

HOW TO BE A GOOD PARISHIONER

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There are two places that every good Catholic loves to talk about. One is his home, the other is his parish. Much has been written about the home, but very little about the parish. To supply this need and to help Catholics be good parishioners, we present this booklet.

THE PARISH

Most of us would find it impossible to be good Catholics if it were not for that smallest unit in the organization of the Church—the parish. For what would we be today if it were not for the baptismal font, the parochial school, the parish hall and playground, the altar and tabernacle, the priests who were truly shepherds of our souls? How many happy memories are bound up with the parish in which we were raised: Our first confession, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Sunday Mass, Lenten Way of the Cross, marriage perhaps, and the burial of our dead ones! In every truly Catholic life it is the parish that keeps the light of faith and the fire of charity aflame in the mind and heart.

The parish is vital to our religious lives because God has created us as social beings. This means that for our spiritual as well as our material prosperity we are dependent upon one another. Very seldom could one person erect a church, but a group united as a parish always can. Very seldom are parents able by their own efforts to give a proper Christian training to their children but with the aid of priests and nuns and brothers and fellow-parishioners supporting a parochial school they easily can. In times of temptation, perplexity and sorrow, we all need the help of others, and we find it in the form of direction and comfort given principally by our pastors. Indeed, the Church, as the Saviour founded it, is a social organization, known most truly as the Mystical Body of Christ. The parish is a most important unit in the Mystical Body of Christ; through it we retain, sound and healthy, our membership in Him.

YOUR PASTOR

As a boy, your pastor had a dream. It was a dream inspired of heaven, a dream in which he pictured himself at the altar and in the confessional, helping thousands of human beings to save their souls. As a youth, when the pleasures of this world were most attractive, he buried himself in a seminary, devoting some twelve or more years to hard study, discipline and prayer. Finally, on the day of his ordination, he knelt before his bishop and stepped back an alter Christus (another Christ) with all the powers of the priesthood.

All priests are called Father, but it is your pastor and his assistant priests who pre-eminently deserve that title. As much as a natural parent has a fearful responsibility in rearing his children, so much greater is the burden of a good parish priest, because he must answer to God for so many souls committed to his care. He is a man who has given up the delights of family life, to take upon his shoulders the worries and spiritual destinies of all the families of his parish. Not for worldly fame or pleasure or riches did he become a priest, for there is very little of these to be found in his calling. The only real reward of a good pastor in this life is the knowledge that his parishioners are trying to be good Catholics and making their way towards heaven.

THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS

Too often we take the nuns and brothers in our parish schools for granted. Seldom do we remember that, in a worldly sense, they are the poorest paid teachers in the nation, while so frequently they are unequalled in their profession. In Australia there are about 12,000 Catholic women who have freely and whole-heartedly bound themselves to the sweet slavery of the three vows, most of them to help your children learn the true liberty that is theirs as adopted Sons and daughters of God. Not very often do you see the nuns cut of their schoolroom or home, but their gentle influence is by no means confined to the convent walls; from the cloister and classroom it radiates to the hearts and homes throughout the parish.

THE PARISHIONERS

A parish would be an empty framework if it did not have parishioners. It is our good people themselves who, by

their devotion, sacrifice and zeal, create and maintain our parishes. Because of the constant shortage of priests and nuns, almost always it is the laity who first carry the faith to a given locality; after them come the priests, the parish church and school.

In this country there are various kinds of parishes, which may roughly be classified as the rural, the small town, and the large city parishes. While each type may have its own characteristics and difficulties, in the main they are all conducted in the same way and are confronted with the same problems. In each parish, priest and people unite to offer sacrifice at the same altar, to impart the faith to children and converts, to receive the same sacraments, to obey the same laws under their bishop and the Holy Father—in a word, to help each other to be all that a Catholic should be. Most truly does every active, fervent parish fulfill the promise of our divine Lord: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.”

BE A REAL PARISHIONER

There is a difference between a home and a boarding house. In the latter a person usually obtains only his meals and rest, but in a home he receives not merely the necessities of life but also care and love, and in turn he is vitally concerned about all that affects the stability and happiness of the home. Some Catholics, it is to be feared, are content to look upon their *parish*, not as a home, but as a spiritual boarding house. They are satisfied to look for the bare essentials there, such as the fruits of the Mass and the sacraments, but at this point their interest *and* activity in their parish cease. They lose, and so does their parish, all the wonderful spiritual and social fruits that might result from their full participation in active parochial life. To be a good parishioner you must:

KNOW YOUR PASTOR

The good parishioner makes and keeps himself acquainted with his pastor, no matter how large or small the parish and no matter how many people belong to the parish. If you happen to move into a new parish, one of your first and most important actions should be to call on your new pastor, and promise your co-operation and support for all the activities of the parish. The Canon Law of the Church ordains that there are certain religious functions that only your pastor as your spiritual father, should perform for you. These are:

The Baptism of Your Children

No other priests than your parish priests are allowed, without the special permission of your pastor, to baptize your children. Of course, in case of sudden danger of death for your child, any priest, even any layman if no priest is available, can and should baptize. Every parish has a regular weekly time for baptisms, and after a baby is born, the pastor should be informed and the baby should be brought to the church at the appointed time. This should usually be within a week or two after birth, unless there be a serious reason for deferring the baptism. Parents who, without a reason, put off the baptism of their children for a dangerously long time commit a mortal sin.

The First Communion of Your Children

This is one of the most important events in the religious life of your child, and the preparation for it is one of the most sacred and gratifying duties of the pastor. If your child is in the parochial school, as it should be, this preparation will be timely and thorough. If for some very important reason your child is forced to attend a public school, you have an obligation to co-operate with your pastor in seeing to it that your child attends the instructions that will prepare it for the great event of its First Holy Communion. In large city parishes it is especially important that you report to your pastor when your child, if not in the parochial school, is of age to receive its First Communion (usually about seven years). Some parents will have a fearful account to make to God because they neglected to provide for the First Holy Communion of their children until they were far advanced in years, with the result that they were forced to grow up without the graces that this sacrament could have brought to them, and sometimes with the result that they gradually lost their faith,

The Confirmation of Your Children

This sacrament is necessary in order that your children may grow strong in faith and virtue and resist the dangers and temptations of the world. Again, if your child attends the parochial school, this will be taken care of in the ordinary course of events. If not, however, it is your obligation to see that the child is brought to the pastor for instruction when it is announced that Confirmation is to be administered.

Your Marriage

According to the law of the Church, only the bishop, or your pastor, or his assistant priests, has the right to officiate at your marriage. If two people planning marriage happen to be from different parishes, then the pastor of the girl is the one who is to officiate. If it is to be a mixed marriage, the pastor of the Catholic must assist at the marriage. The prospective bride and groom should approach the pastor at least three or four months before the ceremony. Above all, they should not set the date for the marriage, and then afterwards see the pastor; if they do, complications may arise that will be distressful to all concerned. It is the pastor's duty to make sure that there are no impediments to the prospective marriage, and no good Catholic ever resents the questions he may ask to make sure of this.

If a non-Catholic wishes to become a Catholic before marriage, or is at least interested in taking the full course of instructions in the Catholic religion, the couple should go to the pastor at least six months before the ceremony, if possible, so that the instructions may be completed. Every truly Catholic young man and woman want to have the full blessing of the Church on their marriage and will abhor the thought of a mixed marriage, at which no blessing of the Church can be given. If they are going with a non-Catholic, they will do all in their power, both by word and example, to win such a one over to their faith before even promising marriage. They will not only offer to introduce a non-Catholic friend to a priest, but will accompany him (or her) to the instructions.

No matter what fashionable society or local custom may decree as to the advantages of afternoon or evening weddings, the good Catholic will always want to be married at Mass, therefore in the morning.

Sick Calls

The care of the sick is one of the most sacred duties of every zealous pastor. If a member of your family is dangerously ill (do not wait till he is dying), you should immediately call your parish priest. Try to make such calls during the daytime, whenever possible; but if the danger should develop during the night, then contact your pastor, regardless of the hour. A priest from outside your parish may be summoned only in case of emergency, when it is impossible to reach your pastor or his assistant.

Even in illness in which there is no immediate danger, but which may mean protracted confinement you should notify your parish priest. He can come to bless you, hear your confession, and bring you Holy Communion. If you are entering a hospital for an operation or a serious sickness, even though most hospitals have a Catholic chaplain, it is well to tell your pastor about it.

Funerals

Though a dying person has the privilege of designating the church of his funeral, the good parishioner always wishes to be buried from his own parish church, where he prayed and worshipped and received the sacraments during life. It is fitting that, in accord with Canon Law, the same priestly hand that so often absolved you from your sins and placed upon your tongue the Bread of Life should impart the final blessing to your earthly remains.

Easter Duty

The best place in which to fulfil the obligation of receiving Holy Communion during the Easter season is your Parish church, though this duty may be satisfied in any other church.

Frequent communicants need not worry about where they receive their Easter Communion; but those who have been away from the sacraments for a long time should, if possible, receive in their own parish church so that pastor and fellow-parishioners will know that they have approached the sacraments. It may be noted that if a Catholic deliberately misses his Easter Duty, he is guilty of mortal sin, but he does not incur the penalty of ex-communication.

THE DEVOUT CATHOLIC

The good parishioner is faithful to his Catholic ideals. The truths of his faith are not simply beliefs, but convictions on which he bases the conduct of his life. His religion is not a separate compartment in his mind divorced from his everyday activity; his home is Catholic, his work or business is Catholic, even his recreation is Catholic. Wherever he goes, he is known as a Catholic and a good One.

Such a Catholic is no stranger to the tabernacle. A man of prayer, he is not too busy to drop in for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament whenever occasion permits; he goes often to week-day Mass, and even makes a habit of doing so, if that be possible; and he is regular in his reception of the sacrament of penance. Of course he receives Holy Communion frequently, surely not more seldom than once a month and he would not think of missing the exercises of a mission, retreat or Forty Hours' Adoration held in his parish. Lenten devotions, First Friday, and other occasional services in his parish church are made part of his schedule. He is not hesitant about giving his time and effort, within reason, to any organization or project beneficial to his parish or the Faith. Perhaps there is no tribute that can be paid to a man that is greater than the designation: a devout Catholic.

SUNDAY MASS

For more than 1900 years Catholics have been gathering in groups to assist the priest while he offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We know that this is the most perfect way of adoring God, because in each Mass our Redeemer comes to the altar under the appearance of bread and wine to immolate Himself, though in a bloodless way, once more for us. We know, too, that we have need of the Mass, because our Saviour ordained that through this mystic sacrifice and the various sacraments all that He won for us on the Cross is to be imparted to our souls. For both these reasons the Church commands that all Catholics assist at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation under penalty of mortal sin.

Ordinarily a good parishioner will go to his parish church for Sunday Mass, even though he can fulfill his obligation in any church or chapel officially open to the public, and on occasion may have a reason for attending Mass elsewhere than in his parish church. By going to your parish church for Sunday Mass as a general rule, you will be more certain of receiving continuous instruction in your faith; you will give encouragement and good example to your Catholic and non-Catholic neighbours; you will participate in the corporate worship of your parish, and probably more often receive the sacraments; and you will fulfill your obligation of financial support to your parish and keep in contact with your parish priests. In the large cities Catholics who "shop around" for the latest and shortest Mass are always poor parishioners and are even in danger of losing their faith.

YOUR CHILDREN IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The existence of our extensive Catholic school system is a miracle of accomplishment. Truly we can say that this has been built up at a cost of 'blood, sweat and tears.' Yet, sad to say, there are very many parishes in which it has been impossible as yet to erect a parochial school. Sadder still it is, in regions where there are Catholic schools, to find careless Catholic parents who are content to send their children to a public school, while non-Catholic parents often beg permission to send their children to "the Sisters."

The public school, even at its best, is both a negative and positive danger to the religion and morality of your child. In those areas where it is still impossible to maintain a parochial school, parents are bound to co-operate closely with the pastor in giving instructions to their children at home and especially in seeing to it that they attend every catechism class held for them. And in every parish where there is no Catholic school it should be the desire and goal of every Catholic family that some day a Catholic school may be erected.

The Catholic parent who willfully neglects or refuses to send his child to a Catholic school- is opening the door to great sorrow and worry in the future. How often have not most priests heard careless parents lament their folly too late, when the years of schooling were past, the poison sown, and the damage to the souls of their children already done! So great is the possible harm to your children from a non-Catholic education that in some places bishops have decreed that Catholic parents who deliberately and needlessly expose their children to a dangerous, irreligious school are to be refused the sacraments.

JOIN YOUR PARISH ORGANISATION

A parish is not only a centre of worship; it is also an agency for saving souls. For that reason there must be active organizations in every parish that fill the needs of various groups, men and women, young and old. Some of these organizations limit their activities to the purely spiritual; others have a mixed spiritual and recreational or social programme, the latter to counteract the baneful influence of dangerous associations and amusements in the world today. A priest's work would be far easier if he could limit himself to the purely spiritual, or even to directing the purely spiritual organizations in his parish; but he recognises the importance of these other things for the welfare of his people.

The sad thing is, however, that there are so relatively few who co-operate with the parish organisations that mean so much to the work of the parish. "When I was at St. ~~~-s parish," said a zealous priest recently, "where there were 400 families, the number of men who would appear for Holy Name Communions and meetings would be about 70. Then, when I was transferred to St. —s parish, where there are 2,000 families, I found the number of men taking part in the Holy Name affairs to be about 70. Then after weeks of effort to build up membership and enthusiasm, at our next meeting there were just about 70 men!" So often pastors have the same complaint; it is only a faithful few who can be counted on.

It is true that active membership in parish organizations is not obligatory and that attendance at meetings or even spiritual functions may mean making sacrifices. But you can hardly be energetic in any parochial group without being a better Catholic for it, and besides— and this is often forgotten—if you do your bit in the Holy Name Society or the St. Vincent de Paul or the Altar Society, you can be sure that you are taking an effective part in the salvation of souls.

Too many people say, when the question of joining a parish organization arises, "I don't need it," or "Don't get anything out of it," or "I prefer to practise my religion by myself," forgetting that, even if these statements were true, the important point is what they can do for others by uniting with their fellow Catholics.

Without his people's co-operation a pastor can do little to extend Christ's Kingdom on earth; with their co-operation—and that means large and active membership in each parish organization—he can plan improvements, win back lapsed Catholics, make converts, know his people and inspire them to greater sanctity. It is the holiness of pastor and people that measures the degree of good that a parish will perform, but it must be an active holiness, one that will make use of all natural means to accomplish its purpose. In this modern age a parish will grow stagnant unless it operates as a strongly knit organization. For this it needs parishioners firm in faith and great-hearted in generosity, who are willing to give their time and energy to promote the cause of God in every way possible. How often have not the Popes of recent times told the Catholic world that the only answer to paganism and Communism is Catholic Action, which means the organised activity of the laity under their bishops and pastors.

PULL TOGETHER

In the early centuries the pagans used to say of Christians: "See how they love one another." It is to be feared that modern pagans might not be able to say the same of Catholics in many parishes today. The parish, like the good Christian home, should be a little bit of heaven here on earth, made so by charity, where there should be no refusal to serve, no seeking of self, no distinction of class, race or colour, no jealous factionalism, no damaging cliques, no stubborn pride, no hatred. "Pulling together" in a parish means nothing more than putting into practice your holy religion, loving all with a love like Christ's in the wondrous Mystical Body of which He is the head and we are the members, giving all to the work because the work is Christ's.

Thus the Catholic girl who declares "I won't join the Young Ladies' Sodality as long as so-and-so is president," is not being true to her Catholic ideals. The man who refuses to attend Holy Name Communions and breakfasts because there are too many present "from across the tracks"; or the lady who refuses to help at the bazaar because she has not "been recognised," is hardly displaying the humility of the humble Christ.

SUPPORT YOUR PARISH

Most pastors do not find it pleasant or easy to talk about money for their parish needs. They were ordained to minister to people spiritually, but in many cases circumstances have forced them to become builders, property

administrators and financial wizards. Many a good pastor has wound up with his health ruined and his nerves shattered under the constant burden of a parish debt or the taxing responsibility of maintaining a parish plant. No one but the pastor does much worrying about these problems.

The fifth precept of the Church commands all Catholics to help support their pastor, parish church and school. The law does not state how much each one should contribute. The amount of each Catholic's contribution to his church is left to his own conscience and judgment. It is customary, and sanctioned by Canon Law, that parishioners make a donation to the parish priest at baptisms, weddings and funerals. This much is certain, that if each member of any parish did his share, according to his means, there would be little cause for financial worry on the part of the pastor.

In the matter of supporting your parish, it is of the utmost importance that you use the system that is in vogue in your parish. Don't be among the few in every parish who insist on the right to support the church in their own way—standing out against the system that has been adopted. If Sunday envelopes are the ordinary means of church support in your parish, use the envelopes, and see that yours is handed in every Sunday.

It is well to remember that your contributions directly provide for the maintenance and improvement of your parish and can truly be called "giving to God." The salaries of pastors and assistant priests are fixed and very small, as salaries of professional men go, and you should flatly contradict anyone who suggests that contributions to your parish go to make your pastor rich. Most parishes need the help of special drives, card parties, social affairs, etc., not only to make improvements, but just to maintain parochial property and activities. A good parishioner recognises these needs and is always ready to do his share in any fund-raising drive. And he is never among those who complain that "the priests talk too much about money," even though the subject may have to be brought up quite often; he knows that if he is doing his share, the talk is not meant for him; if he is not doing his share, the talk is a needed reminder for him.

STICK TO YOUR PARISH

"Drifters" seldom do well in any walk of life; they lack a stable home and a steady job, from which they might concentrate their energies on worthwhile accomplishments. In our large cities especially, some Catholics become "spiritual drifters." They have no real affiliation with any parish; they are not in close contact with any priest; they are in great danger of slipping away from the faith.

Whatever be the necessity of merits of centralised high schools as opposed to parochial high schools, one thing is certain: very often young people in a central high school lose all interest in and contact with their own parish activities and organizations. This is not healthy, either for the young people or for the parish, since the habits and associations of the "teens" usually carry on throughout life. Extra-parochial clubs, movements, societies, etc., are beneficial and often necessary, but if they take you out of all parish activity, they are no good. The Catholic who lives in one parish and is a synthetic parishioner of another, is likely to run into trouble when it comes to sick calls, baptisms, marriages, funerals; besides, he is probably neglecting his obligation to support his own parish.

Stick to your parish; be interested and active in all its projects; know your priests personally; all this will help you to be a real Catholic. Ordinarily, if your pastor meets you on the street and does not recognise you as one of his parishioners, there is something radically wrong.

ABOVE ALL, BE CATHOLIC

On the other hand, some well-meaning parishioners make the mistake of becoming so parochial-minded that they are in danger of ceasing to be Catholic. The interest and zeal of every Catholic must reach beyond his parish boundaries. There are at least five non-Catholics in this country for every Catholic, and they depend on Catholics if they are ever to know the truth. As a result of the last war, European Catholics can no longer give their customary support to the foreign missions, and the Holy Father is looking to other lands to assume a large part of the burden. At home and abroad, there are the needy, the afflicted, the unenlightened, the persecuted and the sorely tempted; while one's first duty is toward his parish, still Christian charity and zeal know no parochial bounds.

A good parishioner, as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, will be interested in everything that has any bearing on his holy religion. He will take and read his diocesan newspaper, and at least one or the other good Catholic magazine, so as to keep abreast of affairs in the Church at large. He will have a copy of the Bible and other Catholic

books in his home. He will defend his faith in the presence of unbelievers, and will defend his priests in the midst of the anti-clericalism that is so rampant today. He will gladly advise and enlighten others who are groping for the truth, and will pray daily, not only for those of his own household, but also for those not blessed with the gift of faith. His life will manifest his dedication to the cause of Christ, and all who know him will say of him in their hearts: "There is a real Catholic."

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

If you move from one parish into another, go to the rectory and make yourself known to your new pastor as soon as possible. Likewise, if a new pastor is appointed to your parish, make yourself acquainted with him at the first opportunity.

Make it a point to be on time for Mass and other services in church, also for parish meetings. If you have an appointment with one of the priests of your parish, try to be on hand ahead of time rather than late. He probably has other appointments scheduled after yours.

Accept it as a personal obligation to take part in special events in parish life, such as missions, retreats, novenas, Forty Hours Devotion, etc. Be a regular and frequent communicant. One can usually gauge the spirituality of a parish by the number of people who attend daily Mass and receive Holy Communion, and who are present for weekday devotions. A good Catholic knows that he cannot outdo God in generosity.

Remember: you offer the Mass with the priest. Accompany the priest in the prayers of the Holy Sacrifice with your missal or prayer book. You will thus gain more from the Mass and be less distracted.

Build up the habit of receiving Holy Communion each time you assist at Mass. This is the perfect way of sharing in the Holy Sacrifice.

Invite your non-Catholic friends to come to Mass with you, and to other Church services. Give them simple explanations of what the services mean. Most of them will be grateful for this kindness.

Receive Holy Communion regularly with the parish organisation to which you belong. Apart from that, make use of the beautiful custom of having your entire family receive together at certain times.

Urge Catholics who are in a bad marriage to attend Mass. If they cling to the Mass, there is great hope for their ultimate conversion. Besides, even though they may be excommunicated, they are still obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days.

If you know how to serve Mass, and you see a priest beginning Mass without a server, offer yourself for the task. Adult servers are becoming more and more common; men who have served in their youth should keep up their knowledge of the prayers and rubrics of the Mass and be proud to make use of opportunities to serve.

For the baptism of your children, choose godparents who are good Catholics.

If you know of fallen-away Catholics in your neighbourhood, inform your pastor about them. A word or visit from him may be all that is needed to bring them back to the faith.

Try to show your appreciation of the great gift of faith by spreading it in any way you can. Catholics are sometimes far less zealous than are the Communists or the Witnesses of Jehovah. These have nothing to offer, while you have everything.

Do not look upon your pastor as a man with just "another job." You could not pay him for what he does for you with all the money in the world. But he does need your prayers, often.

If you are respectful toward priests and nuns, you may be very sure that you have a deep respect for your faith.

Do not take sides against the Sister from school in questions involving the disciplining of your child. Go to the Sister and talk the matter over. In doubtful situations you may have recourse to the pastor.

Don't "shop around" for a different confessor every time you go to confession. Although every Catholic has full liberty to confess to any authorised priest, it is most beneficial to have a regular confessor.

When it is necessary to call the priest for one who is sick, try to send someone to the rectory who can tell him the circumstances of the illness, what sacraments can be received, how much in danger the patient may be, etc. If you must telephone for a priest because there is no one about to act as messenger, be sure to tell him the condition of the patient and what sacraments can be received.

Keep on hand in your home at all times blessed candles, a crucifix, and holy water, for use in case of an emergency sick call. When the priest is called, prepare a table by the bedside of the patient with a white cloth, the crucifix and blessed candles, holy water, and a glass of ordinary water and a spoon.

When a member of your family dies, make the funeral arrangements with the pastor yourself. Don't leave this to the undertaker.

Have a smile and greeting for your fellow-Catholics on the steps of your parish church. One of the growing evils of city life and large parishes is the unfriendliness and unneighbourliness of Catholics, even at the door of the church.

Parish gatherings are excellent opportunities for Catholics to find suitable partners for marriage. Some people complain that they never have a chance to go out with good Catholics, and yet they never attend Catholic gatherings.

Talk over a contemplated marriage with your parents, your pastor or your confessor. Their experience and wisdom will help you beforehand: it will not help you much to come crying on their shoulders after you have entered an unwise marriage.

Do not let yourself be talked into a fashionable "evening" wedding. The proper way for Catholics to be married is in the sanctuary, at a Nuptial Mass, with both bride and groom sealing their sacramental love with the reception of Holy Communion.

Choose only a good Catholic for steady company keeping. Above all, keep away from divorced persons. Marriage is too important a step to be trifled with. The general rule is that a Catholic can be truly happy and successful in marriage only with a Catholic partner. Therefore, keep company only with such a Catholic or with a person who shows a sincere interest in your faith.

Remember that as a Catholic you can be validly married only before a priest and two witnesses. If a Catholic attempts marriage in any other way, he is not married and is therefore entering upon a life of sin. If he attempts marriage before a non-Catholic minister of religion, he also incurs excommunication.

Have a truly Catholic home, with crucifix and holy pictures, especially one of the Blessed Mother, in prominent places.

Establish the custom of having common family prayers in your home. Children who are taught to pray thus in their homes, do not usually abandon the habit of prayer in their later lives.

Children learn more from their parents than from anyone else in the world. Therefore your example is supremely important. If you want your children to be good, try to be a Saint yourself.

Have plenty of good Catholic literature about your home, and ban any books, or magazines, that could be harmful to yourself or your children.

It is from devout Catholic homes that most vocations to the priesthood and religious life proceed. Be ready to foster such vocations in your children, and be grateful for the honour of giving a child to God.

Do not try to be "a big shot" in parish activities. Subordinate all personal ambition to the good of the cause, and be content to be just "a good worker." Whatever you do should be for God, not for yourself.

If you find yourself a perennial officer in any parish organisation, be willing and even eager to step down and give others a chance. Ordinarily it is harmful to the spirit of parish organisations to have the same officials year after year.

Do not let either jealousy or laziness keep you from serving your parish when the occasion offers itself. This may mean sacrifice and overcoming your feelings at times, but it is worthwhile in behalf of the spread of the faith and the salvation of souls.

If you are attending a non-parochial high school or college, keep up your membership in your parish and your participation in parish activities. Too often, when young people leave their parish school, they lose all contact with their parish, to the great detriment of their spiritual welfare.

Remember that, as a Catholic, you are "on the spot." The world will be quick to criticise you if you do not live a truly Catholic life, even though it has little use for the Catholic Church. If you are a genuine Catholic, do not expect much praise, except from God. You may be sure, however, that by giving the example of a devout Catholic life you will be influencing a countless number of souls. On the contrary, no one does so much harm to himself, to the Church, and to the world, as a bad Catholic or a fallen away Catholic. Fear nothing so much as the loss of sanctifying grace and your faith.