden to mow. "When you are over here a while," he tells me, "you will change your silly ideas." Big crowd at the Mass is unmistakably Irish. Churches are overcrowded, and overflow went to school

nearby and had Mass there. A young priest robed and disrobed at the side of the altar. Great fervour by women, but not so many receiving Holy Communion. Not many children present. Men noisy in the back benches. The Irish go to Mass in vast numbers, and it is the last act of Faith they cling to. I stand outside and try to place the accents: Cork, Kerry, Donegal. I give up, they were all there. The churches are small and austere, but they are well cared for. I take my hat off to the priests of Birmingham, who do a wonderful job of heartbreaking toil and keep smiling. Truly they are great. I walk up town that night and hear the Irish sing the songs of Ireland and shout "Up the I.R.A." as they go staggering home. I did not see any policemen about.

Whit Monday. I went with my landlord by car to Stratford-on-Avon, where thousands go on week-ends, the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Went that night with Tom and two chaps from Kilkenny to a pub up town. This was one of the many of its kind in Birmingham and it boasted of a social centre which consisted of a large room off the bar with tables and chairs and a piano with a bandstand in a corner where men and women can sing or step dance or act the fool for the entertainment of the gathering. There were 150 present of all ages, men and women, and they were mostly Irish. I was examined with smiling eyes by the many who were amazed to see a man take minerals, and I got many a good-humoured dig about my halo, etc. A Father Murphy from Belfast came in and after telling a few funny stories told us he was collecting for a new Irish Centre and asked for volunteers to sing or step dance in order to put on a show. Soon it was a bit of home from home. *Paddy Reilly from Ballyjamesduff*, *Killarney*, *The Old Bog Road* and *If We Only Had Old Ireland Over Here* filled us with nostalgia for home. After an hour the Paddies and Biddies hand over with a heart and a half the half-crown, etc. to make up a total of £12. There were wild cheers for Father Murphy and bitter talk of the priests at home. From there we went to a dance in an Irish Hall not far away. Here and there as we went we saw the lads having a bit of a scrap, but the police cleared the streets. There are no rows or fights inside pubs or halls or clubs, for the simple reason that each has a dangerous weapon in the shape of a chucker-out. Big fifteen-stone six-footers, who smile broadly but hit mightily. Hence the fights in the streets but their fights are mostly tame affairs. As we went into the hall we could see the boys and girls full spate at the Irish reels. Soon it was over, and we move for home. My

friends decided to have a bit of a scrap and I soon find myself trying to separate them, with, I can tell you, not a little dread and many a silent prayer. The police arrive and put us on the move and gave me a word of warning, which to my mind was superfluous. Everyone dances, everyone drinks and from time to time everyone fights and I do mean both sexes, but the fights are not vicious or prolonged.

I went to the Labour Exchange to get a job and again I am impressed by the kindness and humanity of the Civil Servants The place was like a doctor's consulting room and although big crowds were waiting they took time to tell you all the little things that make for kindness, the place to catch the bus, the best way to go, etc. I get a job in P. H. Parsons, a small factory employing about 200. The foreman of the factory fills in my name, tells me that I am to be employed in the store at £8 14s per week, 44 hours, no work on Saturday, tells me what to wear and wishes me luck. He tells me too that Irish do not stay in factories because the wages are too small. "They prefer," he says, "to work with the builders, where there is a lot of overtime, and Sunday work. The Sunday work, you know, is the beer money." I get up at 6.30 a.m. and take my place at the bus queue where there are thousands heading for work. Hundreds of buses work continuously to get the workers in time. I clock in and start my first day. I work in a huge store which supplies the factory with the component parts that go to make electrical equipment which goes all over the world. There are men and women, young and old, black and white. The work is easy; there is a break at 10 a.m. for ten minutes for tea (a cup of tea can be bought for 2d). Dinner at 1s 6d, 3-course in canteen at 1 o'clock. A break at 4 p.m. of ten minutes for tea. There is music while you work, and conditions leave nothing to be desired. There are very few Irish here. I met a man from Templemore; he talked of days in the hurling field; he was about sixty years of age. A great spirit of good comradeship prevailed within the factory. Lots of friendly advice was given to the new man, Paddy, as I was called. Workers do their work well, and there is very little loitering. "If only we could get work at home," my friend from Templemore complains, "I'd love to go back home again. I'd work for anything if one could get constant employment. Over here its time and clocks and bells and buses. Ah, Ireland is a grand place if one had money."

I go for a stroll in the evening in the local park. There are plenty

of parks and baths at a very small charge everywhere in the city. Lovely children, very well dressed, play while their parents, enjoy the sun under the trees. I did not see one poorly-dressed man, woman or child during my stay of twenty days. Sunday is a lonely day; people work at mowing the lawn, clipping the hedge, or just sleep. There are no games. The pubs are open. I go to a Club with a chap from Holycross and his wife. It is an Anglers' Club, and he is a member. Again my experience of the night in Crown Pub is repeated. Wine, women and song. The people talk sex with a candour that would truly shock our toughest egg at home. Nothing is sacred and it is considered broadminded. Young men and girls in their teens fraternise freely in many Youth Hostels throughout the city. Prostitutes by the dozen roam the streets, and hundreds of unmarried live together for years. The girl in the digs where I stay has gone on holidays. She flew over, taking with her a wardrobe of clothes and £98. What a dash she will cut back in the little village in the West. Who wouldn't go to England?

It's Friday and my last day at work. I feel lonely at leaving such grand comrades. There is no surprise at my leaving. The Irish never stay long anywhere. The foreman tells me: "You Paddies are good workers if only you were not so fiery."

I went to see an Irish girl from home in Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Here again the splendour and grandeur, the attention and the wonderful achievements of this free medical treatment makes one easily understand why people criticize our health service. This girl, a domestic servant, has undergone a serious operation successfully, and is now being sent for a holiday-with-pay while convalescent. She was loud in her praise of everything and everyone and compared it with conditions in Public Wards back home.

I met Father Murphy of the Irish Centre, and was shown over this eight-roomed establishment, where a cup of tea, a list of landladies, and a few hours rest is given to any Irish emigrant who is on the rocks. The place is doing a great job under trying conditions; money is badly needed, and voluntary workers have a heavy task in meeting trains as early as 5 a.m. There is no doubt but that the clergy are doing everything humanly possible to save the people. Went into a café where the waitress told me she was a native of Thurles, and that the girl on the left was from Cork. Both are married and have no children. "We have to work and children would be a hindrance," they told me. They talked of Irish governments and bemoaned the fact of no work at home. Bitterness at

the neglect of clergy at home, who do not use their power to help. All the emigrants I have met, and they were many, seemed to have the notion that Church and State combined against them at home, and that the opposite prevails in England. The only ones they hold dear and with any power to influence those exiles are their old folk at home. "The old man" or "the old woman" are words spoken with the deepest feeling of love and affection. "The only ones I care about," "I must send a few bob," "I wouldn't like them to know." Stand in any group of Irish, let them be ever so tough, and a guarantee you will hear some of the foregoing words within five minutes.

Now my time is nearly over and my boat sails tomorrow. What did I find?

No. 1. I found out that the Irish leave home for economic reasons and I mean the huge number of unskilled or semi-skilled workers who form the greater portion of the emigrants.

No. 2. That work and conditions of work (overtime, breaks, wages) are excellent, and leave little to be desired.

No. 3. That living conditions for people unable to purchase their own house are very bad; often workers are forced to live four and five to a room with great danger to health and morals; accommodation is scarce and very expensive.

No. 4. That landladies will not allow children in houses let. Hence birth control is practised freely.

No. 5. That since women work and can get plenty of it there is no home life, and of course no family.

No. 6. That the Irish lose the Faith is without doubt, or to say the most for them, the girls drift and hold on a little but men drift completely. I will put it this way: a boy and girl of twenty-one may hold on to the Faith, but their children have little hope at all.

No. 7. That Irish care only for their parents, and that if anything is to be done to save our boys and girls it must have the wholehearted support of the parents.

No. 8. That of the hundreds of professionals who emigrate each year it can truly be said that they are a credit to themselves and Ireland, and it is true to say that they are doing wonderful work in many spheres to help the less fortunate along. I met many who in their spare time went from house to house (being insulted at times) contacting Irish men and girls.

No. 9. That where Muintir na Tire comes in is by way of education. I really believe that a wonderful amount of good can be done by

preparing people for what lies ahead. I believe, too, that Muintir na Tire could use its influence with parents to make an all-out effort to have their boys and girls home at least once a year, and in this way keep constant contact with people away from home. This will also let them see that somebody cares and is interested in their welfare.

No. 10. That every exile I spoke to would gladly come back to Ireland and accept half what he is getting in England if he could be sure of constant employment.

No. 11. I recommend that a small grant be given towards the new Irish Centre and that literature and photos be sent for display in windows. While there I saw many photographs of football matches, horse-racing, sports, dances, etc. from various parts of Ireland. We at home should show our goodwill in every concrete way.

OLIVER REILLY

Prosperous, County Kildare

England and the Lay-Apostolate

THERE can be no doubt that there exists a fine body of active and zealous Catholics spending much of their spare time as best they may under the leadership of the clergy in one form or other of the lay apostolate. There can be no praise too high for those so inspired with the spirit of zeal, particularly when it is wedded to the spirit of prudence and of docility to duly appointed authority. But if we are considering the general character of Catholic life in England, the spirit which imbues it, that which makes it possible to assess Catholic life here in comparison with Catholic life elsewhere, then I would indeed describe it as a spirit of traditional inactivity in the lay apostolate.

Before attempting to substantiate what may seem at first sight an ungenerous judgment and, hoping to temper the gusts of righteous wrath from those who are giving already a splendid example of Catholic activity, I hasten to explain that I view Catholic life in England from a position which is not by any means that of a typical English Catholic. In the first place I have spent a large proportion of my adult years overseas and in the second I was received into the Church overseas seventeen years ago. Moreover a significant

part of my life as a Catholic has been spent abroad. Another factor influencing my outlook not a little is that I spent two fairly recent years in a country ruled by a Communist government in circumstances which had something of the atmosphere of apostolic times. A further factor that I am particularly glad to mention is that over a period of years I have been taken in hand by a succession of skilled and zealous priests and enthusiastic laymen with the object of training me in the lay apostolate.

It is, therefore, from an overseas source of Catholic life and tradition that I have come to England; it is with this training and background that I attempt to apply in an English setting those lessons so imperfectly learned elsewhere and it is in these circumstances that I voice the conviction that, viewed in a broad field of the character of Catholic life in England, there is a firm tradition of inactivity which only a powerful and perseveringly applied effort can expect to transform.

To be frank and objective we have to face up to the unpleasant fact that, taken as a whole, we are not doing enough because the majority of us are doing little or nothing.

What are we to say, for instance, of a parish of several hundred practising Catholics, set amidst a non-Catholic population of nearly twenty thousand, into which a Catholic moves, makes himself known to the parish priest, continues to practise as a daily communicant and is not contacted by a single Catholic parishioner for recruitment into a parish society over a period of more than a year? Impossible you will say. It is possible and it is true. In that case some will retort, it is his own fault. He should have contacted the parishioners.

But that misses the whole point. If the newcomer has a duty to contact his new neighbours how much more those other members of the Mystical Body of Christ into whose midst he has moved?

Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely from personal knowledge. They cry shame upon us and point the finger of scorn at our pretensions to being Catholic.

Anyone who has seen, as I have seen overseas, the tremendous fruitfulness of parish life where every soul is contacting or being contacted by others in an intense spirit of Catholic zeal under the control and orders of the parish priest, will experience that sense of deathly stillness which depresses us in some English parishes.

Anyone who has heard, as I have heard, the very school children from Catholic schools overseas bubbling over with keen discussion on Catholic topics of doctrine or moral interest, will have that sense

of futility which some of us feel when the statistics of lapsation amongst former pupils of Catholic schools in England are made known.

Anyone who knows, as I know from personal experience, the desperate urgency of the need on the one hand, and on the other the power of generous response of the human soul to the appeal "You are needed", will feel that sense of frustration that comes to those who await the apepal, who urge the appeal, but are never called.

The Communists, those dupes of the Devil, put us to shame. I have sat at the same arbitration table under a Communist government with a man long known to me as a meek nonentity. But there his eyes were shining and his voice rang with a new sense of confidence and pride. When the Communist arbitrator had left us alone for a few minutes I said to him: "You are a changed man now you have union office under the Communists." He unhesitatingly replied: "Yes, it is the sense of being needed, of being used. I was nobody, now I am somebody."

If the Communists, the children of this world, can be wise in their generation, are the children of light to be left un-needed, uncalled?

Many will indignantly repudiate the suggestion that the laity are not being called to the service of the Church in the apostolate. "We call," they will say, "but the laity do not respond and when they do respond they are untrained and therefore undependable. When we try to train them they kick over the traces."

No doubt there is some truth in this.

I am quite certain, after ten years of varied experience of a number of Catholic societies that, although they are all excellent and their members are to be congratulated upon what they have accomplished, there is in fact one lay society with a system pre-eminently good and specially designed to stimulate our Catholic life to a high pitch of apostolic fervour and activity.

In these circumstances it so happens that there now enters into the field of the apostolate of the laity in England a new and important factor, or rather a factor not new but newly-revived. I refer to the post-war immigration into England of large numbers of Irish men and women. This is surely a factor which should be decisive in the apostolate. Nothing, surely, can restrain this fine body of Catholics from transforming by their zeal, initiative and intense spirit of Faith the whole fabric of Catholic life in England and in fact of

England itself. Surely the day of England as the Dowry of Mary is once more within sight of the prophetic eyes of the Faithful?

There are, indeed, many inspiring examples of the Irish Catholic spirit. I have met many and I have been delighted to have had the opportunity of working with them; they command our unqualified respect, gratitude and love. Their influence is powerful and all pervading, but the evidence available hardly justifies complacency.

Let the Irish speak for themselves. None of them has confided in me that they are converting England quickly. Some have confessed that England is perverting the Irish. The truth lies somewhere between. But is it a comforting truth? Do the Irish say that the Irish on arrival in England man the citadel or leap into the spiritual breach? I have not been told that. On the contrary I have been told disquieting accounts that do not portray the Irish in England as on the whole a body filled with the spirit of zeal for the apostolate.

There are indeed many regrettable distractions in England to lead the new arrival astray. There are many severe and terrible temptations. Not all the Irish survive unscathed.

But is the Irish response to the appeal to the apostolate—an appeal to a spirit even of heroism—such that both the English and the Irish can say: "We are fighting shoulder to shoulder, our ranks are full, new legions are being formed, the tide of battle sways but turns in our favour"? I have not heard knowledgeable and well informed Catholics speak like that or anything like it. Some have gone so far as to declare that a large majority of Irish arrive in England quite unfitted to enter the ranks of an active apostolate. I do not know the inner truth of this. What I do know is that trained members of the Legion of Mary overseas foresaw and faced up to a bitter Communist persecution in such a way that they earned for the Legion the intense and undying hatred of the Communists.

Now I say to myself: "If trained Catholic Legionaries could withstand the wiles and teror of the Communists, why cannot trained Irish Catholics coming to England withstand the meretricious attractions and temptations of non-Catholic English life?" I know of no reason. I know and love the Irish and I have even more cause than others to be grateful to Irish priests. It has been my good fortune to know and to be in personal contact with literally hundreds of priests of practically every nationality. To all I express my gratitude for the generosity of their kindness, forbearance and patience, particularly their patience. If I were required to state which nationality of priests had influenced me most I would be

reluctant to make any invidious distinction where all have been so helpful. But in plain historical fact I have been most influenced for good by Irish priests in the mission field. It was they, even more than others, who won me at first to a willing co-operation in, and finally to an enthusiastic pursuit of the lay apostolate. This stubborn English clay has been moulded by Irish hands. Those who don't like the shape should not blame the Irish . . . The Irish potter does not have entirely his own way with English clay. But at least the imprint of Irish hands is there and I am grateful for it.

So I have no difficulty in believing that if, as some aver, there is a real problem of lack of formation and training in the apostolate amongst some of our Irish immigrants, the solution can be as readily applied by Irish priests in Ireland in respect of future immigrants as it was in at least one English case by Irish priests in the mission field.

Moreover the magnificent response to the appeal to the laity made by priests, many of them Irish, in the mission field in the very teeth of Communist oppression, gives strong grounds for confidence that there is a solution available; it is waiting to be used and used properly.

The Legion of Mary system to some is a stumbling block. "We like the spirit generated in the Legion," they say. "But any system which is invariable is unsuitable for use by those who must mould it to suit themselves."

Like all the other uninformed objections to the Legion system this is answered fully and effectively in the Legion Handbook. No parish is forced to have the Legion. But it is a condition of its aceptance that it is accepted *in toto,* invariable system and all.

The Legion, it is sometimes suggested, should be something of a chameleon, ever ready to change to suit its environment and the local temper. It may be in some eyes something of an ungainly goose but as it lays the golden eggs of an intense apostolic spirit, it should not be plucked nor strangled to suit local tastes.

I have met people who become a little impatient when I instance the effectiveness of the Legion of Mary elsewhere. "Yes, yes," they say tolerantly. "For others perhaps, but not for England. We are different." This makes me wonder whether the wild theories of the queer sect of British Israelites have been more widely accepted than even its own adherents realize.

Those who are ready to criticize Irish immigrants for not reporting immediately for duty at the nearest Legion praesidium after

arrival in England are sometimes answered with a certain rough justice. "Why," it is said, "don't you contact them and recruit them and train them yourselves. You say you need them and welcome them. We send you the raw material. You go ahead and lick it into shape, it is for England's benefit."

There is something in this. But the problem has to be viewed with detachment and fairmindedly. It has to be admitted that promoting the Legion of Mary in England is hard and sometimes unrewarding work. The English, it is true, have become accustomed, slowly and reluctantly, to being drafted into the ranks of the armed forces for the defence of the country and its interests. They accept the necessary discipline this entails. But few Englishmen take kindly at first to discipline for any other purpose.

The Legion of Mary is a highly disciplined system. Otherwise it would not be so fruitful. Those who join its ranks are required to accept its discipline for the purpose of being trained to defend and extend the Kingdom of Christ. It is clearly impossible to be a suitable instrument for that purpose unless there is co-operation in a spirit of docility. In many cases there is wholehearted and effective co-operation. Those instruments become powerful for good. But we must not be blind to the fact that getting English parishes to accept and use the Legion effectively needs a lot of patience as well as adroitness in handling the opposition.

There is, it seems to me, an unanswerable case for training and forming Irish apostles in Ireland before they come to England.

Lest I may have expressed too keen a criticism of conditions as they appear to me I gladly admit a very bright ray of light into the very gloomy picture I have painted. We need a painless means of converting people to the willing acceptance of the obligation of the apostolate. If you lecture them, argue with them, denounce them, preach to them, cajole them with the object of making them apostles, by and large they remain unconverted. "I like to do what I like to do and I don't like to do that," they say. They are in effect denying Our Lord's command: "Go ye . . ." If we find we cannot convert them by our eloquence nor even by our example we must try some other way and fortunately this is now to hand in the new work of the Legion going under the name of the Patricians. It is quite simply a method of encouraging people to convert themselves by their own eloquence.

WALTER PRICE

London.

An Irishman in England

GENERALISATIONS are notoriously dangerous and an article must necessarily be full of them when its terms of reference, briefly expressed, may be said to be: "Is the average Irishman in Britain a misfit and, if so, why?"

But if I define "average Irishman" as the representative of the majority of Irish-born people now living in Britain whom I have met in this country in the past four years, and "misfit" as a person who does not blend into the social background because of some noticeable difference of appearance, speech, dress or the like and who is regarded as a social "outsider" in consequence, then I would say that the average Irishman in Britain is indeed a misfit.

Why is this so? The answer is a complex one and must take into account such considerations as temperament (which is inherited); outlook (which is developed by environment); and behaviour patterns (which are the result of both environment and habit).

By temperament, the Irishman is mercurial where the Englishman is placid; excitable, argumentative, sensitive, imaginative where the Englishman is calm, staid, and not given to argument or flights of imagination. Above all the Irishman has a quality of spontaneity whereas the English people among whom he must live are methodical, practical and "cut-and-dried."

Differences in temperament are accentuated by differences in outlook. The Englishman is basically bourgeois (and I use the term to include the derogatory overtones associated with it). That means that his outlook is smug, small-minded, intellectually limited, lacking in imagination, in the capacity to admit new ideas, in range of thought and depth of perception. By comparison, the average Irishman of equal educational training, is more interested in new ideas and arguments, more natively intelligent and more "alive" in every way.

In English society, however, these qualities are often a disadvantage for they mark the Irishman out as "different," as not conforming to type and therefore an "outsider." The fact is that the Englishman's world, though a limited one, is an extremely ordered one. There may be few things in it but each has it own place and each thing is in its place. He simply refuses to allow any external circumstance or happening or person to upset it. This quality, which is often regarded as British phlegm, calm and steadfastness, is simply the result of unimaginativeness and is for them, according

to circumstances, both a blessing and a curse.

These differences in temperament and outlook are not, however, the proximate cause of the misunderstandings between the two races, though they must be mentioned if we are to understand the underlying causes. It is when they reflect themselves in external behaviour patterns that the real trouble begins.

The English, like every race or people or tribe, have certain tests of acceptance to any stratum of their society. In some cases it is the old school tie, the nuances of pronunciation or inflection, a code of conduct; in others a pattern of behaviour or a community of interest.

But when the Englishman begins to apply these tests to his Irish acquaintances he finds that they do not work. He cannot judge the standing of an Irish school tie; he cannot stratify by accent, by outlook, or by any of the methods he employs with his fellow-countrymen.

He is, therefore, forced back to judge an "outsider" by a different set of values. And often he is prepared to accept the "outsider's" own valuation of himself. Unfortunately the majority of Irishmen have an unaccountable inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* the English and they rate themselves too low. So the Englishman, accepting the Irishman at his own valuation, rates him socially inferior when he is often in fact his intellectual equal or superior.

This brings us to the kernel of the trouble. For the Englishman stratifies people into social classes not because of their intellectual abilities. Birth, connections, dress and deportment, wealth, achievement, employment—these, rather than intellectuality, the gifts of imagination, sensitivity are the tests. And in them the average Irishman often does not measure up.

For there are some characteristics of the Irish which the English can never understand. First of all there is what the English regard as the Irishman's complete irresponsibility. Because Irish people do not always do the expected, because they turn up late for appointments or do not come at all, because they appear to lack ambition, the English regard them as shiftless. The average English youth has his or her career well planned out from an early age. This is in marked contrast to the average Irish immigrant to Britain, who is either an unskilled labourer or a young man or girl with a Leaving Certificate and no specific training for any occupation nor, it would appear to the English, the inclination to undergo such training.

This apparent lack of responsibility damns many an Irishman in

the eyes of his English acquaintances. So, too, does a more personal matter—that of sartorial standards. The Englishman, as a rule, dresses far better than the Irishman (and the same is true for women). I have seen some Irish professional men arriving in London attired in a way which is accepted in Dublin but which is regarded with surprise and slight disdain here. This may be a small point in our eyes (and we may be right in this view) but it is of great importance to the English.

To be fair to the English, however, it must be remembered that they are as antagonistic to and distrustful of any other nationality as they are of the Irish. Their attitude to the Irish is not much different from their attitude towards the Italians, Spanish, French, Germans or coloured peiple. Even the Scots and the Welsh, and the businessman from the North of England, suffer from this same superciliousness and disdain on the part of the English in the south.

The trouble or a great part of it is that the English have a preconceived idea of the Irish, just as we have of them. By and large they think of us as completely unpredictable, "mad," dirty, drunken, quarrelsome and generally "a bad lot."

So when an individual Irishman fails in any way to conform to their standard or pattern of behaviour, it is taken as proof that the misconception is justified. (And it is only human nature to like being proved right, which, perhaps, explains why the British Press so frequently publicizes the wrongdoings of Irish people in Britain.)

But it is only fair to remember, also, that too many Irish immigrants provide justification for the English opinion of them. They get jobs and do not turn up to them, they get drunk in the publichouses and fight in the streets, they ruin furniture and bedding in their "digs" and so on. These are things which are understood and easily forgiven in Ireland, but they damn the Irishman in British eyes. And though those who do such things may be very much in the minority, all the Irish suffer as a result.

It is therefore, true to say, in a general way, that society has not been able to fuse the Irish into their new environment in Britain since they have not the same social behaviour patterns as the British and have failed to acquire them.

Nor has religion bridged the gap between the English Catholic and the Irish Catholic. They subscribe to the same doctrines, go to the same churches, receive the same sacraments; but they are still poles apart in mutual understanding.

The trouble stems from the difference in outlook on religion.

The English Catholic's approach to his faith is based on intellectual acceptance of its tenets and punctilious observance of the duties this acceptance involves. For the average Irish Catholic, religion is a matter between himself and God. He regards prayer as his direct method of communication with the Almighty, not as a corporate act of worship, as the Englishman does.

This may explain why the Irish Catholic does things which shock and hurt the English Catholic. He comes late to Mass and leaves before it is over. He ignores the frequent requests from the pulpit that he should come in time and wait until the priest has left the altar. He will stand at the back of the church though there are plenty of seats up in front. He shows less reverence in church than does the English Catholic and he takes little or no part in parish activities.

These complaints may appear comparatively insignificant. The point is that the English do not think them insignificant. Like the matters of dress and deportment, the outward appearance counts for much and if the Irish want to be accepted by the English they must take note of the fact. As one English Catholic put it to me: "We were brought up to think that Ireland is the Catholic country *par excellence*. It is hard to believe that when we see the way the Irish behave in church."

Politics have not provided a bridge either. Since Ireland (or twenty-six counties of it) ceased to be represented at Westminster, the Irish vote, which at one time could make or break a British government, has ceased to exist. One attempt was made to rally Irish voters in Britain behind the Anti-Partition League's banner in opposition to the British Labour Party, following the passing of the Ireland Act in 1948. That endeavour collapsed and since then there has been no attempt to organize Irish voters. Now the Irish in Britain vote on a class basis when they vote at all.

And so cut off mentally, socially, religiously and politically from those living and working with him, the Irishman in Britain turns for human contact to his fellow-countrymen. This explains the mushroom growth of Irish clubs, "county associations" (there are in London some twenty-four of these organizations into which admission is based on birth in a particular Irish county) and similar societies in the post-war years. The proclaimed aim of such societies is to keep Irish culture alive among their members, though, in fact, they serve mainly as social meeting-places. They have a certain use in this respect but since they save their members from the necessity of having to adapt themselves to their social and cultural environ-

ment they are merely delaying the integration process.

Mr. De Valera has shown himself alive to this danger and on more than one occasion has stressed that the Irish people in Britain play their full part in the social and civil life of the communities in which they live. Shaw, of course, went much further and said something to the effect that Irishmen in Britain should keep well out of each other's way.

It was different when Irish emigration was directed towards America and Australia. The different elements which were forming society were still in the crucible and the Irishman supplied an essential part. But the pattern of English society has been formed over the centuries and is fully developed and there is no room for new elementes. The "outsiders" must either conform or remain outside.

Again America and Australia were far from home and the Irishman had to make the best of his new life. But London, as the airline advertisement says, is only forty winks from Dublin and the average Irishman is in constant touch with Ireland through his own comings-and-goings or those of his relatives and work mates. He is, as it were, joined to his motherland by an abiding umbilical cord through which he draws mental nourishment.

Despite that or more likely because of it, he has a deep sense of "not belonging." Very many Irish people will not put down permanent roots in England, such as buying a house, since they think that sooner or later an opportunity of returning to Ireland will arise. It is this feeling of "not belonging" which more than anything else makes so many Irish people in England depend for conviviality on publichouse company and seek solace for the pangs of "exile" in the bottom of a glass.

This psychological homelessness is the real tragedy of the Irish in Britain compared with which the physical difficulties of emigration and even the natural distress at leaving home and family are small. For while Britain's corn is wholesome and nourishing it is still alien corn. And it cannot satisfy a hunger which is of the mind rather than of the body.

I have been asked to do things: one, to state what might be done to improve the position from the point of view of the Irish emigrant to Britain; the other, what the Irish in Britain can do for those at home.

As regards the first, the most important thing is for the Irish nation to accept the fact of emigration and that it is bound to

continue until the economy of the country is sufficiently invigorated and expanded to absorb the total potential working population. Emigration, at least on the present scale, is certainly a disease, but it will not be cured by the pretence of ignoring it. The cure must begin at home. It is too late to do much when a young man or woman arrives in Euston into a totally different environment. As far as possible, jobs in England should be found for intending emigrants before they leave Ireland. Literature advising emigrants what to expect in England, what to do and how to behave should be made available. Local Chambers of Commerce or employers' organizations should be in a position to know if skilled workmen are leaving the country in case any projects are in mind which would provide extra employment.

The other point is what the Irish in Britain can do for those at home. The first is to invest in Irish industry whatever savings they can. Under-investment, especially in agriculture, seems to be the main fault of the present-day Irish economy. If the Irish who get rich in England (and some do) can be persuaded to invest their savings in Ireland they could provide extra employment at home.

Greater support of the Irish centre in London and similar places in other parts of Britain would also be of great value. These centres provide Irish immigrants with accommodation at reasonable rates and help them find employment and lodgings. This is a very necessary work since the first few weeks in England are accepted as being the most dangerous from the moral point of view.

And what the Irish at home and the Irish in Britain equally can do is to put emigration into the proper perspective. I think it is true to say that a fair percentage of Irish emigrants leave Ireland not because of economic compulsion but out of a sense of frustration. They do not realize that this frustration is experienced just as much in Britain or in any other country as in Ireland. In Britain, it manifests itself in juvenile delinquency, the teddy-boy craze, the rock-'n'-roll craze, the "angry young men" movement. Emigration will not cure what is really a form of growing pains. Unfortunately, as I have found from repeated experience, no intending Irish emigrant will believe that until he or she has been in England for six months. Then it is usually too late.

DESMOND FISHER

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Apostles or Lapsed

I WONDER whether anyone else would agree that the problem of Irish emigrants and their high rate of lapsing in England may be another facet of the same problem as the high lapsing of Catholic Servicemen in the Forces. I wouldn't be surprised if the figures are similar.

Major John Watt, writing in STELLA MARIS, estimates that out of every 12 Catholics in the Army:

8 are lapsed or lapsing
4 are practising

12

This is a serious situation and common to all the three British Services, but remember that these young people have come from Catholic families and parishes where the social and religious framework has been deliberately erected to support them. Only yesterday his mother would call him for Mass. Today he opens his Sunday morning eyes to a barrack plastered with "Pin-ups" and his first move to get out of bed is the signal for a half-blasphemous appeal from his neighbours to "keep quiet" and stop disturbing them.

One often hears people talk as if there was something singularly wrong with Irish youth that they should lapse so easily. I don't think there is. It is simply that if you rear a man in the plains, he will gasp for air on high ground. Exactly the same thing happens to English, Scottish and Welsh Catholics in the secular atmosphere of the Armed Services. They lapse too.

It is crying for the moon to expect a new race of Catholics who are impervious to their surroundings, and who will maintain their integrity under whatever onslaught. The practical solution to this problem has already been found and proved and proved again. This is to form a Catholic community which will give them protection on the unit level at least as good as that they enjoyed from family and parish.

On my last Station there were fifty Catholics and the chaplain had complained that only half a dozen ever went near the church. So we started the Legion of Mary with four members. We began by selling Catholic papers round the billets, getting to know everybody, drawing the people together. We organized two Retreats, the evening Rosary, a Study Group, weekday Mass and Communion at the parish church. Soon we had eleven legionaries doing active work on the camp. Then we counted up the flock, everyone of whom by that time we knew intimately, and instead of the handful of practising Catholics, we found just six lapsed ones out of fifty. What a difference!

We also found some amazing apostles among the airmen, half of whom were lapsed before joining the Legion. By joining the lay apostolate these apparently defenceless young Catholics not only defended themselves, but went out on the attack against the evils they might have suffered from themselves and provided a great umbrella of safety for their even weaker brethren.

I believe that we have tried in the past to encourage a type of Catholic fidelity which is too passive and a piety which is too individualistic. Nowadays it is clear that the army of souls confirmed as "Soldiers of Christ" must fight for their lives and must understand how closely they depend on one another for common safety as well as for victory. And it is not enough only to understand the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, it is necessary to live that doctrine. In fact for most of us the understanding can only come through experience.

What happens to the young apostle when he finds himself working week after week for the sake of his nearest neighbours, for his own Catholics or the vast majority of those around him who have no religion at all? I think he gains a sense of community and of responsibility and begins to understand the mystery of the Church. It is very hard, of course, to keep up his spirits in the face of disappointment and he feels a need for more and more prayer. Any layman actively working for religion is labelled "pious" and usually gets a nickname that hurts. Nobody likes being laughed at, but the apostle will have to be laughed at. Indeed, I would say that if he succeeds in maintaining his balance, composure and proper pride he might be wasting his time in the apostolate.

A haughty, self-righteous attitude is not likely to give confidence to anyone seeking the faith or needing support. The greatest weapon in the apostolic armoury is the low esteem in which the apostle is held, allied to his steadiness under the fire of contempt.

Now, if I may revert to the problem of the Irishmen who go to England, I would guess that his faith is stronger than that of his English or Scottish counterpart; but his religion is more individualistic (that is, he finds it less easy to co-operate with his fellow

Catholics) and he is less willing to be thought foolish. Therefore he is perhaps more vulnerable. But my experience has been that Irish Catholics are responsive to a religious appeal and will help if the need is put to them.

I give three examples of legionaries from my last Station which illustrate the modern apostolate. The first legionary was a young man we thought as first was not even a Catholic because he did not appear to know the Hail Mary. But he accepted the difficult tasks assigned to him and persevered to the end. The remarkable thing about him was his ignorance of religion. The son of a mixed marriage and careless parents, he learned his faith late in life through the Legion and it was a standing wonder that he should have joined us at all.

The second legionary was Irish. He was very faithful and did an exceptionally good job distributing Catholic papers. Just before taking his promise after three months probation he announced that he had got his marriage validated! Evidently he was previously "fixed-up" in a registry office and his apostolic work was the spring-board for his return to the Church.

The third had been a junior legionary at school and was the coolest, the most successful and the most courageous I have ever met. His resolution supported the shakiness of the others. His confidence made it all seem easy or at least natural. Because they called him "Pope Pius" and he didn't seem to mind, we didn't find our own nicknames so hard to bear. He had been a leader so long, since the age of fourteen, in fact, that he had quite forgotten how unusual it was. I never knew anyone resent him though he would fill a billet with spellbound comrades during the winter evenings to hear his expositions of doctrine or his answers to questions on the faith.

All these men are typical of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century. Due to the decline of religion in the West the world could hardly be more full of peril for the youthful Catholic, but increasingly this unequal, this rag-tag and bobtail army is taking the field. Wherever it fights it is conspicuously successful, whenever it is absent or unmobilised the picture is a depressing one. The issue is in the last analysis in the hands of the clergy because the laity have no authority to act on their own and they need a priest's encouragement to give them confidence.

Sometimes the necessity for the lay apostolate is obscured, as in Catholic Ireland, by the very goodness of the people. I cannot now

answer the objection of lack of work to perform, which is often posed, but would merely point out that it is not possible to establish an apostolic tradition unless work is done. And without an apostolic tradition it is likely that the most virile elements will be lost to secularism. The young men who leave Ireland have a tremendous opportunity, a better opportunity than their fathers, to affect their new environment for good. The general decline of religion, which has so many dangers, has many opportunities. If even one in ten Irish emigrants had some training in the apostolate before leaving Ireland, the wholesale lapsing could be stopped and a missionary work of outstanding value could be done among the de-christianised but not hostile masses. I believe this missionary work by those who emigrate is also the condition of health for those who remain. A Christian is one to whom is entrusted his neighbour. Ireland is for the sake of the world!

GEOFFREY MORLEY-MOWER

A London Parish

AN introduction to the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption and Saint Gregory, Warwick Street, will reveal for appraisal the very heart of London's West End. The parish church (seating capacity *c.* 400), rich in its antiquity, is situated, one might almost say concealed, just off Regent Street, scarcely one hundred and fifty yards from Piccadilly Circus. Noted for its shrine to Our Lady, it was originally built at the beginning of the seventeenth century as the Chapel of the Portuguese and later the Bavarian Embassies and became a parish church in 1850. The area over which it extends its care would be, if anything, slightly larger than the normal city parish, as we know it.

Warwick Street parish is served by a parish priest and two curates, who must cater for a residential population, and, being the central West End church, for a very numerous floating and passing community also. Besides the normal two morning Masses and a number of regular after-work Masses at 6 p.m., lunch-hour Mass is daily celebrated to cater for office-workers, of whom there are vast numbers in the vicinity. The number for Holy Communion at this lunch-hour Mass far exceeds the number at all the other

Masses put together. Further, there is a lunch-hour Benediction service three days a week; confessions are heard daily from 1 to 1.45 p.m. and always during evening Mass, and every Saturday night. Besides attempting to attend to the visitation of their respective districts, these priests must deal with an unending stream of casual callers, convert-instructions, lay-apostolate groups, school children, talks for non-Catholics, boy scouts, etc., and must minister to a hospital under their care. The ever-recurrent buzz-buzz of the telephone is superimposed upon a week of duties that is capped by a 6.15, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. Sunday Mass schedule with preaching at all Masses, confessions in the afternoon and devotions at 6.30 p.m. Clearly then, in offering religious facilities of all kinds to its parishioners and its passers-by, this parish could scarcely be surpassed.

The parishioners of Warwick Street, apart from those working and living in hotels, clubs, restaurants and such establishments, number about 2,000. But almost all the big hotels (500-1,000 rooms) and residential clubs are in the parish, besides hundreds upon hundreds of catering establishments of one kind or another. These large hotels employ huge numbers of staff and in no two of them will the hours of duty be found to correspond. Some work split-duty, others straight through. While staff are on duty in this type of hotel, they are extremely busy; when they are off duty they are nearly always either out or gone to bed to rest. The numbers could be estimated at roughly between eight and ten thousand Catholics in the hotel and catering trade in the West End, of whom about 85 per cent would be Irish Catholics. Of this number, virtually all the residential staff are girls, from school-leaving age upwards. Further, they are continually moving from hotel to hotel, which is particularly true of the summer months, when there occurs a mass exodus to the coast. Consider the difficulties of visitation in these circumstances on the part of the parochial clergy who are tied to the schedule I have mentioned above. Consequently, that vital contact between the priest and his people, so necessary even in a normal parish, is utterly impossible to maintain, and this in an area notorious for its immorality—the West End.

The need, then, of a special priest or priests to deal with the problem is readily apparent. It becomes even more so when we consider the special difficulties of the people concerned.

Irish immigrants here find themselves in a highly materialistic environment, which is something completely new to them. The

values, standards and principles by which they and their friends have always lived are openly impugned and stated to be outmoded. A course of action opposed to all that they have ever held to be true is presented as the accepted thing to do. The notion that one religion is as good as another is frequently met with, and can be very disturbing, particularly when its protagonists observe a high standard of natural morality. To be a Catholic in these surroundings is to be bombarded with questions about the faith and objections to it. And who can equip a child of fourteen with adequate knowledge to meet such a challenge? Consequently, should practice flag a little, faith is quickly subjected to difficulties and the way paved for total collapse.

Further, the fact that more than 50 per cent of the immigrants have their first contact with a city when they come to London might well appal us. The glamour and bright lights, the endless train and diversity of amusements, many of them unwholesome, the new sense of freedom for which many are inadequately prepared, each exacts its toll. Coupled with this is the stark fact that agents of immorality are constantly recruiting, seeking to enmesh the weak and unwary. There is easy money to be made. The commercial value of sin is in daily evidence at every street corner.

In spite of the glamour of city life, the number of immigrants who feel lonely is truly noteworthy, for there is little or no unity among Catholics in the hotel and catering trade. While they are strong in numbers, they are never made conscious of their strength. No special society, civil or religious, exists to band them together or overcome the sense of isolation that all of them feel. Another handicap arises from the fact that few of them on their own initiative will approach the priests of their parish upon arrival.

Their only contact, then, with God or religion, is to be found within the four walls of a church. Yet while we stress the handicaps with which they meet, let it be stated that the great majority remain steadfast in faith and practice. Nevertheless, the effect of years of life spent in a thoroughly materialistic atmosphere makes itself felt eventually. Their children, for instance, should the immigrant have married, often show a lack of that faith that would have been instilled by a fervent Catholic mother. This would seem to indicate that mere Mass-going and occasional reception of the sacraments is insufficient in the circumstances. A more positive approach seems to be demanded.

I'm afraid too, that we must face the fact that many of our Irish

girls arrive here insufficiently instructed in the matter of sex-education. How this is to be overcome constitutes a very involved problem in itself. But it would appear to be beyond reasonable doubt that many tragedies can be traced to ignorance in this all-important matter.

What action, then, is being taken to deal with the whole problem outlined above?

Two priests have been appointed to devote themselves exclusively to working amongst Catholics in this category. Generally speaking, we seek to establish, by arrangement with hotel owners and managers, regular visitation of each Catholic in the hotels themselves, in order to forge that personal link with the priest, considered so necessary. As a further step, there has been formed, with the approval of His Grace, the Archbishop of Westminster, a Guild, after the fashion of the Nurses Guild, called the Catholic Hotel and Catering Workers' Guild, with the express purpose of uniting Catholics in the Trade; of providing them with a monthly religious meeting on the lines of a Sodality, and of drawing them together in social and recreational activities. Thus it is hoped to assist them to live a fuller Catholic life, united with their fellow-Catholics and with their priests, sealed by regular reception of the sacraments.

The Legion of Mary, of which there are six *praesidia* (i.e. three twin-*praesidia* to facilitate shift-workers) offers the opportunity of more apostolic effort on the part of hotel workers. These *praesidia*, besides undertaking visitation work in hotels, meet the Irish trains at Euston, sell Catholic papers and endeavour to give an early welcome to new arrivals among hotel and catering staffs. They also run a monthly Patrician meeting.

Needless to say these efforts have not accomplished very much. The problems facing us are complicated. The most that we can say is that a beginning has been made, and that we look forward to, at least, a partial solution through the steps already taken.

Perhaps readers of THE FURROW may be in a position to help us by making known to intending emigrants our presence in London and by encouraging prospective hotel workers to join the Catholic Hotel and Catering Workers' Guild.

A. P. BOLAND

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The Young Irish Worker

THE Irish parish priest of a practically all-Irish parish once asked me if I thought, as he did, that the Irish were a serious obstacle to the conversion of England. Were they, in their ever-increasing numbers—19,000 new arrivals in 1956 against 18,000 in 1938, something of a distraction for the English priest from his endeavour of winning his fellow countrymen back to the true faith? No, I had never held that and anyway they are here and for us, neither Jew nor Greek, nor bond nor free and I had long got used to working in the Anglo-Irish setting of the Church here. My having no Irish blood had never made any difficulty in the making of innumerable Irish friends, although I shall never forget being asked, on the occasion of my very first pastoral visit to a house after ordination, "And how long have you been over, Father?" and the great difficulty I had in persuading the good lady that there really were some priests who were English.

If neither an obstacle nor a distraction, were the Irish a positive help towards the conversion of England? Obviously yes, to a great extent. The vast numbers of good settled Irish and Anglo-Irish families, whose children become fully integrated into the community, make a contribution to numerical increase and form an apostolic potential in the degree in which they are trained. It is the Irish who have made the Church in England one predominantly of the people, preponderantly working-class, unlike so many other countries of Europe; and in England the second and third, if not the first, generation become, I think, much more English and much more completely merged with the land of their birth and adoption than they do, e.g., in the United States.

My own immediate work is to chaplain the group of full-time organizers who staff the English YCW Headquarters and who tour at home and abroad building up their apostolate. There have been seventy-two lads and girls who have worked in this way, returning later to industry or taking up similar work in the adult field. Among the names of these seventy-two: Keegan, McGenity, Hood, Bryan, Casey, Murray, Ryan, O'Neill, O'Shea, Hough, Foley, Kelliher, Kelly, McNally, Hurley, Dalton, Frain, MacNamara, Keneghan. Only two of these were born in Ireland and only one would have called himself Irish. Of the rest with English names, few would have been without some Irish forbear. I mention these as they are

pretty typical of the make-up of our local groups up and down the country.

With the immediate young immigrants, those whom previous writers in THE FURROW call the *unsettled* Irish, there is quite a different problem.

B. H. from Clare, a good fellow, shakened and sickened by the immorality in the electrical factory where he worked and shy and nervous. Asked by the curate to help start a YCW section, he never looked back. Ran his own weekly team in his digs, visited and carried out a fine apostolate in a near-by military hospital, ran a school-leavers' group of some thirty boys; became such an influence at work that the management gave him his own office where he could interview and advise all the apprentices. Became a full-time organizer and a prayer-inspired orator. Lent to the U.S. YCW—now studying in an American seminary.

N. M. from Dublin gradually built up five teams of girls in her factory, though she herself worked in the office. Had a profound moral and religious influence over the girls and men. Contacting in a local café and carrying out a work inquiry, asked a group of girls their jobs. Smiles and giggles. They were street girls. N. M. got friendly with them and met them regularly—partial success with some. N. M. runs her own local parish section, is regional president and has recently become a full-time diocesan organizer.

S. C.'s job has meant living successively in three different towns. In each he has been instrumental in starting and building up a YCW section. In the second town the P.P. wanted him to be put up for election as a local councillor; in the third within a few months he had started a YCW section, running a large and imaginative youth club, with a blessing but no active help or guidance from the parish clergy.

L. C.—from Dublin and a *character*. Working one day in the stores at Woolworth's shifting boxes with a sixteen-year-old, the latter swearing continually with annoyance at the work. "Offer it up," says L. C. "Offer what up where?" says the sixteen-year-old. Laughter at the next leaders' meeting at L. C.'s *Irish* approach to her pagan work-mates. Leaders bemoan the fact they have no factory workers in their groups. L. C. leaves Woolworth's and goes into local pickle factory where conditions and morals are notorious. Tries to start trade union; has meeting with the girls and the union branch organizer, but all the girls she has, Christmas rush staff, leave. L. C. goes on a conveyor belt, three girls doing work previously done by eleven. L. C. gets better spirit into the work and brings along one of the girls to the chaplain for instruction. But conditions of work affects L.'s health seriously. Now she runs a team of girls in a large mail-order firm.

But these are all exceptions or rather they are first-rate individual Irish leaders. It is very difficult to group or hold an all-Irish leaders' group or team, though there has been more success of late with nurses. If one had time to specialize in this, no doubt it could be done. Every YCW section holds its general meetings roughly each month for friends and contacts to build up teams, recruit new leaders and members and to build up a mass influence. My own local groups have had a majority Irish workers attendance at these but with very little successful follow up. At one all-Irish meeting, just with lads, they did begin to open up and put some tricky questions to the chaplain: "How far was it allowed to change your name and address in order to dodge income tax and conscription?" apparently not an uncommon custom.

The other difficulty is that, apart from individual cases where Irish lads or girls have become intermingled with the rest, it is difficult to make an Irish group into a leaven for the English lump, particularly with non-Catholics. As workers I believe they usually get on quite well together, but frankly the average English fellow or girl will not be attracted to the Church as seen in the average Irish lad or girl and perhaps the more pious they are the worse it is. If he or she says anything at all, it will often be the wrong thing, however *right* it may be for them. Training can perfect and develop the right approach, but it goes back to the apostoolate of like to like. I could work with the Irish among the Irish here, and in some ways I think an English priest can do more, as the Irish lads and girls will sometimes open up to him in a way they might be afraid to with their own, but not with the Irish among the English, at least in the sense of a leaven among the crowd of non-Catholics.

The Editor has asked me to be quite frank. There is one distressing factor I have come across: this is the quite bitter criticism which I have heard young Irish workers, particularly girls, make about working conditions and wages at home in comparison with what they find in England. It was so scathing and negative at one general meeting and so shaming to her personally that the Irish-trained girl leader made haste to switch them back to other matters.

I also appreciate the request for friendly and constructive criticism. We have so much in common in our ecclesiastical and

ecclesial life that much of what I could say hit as us as much as yourselves, except that sound self criticism seems to be much more healthily prevalent on your side, at least in THE FURROW, than with us. We both need a development of Catholic education—children, youth, adult—which will train our people towards an integral living of the faith in the whole life, which will produce adult, articulate, witnessing Christians. "Apostles or apostates"—Pius XI's dictum is true generally of those you send us as of those we send out from our own schools. And we need the total lay apostolate. Magnificent as the Legion is as the right arm of the priest, as a providential instrument of direct evangelization, and through the Patricians as a weapon of mass religious influence, it must still be complemented by an apostolate which will train leaders who will implement the social teaching of the Church, who will transform institutions and the surroundings of life and restore them in Christ. Whole sectors of industry and the professions could be deeply Christianized, were your people given the spirituality and formation for the task.

Our partnership in the problem? Your part as I see it: a movement to train lay leaders for a full apostolate in life, work, neighbourhood, family, leisure, for home and for export. I see no substitute and immense scope, in spite of quite different conditions, for the YCW in Ireland. Education for life—at home and abroad. Irish priests full-time and specialized for the Irish *unsettled* with trained Irish lay leaders, assisting them either towards their return home or their eventual integration into English life. Our part? Collaboration with you on the above on parish and movement level. The follow-up with the *settled* and their children.

EDWARD MITCHINSON

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Holidays to Remember

"HAVE you been ill lately?" I asked. He was a priest of my acquaintance, reputed to be fond of sport, with quite a respectable handicap at golf. His absence from the game had been commented upon. Hence my question.

His response was not altogether what I expected, though it was proper Irish, as they say. "Why?" he asked. "Well, you were missed," I answered weakly.

"I am not surprised," he said, smiling. "I suppose I overdid it in the past. To be sure, I took no more time off than is commonly regarded as respectable. Well, I have had second thoughts. Oh, I am not going to lay down the law. Others can draw their own conclusions. I have drawn mine: I have overplayed the recreation game."

This sounded intriguing, Normally my friend was taciturn and disposed to communicate by nods and grunts rather than words. He now continued without any prodding.

"A lot of people," he went on, "combine business with pleasure. Agreed, there are some who think they must have a holiday even though they don't need it. They are silly enough to imagine it's something the best people take. A racket has developed in tours and pilgrimages and camps and hotels as a result. But there are some sane folk who take a holiday only when they need it. And they also manage to make good use of their holiday. I believe that that is what I should do too. Please God, that is what I intend to do."

He replaced his putter in his bag, went to a seat outside the clubhouse, sat down and lit his pipe. After completing his ritual with pouch and matches and when the measured puffs were spreading the aroma of peace, he resumed, talking as if to himself. "Strictly speaking, I don't need holidays most years. But a change is good for me and for the people. You know the saying that a change is as good as a rest. A short separation can help the parishioners and me to appreciate each other. But there is no point in my dragging out the separation period sedately drinking spa water or studying submarine life as a frogman. I can still be about my Father's business. I can do parish work in some spot where the people are new to me and I am new to them.

"I heard this talk about doing supply work in England and first I laughed at the idea. Then it struck me that perhaps I could do something to help two young chaps and a young lass from my parish who were only a few months over there. Their parents and myself were not too happy about them. I got a chance to go to the industrial city where they were and I went. Now I am all for the idea."

There was a prolonged silence. It looked as if he might retreat into his normal, silent self again. I felt that at this stage no harm could be done in trying to draw him out.

"But what," I ventured, can the likes of you or me do in a city

parish in England? We are supposed to have done everything possible to prepare our people before they left. Is it not taken as quite definite that they have far better church services beyond than they have had at home—the country people, I mean? They have more Masses, devotions on week evenings, Confraternities and Sodalities; the churches are nearer, cleaner, better heated. On balance, the scales seem to favour clearly the Catholic in England. So what's for us to do?"

He remained rapt in thought for a full minute and I thought I had failed to lure him into further discussion. Then he looked me full in the face. "That's the widespread fallacy," he affirmed, slapping his thigh with one hand and holding his pipe aloft with the other. "It is assumed that everything is fine because there are convenient churches, frequent services, inspiring devotions, because there are files and Census Books and all the paraphernalia of efficient management. Oh, I don't mean to say that you should not have these things.. I would not presume to suggest that you can even hope to start a parish without them. I merely insist that when you have them you are still a very long way from your goal."

He relaxed, took a few pulls on his pipe and resumed. "I recall being sent out one evening to look up a lady from another parish, a lady who had done a Helen-act and had found her Troy in the parish where I was supplying. I did not find her, but in the course of my hunt I met a lot of people and unwittingly brought at least one back to the sacraments. I was later told about it and could remember the incident clearly. It happened that in one apartment there were three Irish sisters and in the course of conversation one of them volunteered the information that she had arrived in England at the age of sixteen and was drinking within a week of her arrival. I showed no surprised or anger but innocently confessed that I'd have done the same myself if I had been in her shoes. I am morally certain I would have. Perhaps it was not a wise thing to say. At the time I did not advert to it. But she told me afterwards that that remark decided her, for she concluded that I was the priest most likely to treat her kindly if she were ever to come back. She had been away from the sacraments about twelve years. You see, it takes the human touch—with the grace of God. Christ was very, very human. He sat down to talk to a lot of queer men and women. That was how He won them."

He was warming to his subject. "I know a family of Irish descent who lived beside the church, a fine church too, admirably administered with excellent services. Yet the family all were a total loss from the Church's point of view. I began to visit them—informally, you know; drop in occasionally, take a cup of tea if it were offered, talk about anything and everything, always keeping my purpose in view but never directly opening the religious question—you must find out if Faith is completely dead, though it rarely is. You must also study their temperament and character, their temptations and difficulties. One by one they have stolen back to the fold because I was able to exploit various occasions and opportunities. Certainly if they are to be retained they will still have to be nursed and petted and humoured.

"At the beginning you said we are supposed to be doing all we can to prepare our people. I hope you are not being cynical and sarcastic. There is no doubt about it, the man who is not doing all he can at home has a lot to answer for. And note what I say: it is not enough to do all the book says I'm bound to do or that I'll have to have ready for the bishop. It's a case of each one asking himself not 'have I done enough?' but 'is there any more I can do?' Last year a very fine article appeared in THE FURROW giving a list of things a man could do for prospective or actual emigrants. I have said I would not preach to my colleagues, but I'll ask them a question all the same: how many of these suggestions have you tried out in your parish?"

"It is your case, then," I interposed, "that the real work is not being done in England?" He cut me short impatiently. "Don't get me wrong. Do not carry away the impression that the priests in England are not doing their duty. They most certainly are doing more than they are able to do. But they are cluttered up with inescapable routine, parish work like marriages, instructions, services, sacraments, fund-raising and so on—there is no end to that kind of work, work which must be done, work without which there is no parish at all or church organization. The result is that they can never get as far as the real pastoral work.

"Consider the parishes where the number of priests has not changed in twenty years. At that time say two priests looked after one thousand souls. Today, two look after upwards of four thousand in the same parish. How can it be done effectively? It is reliably estimated that 20,000 a year leave the Republic alone. Some put the figure as high as 50,000 Where do they go? It takes no great mathematics to reason it out that many extra priests are required to care for 20,000 young, inexperienced, unmarried, flighty indi-

viduals who pour in in droves, torn from their native roots, broken from their ties at home.

"And here is a point that never gets the consideration it should. It has been said that a lot of Irish people in England say they never talked to a priest at home. That is quite intelligible. But it is woefully misleading. The father, mother, brother or sister of every one of those individuals was closely associated with some priest somehow. Through that association a priest could influence the whole family even though he never met some of the members. It would be extremely difficult to find a *family* that has not a strong link with a priest. In that way, through meeting two hundred people a priest can meet two hundred families or almost a thousand people.

"The situation in England is radically different. One thousand Irish Catholics in an English parish frequently means one thousand families. Each person is a separate unit, an isolated individual. To influence them one must see and talk to each one. That is why more and more priests must be sent amongst these people, people who lack the solace of home and the protection of a Christian society. These priests should preferably be men who have had experience of them at home, priests who have done parochial work amongst them already. They are the men best fitted to understand them, men who will not be too soft or severe with them because they know what and how much to expect from them."

I was more at ease now that my friend was really in talking mood. He explained how slow the visitation business is if it is to be reasonably successful. He never did more than ten houses between 5.30 and 10 p.m. That rate meant a maximum of fifty per week. In practice, fifty houses per month would be the limit. At that speed the priests would not get round some parishes in a life time. In some lodging house a whole month could be spent with profit.

No matter what he knew of the *status animarum* of the inmates he was careful not to open the conversation with religion. That would emerge in discussion on topics ranging from football and athletics to Suez and the Partition of Ireland. At the same time he was always careful to get in the Christian viewpoint. As often as it seemed desirable or feasible he had those in the house say a prayer and gave them his blessing. He always carried a supply of Holy Name cards, Agnus Dei's, beads or medals, anything to serve as a reminder and a token. These objects were always appreciated even by people who had at first appeared indifferent or hostile. He instanced the case of an unfortunate Irish girl, an unmarried mother,

who had refused to let him in on his first call, but who welcomed him a week later and had on display the card which he had given her. Her story was a fencing drama of parry and thrust, of retreat and advance, of time and patience and humility and prayer and charity. But his story showed how a priest through warm, human contacts can breathe the living Spirit of Christ into fallow souls and an inert society.

"What do you think of the suggestion that theological students join in this work as a practical training?" I asked him. He was not enthusiastic. "Dealing with sin and sinners, with careless and semi-heretically-minded people is always a dangerous business," he explained. "We must remember that we are attacking the Kingdom of Satan and that Satan is an adept at the counter-attack. To safeguard the students very elaborate precautions would have to be taken so that the project would become almost impossible or useless. For that matter, I am not inclined to favour very young priests attempting this sort of work, I mean ferreting out and trying to assist the fallen. It would be alright if they stuck to routine work among good people. But even for that it is a decided advantage to know exactly what Irish people expect from their priest. They do not want him to be stiff and formal and officious and full of theoretical theology. On the other hand, they don't want him to be a hail-fellow-well-met, jolly-good-sport type. There is an in-between position that one senses rather than learns. One reaches that position usually through a series of mistakes."

He was loud in his praises of the Legion and regarded their help as indispensable. In his own short experience he had come across and alarming number of Catholic children who attend non-Catholic schools and whose religious training has been overlooked or neglected for one reason or another, but who are willing to be instructed. He himself had found it impossible to give them more than a passing attention. The Legion can readily do such work. It can also help in making a new census and it alone can tackle problems amongst special types of workers such as transport workers in bus depots and railway stations. Quite a considerable number of volunteer Legionaries cross each year to do this work.

He emptied the ash from his pipe, rose, extended his hand in goodbye. "Holidays are alright when you need them," he said, as he held my hand in his strong grasp. "No, I wasn't ill. But it is hard to justify holidays of the conventional sort when there is so much work to be done, some of which I can do, some of which

perhaps only I can do. I'm not much at the preaching. An English lady told me she wasn't impressed by my sermon on the Assumption. But she was impressed by the reaction of what she called three rough-looking Paddies who, she imagined, never prayed. She admitted that when I had finished they fished out their Rosaries from their pockets and she spent the rest of the Mass watching them pray. If I never accomplish any more on the occasion of other visits to England I still have accomplished quite a lot. A part from the good I did in looking up my own weak parishioners I think that that is sufficient argument for my going back to England every chance I get."

With that he was gone. But his words lingered on. Even if I did go to England what was I going to do there? Now I know. Even on mere week-end supply I could do a great deal if only I prepared good sermons and instructions. My people are poisoned at home and abroad by the heresy of naturalism; they are assaulted by immodesty; they are induced to look upon women with contempt. In the Assumption and in Lourdes I could find for them the antitoxin, the defence armour and the inspiration to chivalry. Blasphemous discussions on TV suggest that there cannot be a God when there is so much evil in the world. The Feasts of the Sacred Heart and of the Most Precious Blood furnish me with a complete and devastating reply. These Feasts occur during the "supply" months of June, July and August. If I have the good luck to be able to cross during the Christmas period, the Feast of the Holy Family provides another practical and useful topic. Yes, it means preparation and trouble. But my friend had said it is a case not of doing what I ought, but of doing what I can.

His experience has shown that more than week-end supply is needed. Indeed, full-time holiday supply is only a make-shift arrangement to meet a crying need till such time as the authorities can devise a more satisfactory and permanent system for a difficult situation. More priests has been his plea; more priests who could contact emigrants informally and sympathetically; more priests who would quietly and gradually permeate society with the Christian leaven. For priests still remain the "salt of the earth and the light of the world." It would be better if more of us could give the full twelve months to the work. Until that day comes, the next best thing is to give our month. Half a loaf is better than no bread.

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Changing the Environment

One of the anomalies of Irish Catholic life has always appeared to me, as a member of the English parochial clergy, to be the re-emergence in this century of Ireland as a great missionary nation and the fact that a large number of emigrating Irish are surprisingly ineffective when it is the matter of Christianizing industrialized England; though undoubtedly one of the most important phenomena of our times has been the vast contribution of Ireland to the foreign or indigenous missions of the Church, the impression remains that Catholic Ireland has still to become missionary-minded in the genuine Catholic sense of the word.

The first principle of missionary action is to understand and to be understood. The Irishman coming to industrialized England is immediately absorbed into the contemporary mode of work (industrial production) and finds that his Christian faith is inadequate to face the new challenge and the new opportunities offered him. Either he will dispense with his faith entirely, remain loyal to such regulative functions as Mass-going and Easter duties, or apply himself to various works of supererogation which merely maintain the false dichotomy between religion and work. The great tragedy of the Catholic Irishman living in England is that whereas in the majority of cases he improves his economic and social status, as a member of the Church he deteriorates or stands still.

In England there is still a great barrier separating the Church and a nation which for the main part has lost a sense of the necessity of a Church. This alienation is nourished by a false supernaturalism which, we think, owes something to the failure of the Irish Catholic mentality to adapt itself to, and thus interpret, the contemporary English scene.

The English Caholic has yet to discover that the Church is pre-eminently the vital, animating principle of human society, and more than a monolithic organization with a better business efficiency rating than the Standard Oil Company, or an ideology more powerful than Communism. Failure to discover this innate truth about the Church begets an angelism or supernaturalism which refuses to co-operate with the actual situation in which people live their lives or to reveal the exact correspondence between the order of grace and that of nature. It leads to a belief that Christianity is more a religion of the abnormal, of the peculiar, of the extraordinary, rather than a sacramental, mystical one.

To day in England one might say that the methods needed in the nineteenth century to safeguard the faith of the underprivileged, depressed Catholic minority (the great majority of whom were the Irish emigrants) are being maintained in a situation which is vastly different. The Catholic school, parish visiting, Catholic representation in political life to uphold the rights of the Church, are still necessary but they have not yet caught up with the newly discovered and newly developed sense of a missionary Church. Thus it is that insufficient attention is paid to the natural truth that at most the school is an artificial device in education, which is primarily the affair of the community; that the laity have the responsibility of Christianizing their temporal environment of home, district and working place (not primarily by house to house visiting or by factory Rosaries, but by their active presence within their natural groupings); that political representations is to be done for higher and more honest motives than for what the Church can get out of it.

This long aside is, we feel, necessary in order to estimate not only the undoubted invaluable contribution Irish Catholics coming to and living in England make to English society, but also the vast opportunities offered them, only too often lost because, like experts in other fields, the average Irish Catholic (who with his anti-Protestant bias is apt to prejudge the average English post-Christian) is often out-of-touch and out-of-date with his expertise in the faith.

One prefers to see the problem of Anglo-Irish Catholic relations in terms of their enrichment of the contemporary scene rather than to lose oneself in vague statistics about the number of Irish boys and girls in England who give up the practice of their faith, because the solution of the lapsation is only a small part of the authentic solution to a far deeper problem, viz. how best can the Irish Catholic reared in a rich Catholic tradition collaborate in the Christianization of its family, social and political life.

I have stayed many times with a poor family in the West of Ireland. Not only was I impressed with the reality of its faith but even more so with the natural nobility of its members. One returns to England only too conscious that much of the civilized and cultural life of the average Englishman is but a thin veneer covering over a spiritual and personal bankrupty. I meet every day, going round the parish, young Irish girls doing domestic service who are far superior in real culture, poise and bearing to the better-off, financially and socially, people they work for. I have met Irish lads of twenty years and sometimes well in their thirties with the gift of

innocence still intact. Holiness is wholeness and what the average English "pagan" needs is first-hand experience not of "practising" Catholics or those who are always trying to "get him into the Church" but of Catholic Christians who exert a leadership of love by their own integrity and honesty. Ireland has this to export and more.

On the other hand it needs to be mentioned that many Irish men and women coming to England are often more disillusioned with their faith than with the country of their adoption. Like most disillusioned people they tend to atack the formalities, conventions and rigidities of Catholic life in Ireland unjustly and as an excuse for their own failings. There is no easy answer to the question of the Irish Catholic in England but there can be no true answer until the right questions are asked and these questions rotate around a precise and accurate definition of the meaning of Catholic or missionary.

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Change of Outlook in Ireland

EMIGRATION to England has been the great proving of our Catholicism. Much has now been said about how we have come through that proving. Two things, however, are certain. The first is that the coming of our people to London has made an immense increase in the numbers of Mass attenders here. In some London parishes they make up the majority, the vast majority, of the Sunday congregations. The other fact is that, in spite of this, our impact on the country as a whole has been much smaller than it should have been, considering the numbers who have come over in the last century. That is to say, while there have been some losses amongst those who come over as adults, the losses amongst the first and succeeding generations here have been colossal. I remember a priest who was about to return to Ireland from a temporary mission here saying to me that it was the opinion of many priests that it was only one in ten of the Irish families who passed on the faith to their children. The statement is frightening, but since then I have not been able to challenge it.

Does this mean that our system is producing a type of Catholic

who is not strong enough, or perhaps, more correctly, not well trained enough, to do battle in this environment?

I am aware that it is not easy to train people at home to live their lives in another country because you are to a large extent doing so in the abstract; that however is not as true as it was. I know also that it is difficult for me to make anything like a mature judgment on the question since I have not been very long in the field here and I have never worked for any appreciable time in Ireland. Furthermore I criticize the system in Ireland with a full realization of what I personally, and so many others like me, owe to it. The achievements of the priests who formed the system are great by any standards. Their fruits are manifold and obvious and we, the younger priests, under God, owe our own vocations to them. Yet there are questions that must be asked.

Are we mistaken in our conviction that the Irish priest is near his people, that they find it easy to approach him?

Last Autumn I returned from parish work in a town in England and for a short while worked in a sizeable town in Kerry. I could not fail to notice the difference. In the English parish I felt I was priest to a people; whereas in Ireland I seemed to be just another official who said Mass for them on Sunday and attended other sacramental needs. A priest friend of mine who made the same change noted the same thing. He spoke of it more strongly than I did. Furthermore, when meeting Irish people here, on boat or plane on the way, on the building sites or the buses, in their digs or at various functions, unless I make the first move, unbend as it were, they remain aloof. When approached they are at first uneasy and embarrassed, it seems to be such a novelty for them to speak to a priest. It is true alright that at later contacts there are few like them in their warmth of attachment. It is true likewise that the Irish people have a very fine respect for the priesthood and they have standards they expect you to keep even in friendship with them. One notices the different attitude of the Irish parent and their London-reared children when you visit them here.

But is all the shyness due to this? Do they not so often expect us to ask for something or bring words of reproach? The number of times you get this here, directly or indirectly, makes one wonder if there is not some basis for it other than personal small squabbles with a priest. Are our people beginning to look on us as a caste with huge influence, whom it does not pay to cross?

Another question I would like to ask is: What is the quality of

our *good* people at home? I speak of prominent parishioners who make a little show of their position and rally round quickly when something is to be done. Are they really good at heart, humble in their goodness, kind and helpful to fellow parishioner or countryman? Or are they *respectable* people, proud of their status in the community, observers of traditional norms without real charity? An obviously good man made this criticism of them to me recently and I had heard it before a number of times. I remember, while at home at Christmas, one such person asked me what I was now doing; she showed untold sympathy for me when I told her I was working among "the Irish over there."

While that detestable phrase is fresh—what selfrighteous detachment it suggests! —it seems to be accepted at home by many that those who have left Ireland have been unfaithful to their country, and, so far as their religion goes, they are definitely under suspicion until positive signs prove the contrary. It is high time that myth was exploded. Our people here resent it and, if the truth were told, Ireland would gain an amount on both political and religious fields by their return. Let us quietly face the truth on why they must emigrate.

Is there something in the allegation often made that there is a lack of freedom of thought, a stuffiness of atmosphere in Ireland which makes people glad to get away to fresh air? I am not referring here to those among us who play at being liberals. They play at being Catholics too, enlightened Catholics forsooth, with their Catechism knowledge of religion. I refer to the ordinary run-of-the-mill intelligent people. Do we not choke them off too quickly when they begin to ask questions?

Recently I sat in an office here while two intelligent Irishmen peppered me with questions on the provability of the existence of God. When we had finished, to encourage them to further enquiries for themselves, I made some statement to the effect that it was the duty of a Catholic if he had an enquiring mind to satisfy it, otherwise he was putting too much of a strain on his faith. One of them burst in rather bitterly: "That sort of thing was never encouraged in Ireland."

In Catholicism, where we have the strength of defined and otherwise authoritative teaching, is there not a danger that we make what is really our strength our weakness and content ourselves with a continual restatement of the truths? Our congregations will accept them on our teaching, even when thus presented, but how

much they miss. Frank Sheed's words on the believing Christian's attitude to the mysteries of his religion have some pertinence for us:

> One possibility for him (the Christian) is to make a large act of faith, accept them, and think no more about them. Thus he is not troubled by any apparent contradiction, nor illumined by the doctrine's truth. It simply lies in the mind, and he is no worse for it and no better for it. He has a shadowy feeling that if he looked at the doctrine very closely, it might be something of a trial to his faith. But he does not look at it very closely. He does not really look at it at all. This degree of intellectual unconcern makes for a quiet life, but not for any growth in the knowledge of God. *(Theology and Sanity,* p. 16)

Is it not quite pathetic to see the childish faith of some of our grown-ups? Their knowledge of God is that of a fourteen-year-old. Many of our men especially, to whom some abstract thinking is welcome, have this shadowy feeling at the back of their minds that this religion does not stand up to a man's approach to life. They need meatier preaching; milk is not a workingman's diet. We are no longer so isolated that the problems which test the faith of our people when they leave Ireland are met with for the first time at this side of the Irish Sea. "Don't give me any of that religious stuff," said the Irishman in the pub. " You should be ashamed of yourself and you from Ireland," said the Legionary selling papers. "Ah, but we're educated coming from Ireland now," he said, "not like you who came years ago." She was an emigrant of many years standing. He was a young fellow. They are already troubled by "apparent contradictions" of their religion before they come, contradictions of religion with the accepted life of the English-speaking civilization they know so well, specious objections to dogma by people whose morality already contradicts the Ten Commandments.

These problems are to a large extent inarticulate while they are still at home, but they soon are articulated for them here. Let us get in first, articulate them for them and give them our answers when they are still going to Mass and the sacraments and receptive to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Encourage their minds to think and guide that thinking. Let us not be afraid of too much free thought and possible mistakes. We can correct mistakes and if we are trying to avoid them all the time we shall never get anywhere.

Only in that way can we form convictions in our people that are strong and well understood, not only well understood but capable of challenging many of the accepted absurdities of modern English paganism. This is a condition for survival in this environment.

"But you can't venture out into the deep with a Sunday congregation; inevitably you will leave false impressions." I wonder are we under-estimating the capacity of our congregations? If not and the objection is true, then unmix your congregations and use organizations like the Legion cum Patricians, or the Y.C.W. to train the leaders. O! the dearth of leaders in the Irish community in London! The Patricians is eminently suitable for disturbing people's minds, for teaching them the true meaning of religion, and, as Father Brophy put it, for giving them "a proprietorial interest in their religion."

All this means, of course, that a priest in Ireland must be thoroughly conversant with the problems facing the Church in England today. It is precious little good for the priest in the pulpit who has not been there for three years to speak of conditions in England while Jim down the church is just come on holidays and right there in church, already picking holes in what the priest says of this *terra incognita* for the benefit of John, who will probably step off the boat with him in Holyhead on the return journey. But mere knowledge is not enough. The priest must feel the challenge in his own soul and must not let the edge go off the pain he feels at the suffering of the Body of Christ in England. Flagrant vice can be a choking thing; it can also keep those who have to live the Commandments in the midst of it very close to the Master.

To conclude: "The whole Church must set itself in a state of missionary activity," Monsignor Suenens in his book, *The Gospel to Every Creature,* quotes Cardinal Feltin. Substitute "Ireland" for "the Church," make clear the meaning of "whole" and how near we should be to the solution of our problem. The call of missionary activity was made to our people, before Cardinal Feltin spoke, on behalf of the pagans of the Far East and of Africa. They answered it in a manner not short of heroic. Of their want they provided the material necessaries for the great flowering of vocations to the priesthood and religious life with which God blessed it.

Why not make a similar appeal now on behalf of our neo-pagan neighbours, not confining the activity of the laity to helping with money, and using the fact of emigration? There is a directive from our Bishops to the priests giving missions to the Irish in England

whereby an appeal for the lay apostolate is to be given at all missions as far as possible. Could this not be duplicated in Ireland? Could we not impregnate our preaching with the idea? It is not self flattery to think that the response would be nothing short of what it was before.

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Letter to an English Priest

Dear Father,

I was surprised recently when an English visitor here commented that we Irish are too much given to self-examination. I wonder is it so. What is happening in England today cries out for us to cast a critical eye upon the traditional form of our Catholicism. What looks so fair at home often shows rent and patch away. The Irish Catholic does not always prove himself an export-quality product. His success or failure is a matter for our deep mutual concern.

Our emigrants have forged a link with Britain more important for the Church than the long centuries of past association. Today it is our people who are living with you. We share Ireland's rising generation between us. On them rest our hopes for the future and to some extent yours. With our people and our Catholic faith in common we priests of Great Britain and Ireland must come closer together.

Accidents of birth and nationality should not blind us to the existing opportunities for the Church which the presence of a million Catholics of Irish birth in Britain today offers. The figure is approximately that of the total Catholic population of Britain at the time of the restoration of the hierarchy in 1851. The Catholic "might-be's" of this situation make you think.

Suppose one fine morning one were to read in the newspaper that over ten years the Catholic population of Sweden had doubled through the immigration of Italian miners. As a Catholic priest I would find the prospects stimulating. Obviously the task of integrating workers from the south into the nordic world would require tact and sympathy. Such a broadening of the Catholic ranks would justify serious effort. The traditional Catholic with his background of Faith and heritage of custom from past generations

enriches the expanding Catholic community. Is the case of the Irish in Britain a parallel?

I have looked in vain in English Catholic periodicals for evidence of sustained interest in the ordinary Irish immigrant as an asset to the forces of the missionary Church. Some reviews display a marked lack of sympathy, others do not even do us the charity of being interested. Convert work among celebrities continues to make headlines since Newman and Manning shot up like meteors on the Catholic horizon.

A long article recently addressed to American Catholics under the title *The Church in England: Report and Prospects* has one reference and that historical, to the Irish in Britain. Considerable space is devoted to the Catholic Enquiry Centre. Since 1954 it has sent a correspondence course on the Faith to 50,000 non-Catholics. But not a word about the fact that 50,000 new Catholics arrived in Britain last year. As I was thumbing through the magazine which carried this article, my eye caught the heading "At least notice your neighbour." Any consideration of the prospects of the Church should take into account the arrival of a hundred new Catholics daily.

We clergy seldom get together. The holiday supply scheme to assist parochial clergy during vacation periods should close this gap. The eager energy of our Irish seminarists might well be harnessed to useful parochial assignments under the guidance of an experienced priest. Lay students engaged in extension work for the Legion of Mary have demonstrated what can be usefully done in this field. Distinguished representatives of the English hierarchy have honoured with their presence the congresses organized in Ireland by the *Christus Rex* society. We would warmly welcome more English priests to these meetings and to the liturgical gatherings at Glenstal where discussion of pastoral problems could be most fruitful.

We in Ireland take in a lot of the periodical literature published in Britain. Can the same be said of the circulation in Britain of our Irish clerical magazines? Of course we are agreed that mere reading or writing won't solve problems, but how otherwise can we exchange views and experiences? It seems to me that candid conversations which alone can lead to better understanding are not taking place.

The Irish in Britain live behind walls—walls of prejudice, which they have brought with them from Ireland; walls of mistrust which the British sometimes throw up about themselves in regard to our

people. I have not seen evidence of discrimination in Britain against Catholics as such but I have seen it against Irishmen on the grounds of nationality. No doubt the limit was reached by the London landlady whose advertisement ran: *Coloured people welcomed. Absolutely no Irish.*

Explanations are ready to hand. Some Irish folk let themselves down badly and besmirch the name of Irish and Catholic in the process. There are too many irresponsible young men whose drunken conduct makes headlines in conversation and in print. There are the cadgers on the presbytery doorstep spinning unlikely yarns with an artistry worthy of a better cause. These are the flotsam and jetsam of Ireland, tossed across to Britain, incapable of coming to terms with a way of life they neither appreciate nor comprehend. Remember the story of our arrested development as a nation. We still feel the smart in unexpected ways. Misfits are not exclusively Irish. If we send you more than a fair share of ours it is still less than justice to condemn our emigrants *in globo*.

A people so long "discouraged" as the Irish were needs active encouragement and leadership. It only rankles to remind your Irishman that what goes at home does not go here. With all his faults he has what the rest lack, a sense of God. Under maybe a rough exterior he is sensitive. He does not feel at home on arrival. English accents are as strange as the new scene. The cold formality of English convention he easily mistakes for hostility. He has no confidence in himself. The kind word of a priest can bridge the difficult break with home. He trusts the priest. Challenge him with an ideal. Make him feel he is wanted. When you tell him the Church has a job for him to do, you have an apostle in the making.

The Columban Fathers have recruited thousands of them into the Legion of Mary. It must be done with other societies too. We would like to send you better material for the building up of your Catholic body. It is our problem and yours. We can help one another and the Church by making a fresh approach to it. It would be almost a denial of our priestly vocation if it could be said of any priest that he had no use for the Irish or cared little for the English.

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