

and the priest who was to have said that Mass must have been long in Heaven. Mr. Ward, of Egton, who assisted in the demolition of the old Mass house, has many treasures carved from the wooden beams, and a precious stone slab, perhaps that on which the altar-stone rested. The altar-stone itself is inlaid in the altar of the Lady Chapel at Egton Bridge; the one Fr. Postgate carried about with him is now at Pickering.

In Whitby, there are still many Catholic families who claim to have household furniture used or blessed by the Martyr. No natives, Catholic or non-Catholic, fail to show interest at the mention of his name. All have some stories woven round him, or know some family history which binds them to him. All speak of him as "Father Postgate"; he might have just left them, so vivid is his character and presence in their hearts. Some pray for his canonisation, and aver that there ought to have been "another Rising of the North" when he was not beatified in 1929. Others are quite content that God knows best, and think that no publicity or lack of it could take their Martyr from them. There is, though, the weighty point that were he beatified or later canonised, as we hope, God would not fail to be glorified in yet another of his faithful servants; so that it would seem best to work and pray for that end.

THE ACTIVE CATHOLIC.

BY

MARIANNE ROTH.

To avoid confusion, I must first make clear that this paper does not concern Catholic Action, the need for which is so stressed by the Hierarchy. Here we are left in no doubt as to what we should do. But I have often wondered when, why and how individual Catholics have been most active—what makes the difference between a preacher and a contemplative, and in what respects they are the same—and this represents the results of these wonderings.

What do we mean by an active Catholic? A complication arises at once, because there are obviously two sorts, both equally deserving of the name:

(a) The Catholic who spends his life in purposefully furthering Catholicism, usually by the spoken or written word; the missionary, of whom the great example is St. Paul. Him I will call the *Professional Catholic*, to distinguish him from

(b) *the Living Catholic*. He is not a preacher. He may be anything from a fisherman to an emperor, but his every thought, word and deed is vitally informed by his religion, which is the *raison d'être* of his life. Of course, these divisions are not

mutually exclusive. A good Professional Catholic can be, and indeed must be a Living Catholic, and a hitherto silent Living Catholic may start professing his faith at any time. Without irreverence, one can say that Jesus was a Living Catholic for thirty years, and a Professional one for three.

For the purpose of this paper, the term Active Catholic will mean what I have described as the Professional Catholic, as his work involves more definite physical action than that of the Living Catholic, whom we will dismiss with the comment that his state is that to which *everyone* without exception should aspire. This is easy to say, but very hard to achieve.

An active Catholic, then, is one who in addition to living a Catholic life, is known for his work in furtherance of the Catholic cause. We shall be interested in the following facts about him:

1. His distribution, i.e. what proportion of Catholics is active? How does this compare with the distribution of active members of other organisations, and why,
2. What sort of Catholic is active, and again why?
3. What is the influence of active Catholics in
 - (a) a Catholic country,
 - (b) a non-Catholic country,
 - (c) an anti-Catholic country?
4. What is the work of an active Catholic? What are the indications for undertaking it? What is required of those who undertake this work?

My impression is that of all the Catholics in this country, the number who are active in the sense we have chosen is fairly small, far and away below the equivalent active proportion amongst, for example, the Communists, or the Salvation Army. Is this state of affairs right? I admit that the organisations which I have chosen at random for comparison with the Catholic Church may present that comparison unfairly. Thus people do not join the Salvation Army unless they *want* to be actively apostolic. But ought not Catholics also all want to be apostolic, if they know that they have the one true Faith? One answer to this is that perhaps they do not all know it, but I will deal with this more fully later; here I will suggest that the low activity-rate of English Catholics is due to the Universality of Catholicism, and the Via Media. By the Universality of Catholicism, I mean that it is as much a religion for Mary as for Martha, for Bernadette as for Major Barbara. If people outside the Church feel the urge to be active, they can satiate it by joining an apostolic sect; if they are of lethargic temperament, they choose something quieter; but in the Church there is room for all. This sounds as if I attributed *all* missionary zeal to transient feelings, and I hasten to say that I do not; though, subject to correction,

I do think that temperament plays a large part in these matters.

By the *Via Media* I mean the sane, and, to some, rather pedestrian, view which the Church adopts about matters social, political and artistic. This makes the Catholic activity rate so much lower, for instance, than that of the Communists, because it is much easier to be active when you can go to extremes and shock people, and be generally "agin the government". In defence of this statement, I would cite the increased activity of Catholics undergoing persecution.

These reasons sound very mundane and materialistic, and I shall explain later why I think that the Active Catholic whom we are discussing is a very mundane phenomenon.

To answer our second question, what sort of Catholic is active, and why? All sorts of Catholics are active, but the point I should like to emphasize is that a large proportion of them are converts. It is even more striking from another aspect; that almost all converts to Catholicism are active. The reason for this I suggested above. Cradle Catholics may not realise the value of the faith they hold, and certainly few of them realise what it is to be without it. The convert, on the other hand, knows this only too well, and makes many efforts to help his less fortunate friends into the fold before it is too late.

Next we must discuss the influence of active Catholics in different conditions. In an anti-Catholic country they do underground missionary work at the risk of their lives, and undergo all manner of discomforts for its conversion. The conditions here are ripe for activity: Catholics are a small, persecuted minority, their Faith is held at the highest price, life itself, the turnover of personnel is rapid, owing to martyrdom, and their numbers are recruited from converts. Their work and its results are wonderful, and their activity is, in proportion to the severity of the anti-Catholic feeling, high.

In a non-Catholic country the work of active Catholics is quite different. Their aim is still the conversion of the land in which they live, but they must achieve it, not by heroic sacrifice and death, but by a ceaseless watch and intellectual struggle against plausible errors. Their enemies are not the might of kings and firing squads, but the polite jeers of a cynical and self-satisfied intelligentsia, or the easy-going friendliness of a humanitarian philosophy. They have to reclaim souls who are quite unaware of their loss, and they have to do it by standing firm in the midst of conflicting ideologies, and often by looking ridiculous—there is none of the glamour of martyrdom for them. Such is the lot of active Catholics in this country. They are not persecuted; they are tolerated, and even liked, and no one cares whether they are active or not. Therefore the proportion is lower than in an anti-Catholic country.

In a Catholic country the work of active Catholics is different again. Here it would be absurd if all the population showed missionary activity—everyone would get in everyone else's way. For those who are active the work is ceaseless reform—criticism of errors, the reclaiming of apostates, research into the Church's knowledge, and explanation of her teaching. But in proportion as the country is a good Catholic one, less and less active Catholics will be needed.

And it follows from this that in Heaven there will be no active Catholics at all. I repeat that the Active Catholic is a mundane institution. His existence is a protest against the sins and deficiencies of this world.

But to return to earth, and in particular to this country, the active Catholic is still very much in demand. His work is to talk, write and do whatever he can to show people the religion that is their heritage, and to combat the false, but very plausible, humanitarian ideology that is becoming rampant amongst people who want to do good, but have no God. What, then, should we do about it? Should we say, "England needs Active Catholics—we are they", and go ahead, and act? I feel that this is scarcely the way to go about it, and might lead to serious mistakes. Is not some preparation needed for the would-be Active Catholic?

First of all, he *must* be a Living Catholic. I have said, and repeat, that every Catholic should be this, but it is especially important for one who wishes to disseminate his Catholicism. So the first thing he must do is to examine, and if necessary step up his Faith, by means of prayer and the Sacraments, until it is in complete accord with his daily life—in theory at least! If we succeeded in achieving this ideal in practice, we should all be saints. But we might not be Active Catholics—how is this state achieved? I believe that it is a step which cannot be forced. The activity is a privilege or burden (whichever way we look at it) given to us by God—a vocation in fact—and the most that we can do is to adopt a policy of humility and acceptance of his Will, and, if we wish to be active, hope that he will indicate the way.

This may sound very tame, but the outlook is not hopeless, and we can, I think, increase our chances of being chosen for Action. God may sometimes appear to us odd in his choice of apostles, but in the main he will be likely to select those with the best qualifications. So the obvious thing for us to do is to find out what those qualifications are, and to equip ourselves with them, in as far as it lies in our power to do so. How? Well the first, and most immediate qualification is a sound knowledge of our Faith, and this may be achieved by Study.

The second is a knowledge of the other fellow's point of view, and this can only be obtained by meeting the other fellow on his own ground, making friends with him, and getting to know and sympathise with him. The third necessity is for good credentials in the material world—as good as those of the other fellow, and better, if possible, so that he will be prepared to respect our views. And these are obtained by hard work at our own respective jobs.

These are essential for any group which aims at producing potential Active Catholics (and I would stress the word potential, subject to God's decision). Others more exciting, such as speaking ability, literary style, specialist knowledge, etc., should also be cultivated. The Catholic so equipped (and it should not be forgotten that he is already at least attempting to be a Living Catholic) should produce very favourable results in his immediate surroundings, even if he never makes any far-reaching conversions.

A TREATISE ON THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY OF OUR REDEMPTION

By

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(Translation by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey)

CHAPTER VII.

How in the sacred Passion the charity of Christ our Lord shines forth with special splendour.

After the goodness of Christ our Lord, his charity for mankind, which proceeds from his goodness, is seen. This shines forth so clearly in the Mysteries of his Incarnation and Passion that the Saints, especially Saint Augustine, assign it as their cause. (*De Cat. Rudib.* c.4). For the Saviour came, as he said, "to cast fire on the earth", and he knew that the surest way to kindle it was to show the depth of his love for us. We see this in profane love: those who wish to win it take every means of manifesting their affection for their beloved, as was done by our most merciful Redeemer who showed men how tenderly he loved them by this deed. This is why the Incarnation is specially attributed to the Holy Ghost, who is essentially love. In order to treat of this divine love, we must speak of its two grades or differences. The Saints declare there are two kinds of grace, the one prevenient (antecedent) by which our Lord prepares man for the renouncement of sin and for justification, the other consequent grace which remains with him after justification in order that he may perform good works and live as a child of God. Thus we may imagine two loves in our Lord, the one prevenient, the other consequent, for though