

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptorum New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Iustitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1921.

VOCATIONS



NOWADAYS the truth that the progress and welfare of religion depend largely on our schools is evident to everybody. Catholic schools are absolutely necessary in order to enable the Church to retain its influence over the people. The Pope, the Hierarchy, National and Diocesan Councils have always emphasised the importance of schools in which the children shall be educated on true Christian lines, and they have laid a solemn and grave obligation on all Catholic parents to send their children to our own schools whenever it is at all possible. Were it not for the zeal and self-sacrifice of our devoted teachers, to whom sufficient honor can never be paid, it would be impossible to carry on the well-equipped and well-conducted schools provided for the Catholic youth of the Dominion in every diocese and in almost every parish at the present time. Hence, if the existence of our schools is a matter of supreme importance, equally important is the maintenance of a body of religious teachers for both boys and girls. Knowing well that too often both nuns and Brothers are, owing to the comparative smallness of their numbers, called upon to do work which might well fill up the time of twice as many, it is certainly a laudable and meritorious thing to encourage religious vocations among young people of both sexes who by their pious dispositions manifest an aptitude for the religious state.

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A Decree framed by a special commission of Cardinals, on July 15, 1912, contains the following passage: "Vocation to the priesthood by no means consists, at least necessarily and according to the ordinary law, in a certain interior inclination of the person, or promptings of the Holy Spirit, to enter the priesthood. But on the contrary, nothing more is required of the person to be ordained, in order that he may be called by the bishop, than that he have a right intention, and such fitness of nature and grace, as evidenced in integrity of life and sufficiency of learning, which will give a well-founded hope of his rightly discharging the office and obligations of the priesthood." Now, we may legitimately conclude that the principles laid down in

this Decree apply, proportionately, to religious vocations also, and that "nothing more is required of a person who is a candidate for a religious life than a right intention and such fitness of nature and grace required by the Order or Society as will give a well-founded hope that the candidate will rightly discharge the obligations of the religious life." Taking these principles as the essential conditions, pastors and even pious laymen and women will merit, as St. Thomas teaches, a great reward if they induce others to enter religion. And on the other hand parents who place obstacles in the way of children who have a vocation are in the condition of those who when asked for bread give their children a stone. As a rule, Catholic fathers and mothers understand sufficiently the dignity and the value of a vocation and there is little danger that they will become stumbling blocks in the spiritual life of their offspring, but there are always a few who do not understand and who are so engrossed by the pursuit of material prosperity that they are ready to sacrifice even, it may be, the child's salvation for their own whims. Of such unfortunate and misguided persons the Council of Baltimore says: "We fear that the fault lies in great part with many parents who instead of fostering the desire so natural to the young heart, of dedicating itself to the service of God, but too often impart to their children their own worldly-mindedness, and seek to influence their choice of a state of life by unduly exaggerating the dangers of the priestly (or religious) calling, and painting in glowing colors the advantages of a secular life." If such parents rightly understood their dignity as Christians they would be consumed with anxiety to forward in every way God's designs in their children's regard, and they would esteem it as the greatest honor to be able to rear up a son or daughter worthy to be received into the close union with Our Lord which is found in the priesthood and in religion. "Pastors," says Bishop Schrembs, "ought to teach young parents that the service of God is even more glorious than that of country, for, as St. Jerome says, 'Such a service establishes relationships between the family and Jesus Christ Himself.'" And Father Rickaby says: "It is the glory of a large and happy Catholic family to produce a vocation. A sound Catholic is glad to have brother or sister, uncle or aunt, or cousin or child, 'who has pleased God and is found no more' in the ordinary walks of life, because God hath taken and translated him to something higher and better." It is needless to add that the Catholic who is incapable of feeling such happiness when the Lord has called one of his relations to Himself, is not by any means sound.

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Dwelling now particularly on the vocation of teachers, let us quote the words of a great American thinker, Brother Azarius: "There is not in this world among human callings a more sacred one than that of moulding soul to higher and better things." Bishop Byrne is more emphatic: "The office of teaching has an advantage in some respects over the priesthood. The teachers are constantly with their pupils, shaping their souls, coloring them, informing them, making them instinct with life and motives, and giving them high ideals and worthy aspirations. In all this their work is akin to that of confessor." One last testimony we must quote, for it applies specially to teachers in a country like ours where Catholic schools are doing such magnificent apostolic work. Father Croiset says: "Oh! the beautiful and rich crowns which God has prepared for a religious who inspires little children with a horror of vice and a love of virtue! What sweet consolations will be experienced at the moment of death by the religious when he beholds coming to his aid those souls whom he has helped to save."



Our Lord has for us a love so unsearchable, so tender, that He wishes us to share in all He does. The Creator of the Universe awaits the prayer of a poor soul to save a multitude of other souls, ransomed, like her, at the price of His Blood.—The Little Flower.