

You Came To Me Affectionately When Others Called Me Mad...

I grant to myself the pleasure and the privilege of speaking approving words to our legionaries who are engaged in the visiting of mental patients. Those efforts do particular service to the Legion, because that is a work which must receive our devotion: it is among the pitiful and painful works. Yet its very character tends to exclude it from attention and the Legion is not giving it enough attention.

I suppose it could be said that there is no other work in the Legion which is more difficult. It is not, of course, of the brand of our hostels where on any given evening you may walk into a pitched battle and sustain injury, and where even the most peaceful evening is not free from the feeling of adventure.

Your task is not severe in that way. Its chief difficulty springs up from inside yourself, from disheartenment in some form. You will be inclined to think that there is little value in the work either for yourselves or for the patients.

The lack of variety and signs of progress deprives you of the natural aids which are available in other occupations. But all this is only equivalent to saying that you are engaged in an exercise of the highest legionary spirit.

A phrase in the handbook calls for 'a stiffening up of our spirit'. If there is any employment in the Legion which requires that stiffening of spirit, it is this one. It can weigh you down if you let it. So your work more than others, must be firmly joined to spiritual roots. Legionary quality must be developed sufficient to stay the course. Initial elements of pity and interest soon exhaust themselves and then there is a struggle to keep going. In what follows I ramble over the whole field of your subject. I am going to mobilise an astonishingly large number of considerations which not only provide adequate motives for persevering but which definitely recommend it as a work of special choice.

I begin in a way which may seem to be a little light but which I mean to raise to a higher plane. I point out that Our Lady is symbolised in the Church by the moon and that the moon has in a strange fashion always been associated with mental ailments. Formerly the conviction on that point was so complete that the name 'lunatic' derived from the moon. The Latin word for moon is *luna*. It was supposed that the serene silver orb exerted a sinister influence on some poor minds.

Daily our millions of legionaries proclaim the Antiphon: 'Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?' Our Lady is suitably described as the moon because thereby is shown very well the relation between herself and her son. The moon shines with the light of the sun: it has no light of its own. Similarly Our Lady is

lustrous with the light of her child: she lives by him; what she gives is his.

So I begin with that particular symbolism of Our Lady as the moon: and through that traditional superstition as to the moon's part in mental troubles, I invite you to regard her as your special source of confidence. In your cause, as in every other cause, she will be triumphant by the omnipotence which she transmits.

Or to vary somewhat the above imagery, Our Lady will put the moon, typifying the dread mental ailments, beneath her feet. It is not childish to import Our Lady into improbable situations, because no matter where she enters, there is solution. She accompanies you as the health of your very sick ones.

You attack your problem in her name. Your purpose is to bring her into action. You are her agents, her means of fulfilling herself. Going to your unfortunates, you discharge what must be a unique aspect of her motherhood. Therefore you can rightly expect that an unusual degree of assistance will be given to you – indeed that she may be more with you in that work than she would be in another work. That is if we may be permitted to differentiate between the works to which we are sent.

Being present with you, she will be active in many ways. She will sanctify you because of what you are doing and she will strengthen you for it; and through your approach she will work on the patients in salutary forms.

There will be many of the cases whose mental state will, because God wills it so, remain unchanged. His loving purposes are being served by that infirmity. But likewise, as the history of mankind shows and the pages of the gospels particularly evidence, there is a section whom God afflicts but from whom he is in certain circumstances

willing to lift the affliction. In this latter process you may have an important part to play, namely that of supplying ingredients which enable him to grant that relief. If you were not visiting them, this would not be effected.

Supposing that their affliction has originated from incorrect conduct on their part, could it not be that by the faith, charity and sacrifice of your attentions to them, you have helped to neutralise their debt?

Or we might state a different position. Perhaps their deprivation is for reward and not for penalty. Often a person is suffering on account of sin but not for his own sin. This seems to me to apply very much inside families. I have seen countless cases where sinless members have been privileged to bear the offences of others gravely culpable in the same family, thereby to save them and in the same process to tread a loftier road themselves. Into such a dispensation as this you enter and by your sacrificial labours you ease the burden.

And so you can with confidence look forward to improvement of various kinds in those you visit. But if this were never to operate, it should make no difference to you. Your motive goes deeper than any desire to accomplish a physical benefit.

I put before you Chapter 25 of the Gospel of St Mathew. It described the judgement of men at the end of the world. Our Lord is represented as addressing the good and summoning them to the heavenly Kingdom. He gives them the reason: 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you visited me.'

And they say back to him: 'Lord, when did we ever do those things to you?' And he said: 'Whenever you did it to one of my least brethren you did it to me.' Those words

of his form one of the declarations of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. We minister to Our Lord not only when we are dealing with those stated classes of misfortune but when we deal with all other classes of misery and with all types of men.

But it is to be noted that Our Lord does in that passage assign a particular category to the more miserable ones; a special emphasis of pity enters in. Not only is he served in those people but he is ministered to in his grim necessity. He is suffering in them. Of course his list is not a final one. One could supplement it. For instance you could add on other grave categories of physical distress, such as the down-and-out types, those who are diseased in awful ways and then that one which you have devotedly made your own, the mentally harassed.

More than that, I wonder if among all those different classes yours may not rank the highest because it is the very least? All those others have lost something external. They have been deprived of some quality: liberty, health, esteem, peace, comfort, food; and these perhaps only temporarily. They have retained the priceless gift of man, their personality, their will, their mind.

But the mentally troubled people have lost something of themselves. They have lost much of their personality. For that reason we might boldly seize on the keyword in Our Lord's utterance and urge that they are the least of all the least, and therefore that in those persons you go to Our Lord rendering him a unique service.

An intriguing thought is that one of the charges hurled against Our Lord frequently was that he was mad. I would imagine that it was a very common accusation, because he was moving around making strange claims for himself. To materialistic and cynical minds these would

have sounded preposterous, insane. So to follow up that Judgement scene, it should form an admirable train of thought for you that he may say to you on the Last Day: 'You came to me affectionately when others called me mad and said I had a devil.'

When tempted with those misgivings as to lack of progress and as to whether you should not be otherwise employed, those other compelling ideas will fortify you and keep you on your course. The real danger which lies before you is that of judging a work according to what you think to be success or satisfaction. These are dubious tests. They could point in the opposite direction to the true one – and they do in your case. In other works some sort of fruit is to be seen. Even if a moral growth is not evident, there may be a growth of friendship. Some appreciation will be shown of the legionary efforts for them and in time there will usually be an improvement in the quality of those being approached.

But in your mission you see so little. Year follows year and there has not been the slightest improvement. Even if there has been an advance, it may not be so easy to observe it. Seeing them often, a slight ascent is not measurable. It is even possible for us to think they have receded, so that those dismal words may hammer in your mind: 'I am wasting my time.'

So once again I say it to you that you could not make better use of your time and abilities. This work is a special proof of faith, for on faith you are thrown back; all the minor aids have fallen away from you. Faith is the sole motive-power left to keep you moving. The scripture says that he who perseveres to the end shall be saved; thereby assuring us that faith without perseverance is empty, just like faith without good works. Keep your eye upon perseverance as

the crowning Christian virtue. 'The patient man shall speak of victory,' continues scripture. Perseverance and patience amount to much the same thing.

There is also the important practical and psychological side of your work. You are dealing with a complicated problem and you must bring some wisdom and certain human rules to bear on it.

The first one I present is that you must not underrate those persons. Of course we should not underrate *anybody*. To err in that way is to render ultra-offence to them and so it is that the handbook almost tiresomely insists on the quality of respect as due by us to all and as being the primary key of influence. In this we are found falling short even in regard to the ordinary people around us. We view their defects harshly and we eye their good qualities without the warmth which would cause them to glow back at us. In this way a wrong relation is established and the injustice is committed of assigning persons to a status inferior to their true one.

If that is the tendency in regard to the ordinary people around, it is a certainty in regard to your poor world. The signs of their impoverishment stare you in the face. You must resolutely resist that evidence of your sense. You must not let yourself degrade them in your thoughts, because your behaviour towards them will depend on their status in your mind.

Many of your poor sufferers will show abnormality in their faces. Some will be vacant and some even repulsive, contorted into strange inhuman expressions. So it is no simple act to give respect and to see possibilities. Yet you must do these things. How?

Well, here is one thought which belongs to that very misery and yet which answers it. Many of those persons,

and who will limit their number, are already registered for Heaven, being without sin and incapable of sin, almost as close to God as if they were in Purgatory! This is really an awesome reflection, providing that needed drastic readjustment of improper thinking.

Delving a while ago into Mohammedan traditions, I discovered a kindred idea, helpful to us here, that the insane are often regarded by the superstitious Moslems as sainted. Madmen and fools are esteemed by them the favourites of Heaven. It is believed that their minds have been taken away from their tenement of clay to talk with angels in the high regions. Therefore people will beg the blessing of an idiot when they meet him in the street and bending forward they will kiss his garment with the most profound veneration.

Superstitious or not, a little of that extremity of respect must adorn your own method.

Another working rule for you to go by is that they understand far more than they are given credit for. They appreciate a right attitude to them. This does not alter the fact that they can trade on it. Sometimes their crudity of behaviour is shown in a cunning way, that is lavished on those whom they know will bear it from them, rather than on the officials whom they hold in awe. You who are in the category of friendship may be the recipients of rough demonstrations at their hands. That should hearten rather than discourage you. It is a sign that you are getting on well with them.

I suppose we could generalise and say that most things look worse than they really are. Take the unromantic example of a very sick stomach. It is only a slight disorder in one organ, yet it reduces one to wreckage. We are so demoralised that we could not put up a fight

to save our lives. I am sure that a similar process operates in the mind, more so perhaps than in the body. We know that the intolerable seasickness is not as bad as it seems. But we are not so well able to reassure ourselves in the case of some disturbance of the mind. Everything in that department exaggerates itself so that a particular upset might be only of a minor order like unto the sick stomach. Excitement or shocks can produce bad effects on minds which are precariously balanced. Conceivably these may be as much in the line of remedy as that disturbed stomach. The remedy which you will offer to the victim is the certainty that you are a faithful friend, sure to be along this week and all weeks, interested, smiling, soothing, sympathetic; ready to listen and even willing to receive abuse. That remedy may quickly abate the mental seasickness.

Another example, if it is not over-labouring the picture, is that of the drunkard. He has delivered himself into the grip of his enemy and has abandoned all effort. He lets himself drift in a tide of neglect and depravity. Nevertheless that homeless-looking position is only a few degrees worse than the seasickness. Remove the cause and the decent human being reappears.

Admittedly it is not easy to establish standards of comparison between these purely physical ills and the infinitely less tangible field of mental trouble. But my contention is only that there is a certain amount of parity, at least in some cases and that we must look for those cases. Or rather I would go further and say that our behaviour towards all the cases should be the same, i.e. one of looking for the best in them even where we have no justification for thinking that there are sound elements on which to base our campaign towards amelioration.

So apply the analogy of the seasick man or the drunkard to your cases. It is a legitimate supposition that a little failure in the mind can have the power to produce a disproportionate demoralisation and leave the subject flopping around in a helpless way.

Your principle must be to find, so to speak, a solid spot in them on which you will aim to build. This is no more than the general plan of life. For instance, the communicating of knowledge proceeds from the known to the unknown. Starting off with one item, another kindred one is added to it, and so on indefinitely. It is a process like unto the growth of a plant. The new grows out of the old and becomes part of it. Finally there is a complete growth.

Or take another example from medicine. A person's skin has been so badly damaged that its ordinary recuperative power has been destroyed. The remedy is to graft. A portion of the patient's healthy skin, no more than the size of a postage stamp, is taken and caused to adhere to the devastated area. When it has set, the same is repeated again and again. Those patches are not put down methodically beside each other but, as one might think, haphazardly. Eventually that living patchwork expands and covers the whole space. Perhaps the special virtue of this grafting image is that if you are able to produce a number of little ameliorations of different kinds in a patient, you might be able to accomplish a restoration resembling that marvellous grafting business.

So, look for the healthy territory in them with a view to making it a taking-off point for further exploration. Try to find something in which they take an interest; a hobby, a line of thought, games, animals, flowers, pictures, an aptitude of any kind – for writing, poetry, drawing,

painting, chess, studies; or lesser pursuits like crosswords or other competitions. Your ingenuity must be put on over time!

Even if you can only find a single sensible idea, it is for you to concentrate on that and seek to build out from it. If after a while you should be able to observe something proceeding from your efforts, it would undoubtedly encourage you. You have broken the stagnation. To the patient that gain might represent itself as in the order of the sensational, with consequent stabilising power.

One hears it stated often that those patients do not feel their unhappy condition. Such a general statement cannot be made. It cannot be said: Here is a dividing line; these are afflicted and those are not. The mind is too complex to be ticketed like that. It can be said seriously that we all have a touch of madness in us. Maybe that suggestion expresses an idea which is good; that what is thus rather crudely put is only equivalent to saying that the breath of inspiration is in us.

A quality may be normal and yet can so easily go out of control. Good tempered persons enter into violent rages. Prudent ones can be carried off into extreme follies. Kind ones can act cruelly. Yet basically there is nothing wrong with them. The essential worth is there even though it commits treason occasionally. So there is no need to be unduly dismayed if at times we feel extravagant stirrings in ourselves. They may be an indication of vehement mental vigour whose ruthless surging finds it hard to compose themselves to strict order.

The fullness of life can be aggressive, even explosive. A little too much effervescence and things are out of control temporarily – or perhaps permanently if unchecked. It would be an error to conclude that someone is ‘mental’

because uncouth displays are sometimes given. If the like were never to assert itself in us, it might be no good sign. Is too much balance, or too little of that mental excitement, a good thing? It could mean a descent into the realm of slower mental movement; that is to say into unintelligence. Who would be a clod for the sake of escaping the discomforts which are the inevitable product of an intensely active brain?

Genius and many mental inconveniences abide close together. As the choice strains of the violin are dependent on the tension of the strings, so in regard to the tensions of the mind which possess their disadvantages as well as their gifts. But may I venture on the thought that it is so often the fault of the owner of that delicate brain if it goes astray? Too frequently the genius regards himself as a law unto himself, so that he will not impose law on his mind. Instead of seeking to balance its erratic movements with humble, holy and calming ideas and behaviour, the opposite treatment is administered to it. If something in any order, spiritual, mental, physical, is only constructed to bear a certain strain, it is looking for disaster to pile more weight upon it.

So, just as it is unprofitable to try to make distinctions between the ordinary ones among us and that alleged class of genius, so let us not allow ourselves to interpose a sharp dividing line between ourselves and the mental class for whom we are working. The vulgar phrase is applied to them that there is a screw loose in them. The screw is not loose in them alone. It is loose in all humanity in varying degrees and ways. What does one do with a loose screw? One tightens it. To do that very thing is the legionary mission to all men. It is your trade in regard to your poor folk. Set yourself to tighten that screw. A little turn may be all that is required in many cases.

Your means is contact, and the soul of that contact is genuine interest. This cannot be put on like a garment. If you have not got that interest, the mere contact is not going to be fruitful. A lifeless contact is like the dead wires which do not carry the electricity. It will be dead in the natural order and still more so in the spiritual order. For in both of those orders interest is akin to love. In the higher order love brings grace.

As cannot be said too often, interest is shown by listening. If you are really interested in a person, you will listen to him. But just observe carefully what goes on when people meet and talk. How few can claim a sustained attention! How few are prepared to listen at all!

So do not go to volley forth a lot of talk. Go to prove your love-inspired interest. This is doubly necessary because you are dealing with those who are full of an inferiority sense. To counter this you must convince them that you value them. Someone has written that admiration elicits gentleness and warmth from an ageing woman. But not from her alone; all need some drops of that intoxicating commodity. Praise is too meanly measured out. Give it, and at once is visible the hunger for it.

Let your speech be a self-starter which will set their tongues moving. Then let them talk to their hearts' content. Stimulate their memories – rake up the days of their youth, their home-life and of course it is permissible for you to show the further interest of commenting and questioning in moderation. Then on subsequent visits come back on those things and let them see you have remembered. They mark that fact. Do not let appearances cause you to think otherwise. They are touched in their inner depths.

Do not deluge them with religion. But do not leave it out either. You will need wisdom to tell you when and how much. To be especially avoided is the air of what is called preaching. Here you have an expedient in talking the Legion to them. Tell them you want their good opinion of it eventually their membership. Describe its adventurous operations in all places. So doing you cannot keep away from its spiritual roots. But these enter in naturally so that you are teaching without that flavour of preaching.

To those who are readers, the life of Edel Quinn should be introduced. It is a thrilling, heartening tale of an invalid who surpassed her plight and helped to mould the world and make history. I have never known of anyone who heard her story and remained unmoved by it. Create that mood and use it as the foundation for a building.

Auxiliary membership must be an early objective, and then – to the extent that it is practicable – our new adjutorian degree. Groups of those members could then be formed who would then essay recruiting among their fellows. In every other way too the patients should be encouraged to help each other.

But if those degrees of membership are practicable, why not active membership? Many mental hospitals have praesidia composed of the inmates. To have such in the institution is to set at work there a potent leaven. Those legionaries have abundant time to spend on their activities amongst the other patients and they can raise themselves to a high pitch of sanctity. The value of their Legion membership – on its lesser level as a therapeutic or healing force to themselves – has been so evident as to be everywhere recognised by the medical staffs of those places.

More than in any other legionary work you must associate yourself with Our Lady. You are more thrown

back on spiritual considerations, because your words will weigh lighter than in any other work. Sometimes you are not even listened to. So more weight must proceed from the spiritual background. Concentrate your thought on the vital principle of your legionary mission: your approach to those persons must be in such a spirit of faith and love that through you the person of Our Lord is being seen and served by his mother. You go bearing her.

As perhaps a particular aspect of devotion, you might place before you the babyhood of Our Lord. For so many of the patients will exhibit that quality of immaturity and helplessness. Your role becomes that of enabling Our Lady to mother her helpless babe. So in the more difficult cases keep her in the forefront of your consciousness as thus engaged with Jesus. It would be an impiety to think that such a work of pure faith would be left without its due fruit.

Success. What is success? Your great success will consist, as I have already suggested in persevering. It will entitle you to hear addressed to yourselves one day those words of shattering import: 'Thou good and faithful servant.'

And what about your patients? The method of your work has made a peremptory claim on the divine help and that help shall be given according to promise. There will be success in every case, not of course according to your notions. In many cases there will be nothing to see in the way of improvement so that the counsel against loss of heart must be borne in mind. But in a certain number of cases you will see an improvement which is ascribable to your work. And no doubt there will be even more – complete cures.

In a couple of places in scripture we read of veritable campaigns of healing by Our Lord. One reference reads

that they brought the sick to him from far and wide, and the stupefying comment is added that he healed them one and all.

Why should it not be hoped that in your work, which reflects back to him so many of the things he taught and asked for: unshakable faith, love, heroic sacrifice, tender pity, perseverance and other virtues – he will operate on similarity open-handed terms, healing them all – some in soul, others in mind, in body, in visible forms or invisible ones – in the end *all*.

When nature has come to its last gasp, the supernatural often intervenes with an impressive demonstration to remind man that there is a higher law which can be summoned by heroic faith.

Our Potential Membership is the Uncommitted Catholic Population

I am forced to say that to spend a day in a Legion atmosphere and then to return to the normal level of thought and idealism is a psychological experience. It is not even in the order of leaving a warm room and going out into the cold. The difference between what we are inclined to call the Legion mentality and the common mentality is something radical. It is a manifestation suggesting the broad divisions of positive as against negative, of optimism as against pessimism in the community. Unquestionably the Legion affords a practical idealism based on Christian doctrine which tends towards the fulfilment of everyday duty and at the same time to holiness. It makes the best of both worlds because it unites them. It represents a genuine loving of one's neighbour as contrasted with the skin-deep products which are in evidence on all sides. Today humanitarianism

is paraded as a substitute for Christianity. But it tends to remain impersonal and at best it is a flower without any roots. On the other hand, the Legion seeks to divide humanity into individual persons and its gamut of interest takes in everything from pure conversion to recreation, as Christianity is supposed to do.

Really I think that the Legion contains everything which is needed for the present period of pessimism and for future Christian building. We must clear our minds in regard to what we are seeking. We should realise that we are thinking in different terms to the governments and the newspapers. These are concentrating on grandiose schemes while our thinking is along the more modest lines of religious morale. Yet our programme really contains everything, whereas theirs may only amount to a mirage.

It is quite possible to establish a sort of worldly paradise and a spiritual hell at the same time. I give you Sweden as a case in point. There the grave problems of society have, according to popular acclaim, been solved; the edge has been taken off poverty and misery; and yet that country is a spiritual inferno. Such that it could provoke a hard boiled journal like *Time* to send over a special commissioner to investigate the state of things there because it did not believe it could be as bad as alleged.

His report stated that things were worse even than they had been represented. I ask if that materialistic solution to our problems is what we want. If we reflect, it will be evident that it is possible to solve economic problems at a price which is too much to pay. What shall it profit a nation to gain the whole world and at the same time suffer the loss of its soul?

On the other hand, consider what the Legion has in its treasury and can give. Its vivid, restless Christianity seeks

too numerous to mention – as the phrase puts it. If we succeed in the sort of plan that we have been proposing to ourselves, surely it would make our era like those splendid ones of the past in which religion shook off its fetters and resumed triumphant march!

Another salutary reason for spreading the Legion lies in its relation to Mary. She is essential to religion. She is the mother of every soul, so much so that without her the soul would not have life. But she is a mother who cannot do her mother-work without fully expecting her children cooperate with her. Therefore that cooperation must be forthcoming and must include a couple of ingredients: appreciation of her role and a measure of loving service of her.

Outside the Legion (I make this as a general proposition subject to honourable exceptions) she does not obtain her due in those respects. For this reason, if there were no other, it is important that everybody be given the Legion mind in regard to her. In practice will this be given outside the Legion itself? Will it be given even through our works? Not completely, I think. I have been watching sections among whom we have been working and I do not discern in them any marked tendency towards the Legion Marian behaviour. In fact I would fear that there is a tendency towards regarding the Legion's attitude as being a little in the way of excess. Inevitably people who think thus would be led to take a step back. This could mean a withdrawal into definite deficiency. This would be an offence against Christianity itself, one which the Lord will not abide. So we must strive with a sort of desperation to make all see the Mary that we see, that wonder working maid who transforms everything she touches because she carries with her the source of all good.

to pour itself out in every direction from great to small. It is as tender as it is tough; as full of courage as it is of faith. Its women are as brave as its men, and its men are as gentle as its women. It has a heart for every employment that seeks to serve Jesus and his mother. It cleans up the home for an invalid with no less intensity of spirit than those four legionary brothers displayed recently when they entered an area which promised them a tombstone if they tried to promote Catholicism; or with which the 4,000 Chinese legionaries met their gruesome deaths.

The manifestation of spirited service is no select business obtainable only from the higher types or as a result of long special training. It is not the product of study or of profound thinking. It seems to be quite easily picked up. It seems capable to handling any problem. You can recruit a person into the ranks and in a matter of a few months you can send him off to court that tombstone. It strangely resembles Christianity viewed as a pure ideal, and it is for all.

The important consideration is that the legionary is not made of better material than the non-legionary. The raw material is the same, but the results are very different and that fact is there for all to see. I think it would be improper to pretend otherwise out of a false modesty. One is in the Legion and has that spirit and its full philosophy. One is not in the Legion and has not got those things. So the problem is how to extend that benefit on a comprehensive scale?

When we look around us, many commendable things meet the eye. There are plenty of excellent movements, but where in them is that extraordinary blend of things which go to make up the Legion: the action, the doctrine, the attitude towards Mary our mother, and other things

To what extent are we acquitting ourselves of our duty of getting those who are outside to come into the Legion? The fact is that we are not really trying to recruit, gloss it over as we may. People have almost to force themselves into the Legion. We offer people auxiliary membership when we should be suggesting active membership. We are proportioning the recruiting to the works we have in hand, rather than the reverse process of recruiting as a first principle and then finding the additional works for the new manpower. We are improperly selective, even exclusive.

Apart from the gravity of denying suitable persons the philosophy which I venture to declare vital, any sort of exclusiveness on our part must inevitably constitute us as a clique. It would stir up a vein of opposition to us and then by freak revenge it would confine our membership to persons who will not be the most suitable. If there was a sort of feeling against the Legion, it would only be persons of rather determined will who would enter. Having thus become a separated and unpopular section, our influence would be reduced to vanishing point. I have already contended that this would inferentially mean the repudiation by the community of the things the Legion stands for and that would be a lamentable situation.

But in the measure that the typical material of a place enters the Legion in number, the above opposition melts away. More than that, the Legion visitation and its other works would be benignly viewed and an atmosphere created which would be favourable for the universal extension of an idealistic programme.

Now let us analyse some of the reasons for that hesitant and narrow recruiting. I think that the root cause is our present works. These latter points are too restrictive and

not in line with our idea that the potential membership of the Legion is the unmobilised Catholic population. Our present tasks engage only a fraction of that Catholic potential. Neither are they proportioned to our goal of seeking out every soul with intent to do it large good.

A secondary aspect is that the bulk of those outside the Legion would not be willing to undertake the works which we are now offering them. Therefore what has to be faced up to – and I think it is beyond a question of yea or nay – is a great widening of our works. In the first place, there is room for such a widening inside what has been called our traditional programme. We cannot be said to be visiting either houses or institutions with sufficient intensity. A visitation which goes a couple of times a year to a home is not visitation according to Legion ideas, because there is no friendship and no development. There is no intimacy in the performance. Indeed I think it would have to be admitted that such a visitation would be little better than Symbolic Action.

Nor have we exploited that traditional programme, which would ambition the full Christianising (including brightening and embellishment) of every aspect of life. A part of this would be the running of betterment and cultural groups, classes, clubs, societies and even sports clubs. To do all this would need a much increased membership. New members are coming in to us, but so slowly as to demonstrate that a radical alteration of our method is necessary if even our traditional programme is to be covered.

Then even if we did cover it, I think it would still leave the title of this article a mere theory. The Catholic multitude would still be outside the ranks of any type of organisation. It would remain in possession of

undeveloped notions of religion and it would be an easy prey for false propaganda.

As things stand, we would not be able to cater for that potential if it suddenly entered. The Legion is not ready to receive them. The ordinary army has a framework and scheme which can be expanded to meet the emergency of war, but we have not the ideas or the framework to receive all the uncommitted Catholics if they suddenly decided to join us – which could happen as the result of some special situation.

Now I come to what is perhaps new in our consideration – the question of those who will not undertake the Legion under present conditions. Take the ordinary rough-and-tumble man or woman in the lower social bracket, or even the chronically unemployed, a type whom our programme has been pleased to designate as ‘the man from the corner’. These may have little education. They are painfully shy about their religious knowledge and they also exaggerate their other deficiencies. It would be impossible to get the average one of them into the Legion if it is to mean their being immediately sent on visitation or on any other work which would entail the talking of religion. In reality they can quickly be made capable of it, but they do not know see this. Therefore if we want those classes in our ranks and emphatically we must have them, then we must provide tasks which they will recognise as within their scope. Our agenda says that this might call for the acceptance of manual tasks. This suggestion has provoked alarm on a grand scale – as if it meant a total departure from existing practice and a change of principle. So let us examine it closely with a view to establishing our principle in the matter. How much is new in this? We have already incorporated in our works such things as the following:

Works entailing duties of a household character, for instance in our own hostels; the conducting of classes of various types; clerical work in certain cases; elementary nursing duties; supervising and organising; works of service in general – so beloved and ardently recommended by the Legion, so Christian, and indeed to a large extent a test of sincerity.

To some extent the element of personal and religious contact would enter into those employments and of course the legionary must neglect no opportunity of deepening spirituality. But in some of those cases the opportunity would be small. Would that invalidate the work as a Legion one? I do not think so, and I propose the following.

An elderly widow was no longer capable of looking after her land. Her plight became grave. A friend of mine, the retired superintendent of a mental hospital, took it on himself to bring her land into cultivation. That lone digging did not afford opportunity for discussing religion, but could a nobler serving of religion be found? Incidentally it would set whole countryside thinking in terms of true charity.

Take also the long, tiresome task of cutting the bread in our hostels. Solitary, hedged away, yet these hostels turn out the finest types of legionaries.

I think we would want to guard against imaging some work which is purely religious in type; that is involving total talking of religion to another person and then setting up that as the model which must be conformed to. In practice that would be a fictitious model. Only such works as the apostolate to the crowd, or conversion work, would conform fully to that pattern. Here I think we must contemplate Our Lord and his mother whose time was

not wholly given to the proclaiming of religion. Can we not associate our manual tasks with his carpentry or with her household chores?

I do not think that we need fear an adverse effect from even the most prosaic task. The Legion must be taken as a whole. The amount of 'direct religion' in our tasks is by no means the only sanctifying element. Every moment is intended to be stimulating and sanctifying. At the Praesidium meeting, there are the considerable prayers, the spiritual reading and the Allocutio. Then the reports are the linking up of the work with its doctrinal roots, thus turning every occupation into a living in Christ with Mary.

In addition the legionary is subjected in some degree to the play of such things as the Curia, Congresses, Acies, Reunions, Auxiliary Rallies, Patricians, Praetorians, Retreats, Legion Holidays, Peregrinatio Pro Christo, Maria Legionis and so forth. No one in the Legion can escape from the potent atmosphere which reigns inside that comprehensive circle of formation.

It is reasonable to suppose that this total process of legionising can avail to make people wholehearted who came into the Legion doubtfully and would then render them willing to undertake works which at first they would not touch. So very timidly I put the question: Is a task involving religious talking any more sanctifying than the digging of that old lady's field, or that bread-cutting, it being understood that these tasks are being done in the full spirit of Legion idealism, i.e. in union with Jesus digging (as he must have done quite often himself) or with Mary busily engaged in the daily routine of her home?

Some apprehension has been voiced lest we might abandon that vital item of our rule which requires

substantial work. There is no question of any modification of our rules. We are going to continue to insist on substantial work, and it is the function of the praesidium and later the function of the Curia, to see that each and every member performs substantial work.

There is no need to suppose that this process of widening our works has to be accomplished at a stroke, like a sort of revolution. No, our motto continues in force: 'Evolution, not Revolution'. What immediately happens here is a broadening of our outlook and then the proceeding along thin end of the wedge principles. This has been our method since the beginning. We have put a few people experimenting; and as each step proved fruitful, more have been assigned to the work. The wedge has been pushed in fully. A great, new work has been developed.

Now I come to something which I regard as of supreme importance in the Legion, because it is a vital principle of life itself. We must experiment. This means taking risks, entering on unknown ground with consequential peril. But the Legion is reasonably proofed against all those dangers. The system is capable alike of absorbing and of rejecting. Many examples of the latter stand out in our history. It might surprise many to learn that in the earlier days we experimented with the idea of study as a satisfying of the work obligation. That was a case where we were conclusively proved to be wrong – I do not mean in the experimenting but in the particular item. Well, we had to turn our backs on it and to bar the door against it. It might be that we would have to do the same in regard to certain of the works which would be tried in this proposed widening of scope. What of it? In that very failure would we not have been safeguarding our idealism, one part

of which is that we must never be static or rest content. Another part is that we are never to be afraid, a principle which is beautifully set out by Newman: 'They who never venture, never gain. To be ever safe is to be ever feeble. And to do some substantial good, is the compensation for much incidental imperfection.'

Let us be greatly daring and suppose the Legion in a small town to be possessed of a membership of 500. And why not, if the idea be that of mobilising everybody to apostleship! Surely this would not mean, as some have feared, that there would be nobody doing the visitation of homes and hospitals? At present members do not abandon the difficult tasks for more congenial ones. Why should this happen in the future? It must be the care of the praesidium and of the Curia to see that no such advantage is taken of any widening of the Legion works.

In regard to visitation, I have heard you on all occasions professing your ardent appreciation of that work. You have declared the good it was doing to those to whom you were going and the still great good it was doing to yourselves. Then how would it be possible that you would turn your back on it, or that you would turn others from it? Of course the visitation would not be dropped. It should be increased. For you would have more members. Out of that 500 a great number would be engaged on visitation and covering it adequately instead of after a token fashion as is sometimes the case.

In addition every other untouched work could be attended to in such a way as to help the recipient and the giver alike. All that 500 would be attending their praesidia and imbibing the full Legion education.

Surely the impress of all this on that town would be devastating; so that duty (that forgotten thing) and public

spirit (that absent thing) would come into their own and life would be lived on the levels depicted in the gospel!

A nation is composed of its communities. Suppose, as a document known to you says: 'A nation were to arise which built its life on lofty standards and held up to the world the example of a whole people putting its faith into practice and hence as a matter of course solving its problems, who would doubt that such a nation would be a shining light to the world, so that the world would come to sit at its feet for the purpose of learning.' Those words were not added to the handbook yesterday. They were always a Legion objective.

In any widening of our works we must not lay ourselves open to the charge that we are depriving people of employment. So we must keep away from those needs which would be subjects for ordinary contracts. But otherwise our ambitions should expand towards everything helpful to our neighbour, even to the creating of employment and the building up of industry, the aiding of our districts to improve themselves, the reclaiming of what is waste.

Our visitation takes us often into dwellings and surrounding which are miserable. Our respect for those who live there should compel us to put them into order.

The blind and other afflicted classes, and likewise the young, offer infinite opportunities to serve them.

Legionaries with taste could help girls to make the most of their charms. Other qualifications should similarly be put to devoted use among those who are less endowed.

We never hear of legionaries being sent to help mothers of families with their household work for the sake of freeing them a little. Many of them would wish to join the Legion but cannot do so except they are helped with their burden.

Those and other kindred purposes should receive the attention of the Legion, but they will remain a pious dream until the membership is available to cover them. This brings us back to our theme: we must drastically revise our present ideas of recruiting and cast our nets widely for that potential.

Jesus and Mary were citizens of Nazareth. They lived the common life of that village with perfection. Every person and thing in it was an object of deepest interest to them; we could not conceive them as being indifferent or neglectful in any respect. Now by the law of the Mystical Body, they live on in us and in our places with no less degree of concern. In fact with more concern, inasmuch as Our Lord lives more intensely in a baptised community even than he did in Nazareth. That solicitude has to display itself through the Mystical Body of which we are the members. If we are inactive, we fail the body and the solicitude of Jesus and Mary cannot issue.

That is the charter for our community service.

De Montfort's True Devotion to Mary

Because Louis-Marie de Montfort is a latter-time saint, many think that his system of devotion is a comparatively modern development. But he disclaims having originated the devotion or any aspect of it. He gives examples of persons who, seven hundred years before his own day, had made the Consecration after the same fashion which he himself recommends. Moreover, he asserts that the idea was not new even then. He quotes Boudon as saying that it went still further back in that precise form. Finally he claims that the idea would spring naturally from the very foundations of Christianity.

From this it is to be seen that the True Devotion is no invention of a few centuries ago, but merges into the mists of antiquity. That makes it ancient enough, but possibly not enough to dispel the uneasiness of those who think (as the bulk of Protestants would) that the True Devotion and Mariology in general belong to an era of Catholic departure from primitive purity of doctrine. Most of that

school of thought assigns the fifth or sixth century as the time when Mariology began to appear. When we analyse this accusation closely, it becomes evident that the date-line in their mind is the Council of Ephesus, and that they believe that it ushered in a new and incorrect tendency which proceeded to take destructive possession.

But they are totally misconstruing that event and its surrounding situation – to the extent of reversing the facts. It is senseless to suppose that everything new in the way of doctrine began from Ephesus. The council only put into the form of a definition something which the ordinary Catholic people had had in perfect perspective, but which certain innovators were trying to twist out of its original shape. It was the Nestorians who were the disturbers and who were condemned. It was the old belief which was defined and which continued.

Cardinal Newman gives us a list of saints from the first century up to Ephesus whose utterances on this subject would be identical with what would be said after Ephesus. St Augustine, addressing the Virgin, would typify them: 'He who made thee is made in thee.'

That belief was the primary Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is but a single person and that Mary is the mother of that person. The shepherds saw things in that simplicity when on the first Christmas they hastened over to see the divine babe and his mother. So the Magi saw things at the end of their star-guided journey. And so did the apostles and the other companions of Our Lord. Mary was his mother; there was no confusion in the matter. They believed in Jesus as the Messiah and they enveloped his mother and himself in a common belief and love.

The early Christians did not reason out things as the modern Catholic theologians would. They saw the

position simply and they saw it accurately; the mother and her child, the promised pair through whom salvation had come. They never thought of drawing distinctions which would mean that Mary was not really the Mother of the Divine Redeemer.

The early years, when Christianity was at once growing and struggling for very existence, were not favourable for those minute speculations which are required for the full expanding of doctrine, and which on the other hand must necessarily suggest error. The process is good when the inspiration of the Church is recognised. Otherwise it will produce unending fissuring.

I suppose that it was the conversion of the Empire about 300 which really threw the Church into its problems. Its governors could appear without hindrance and set about their work of administration. The open proclaiming of the Faith brought with it the opportunity to criticise and to dissent. This tendency would be stimulated by the fact that the wind of official favour would waft into Christianity many elements which were not fervent and perhaps worse than that. So every day brought its new light and its new error, with corresponding need for correction by the Church. But where the sects deceive themselves is in supposing that this process of correction and development represented a deviation from the earlier perfection. In spite of their own myriad of contradictory opinions those sects claim – over a gap of one thousand years – to be the heirs of the ‘early purity of doctrine’. No, they mistake the position: they are not the inheritors of original truth but of the pruned-off false growths.

It was an idea of Cardinal Newman that every Christian doctrine, including those concerning Our Lord himself, has appeared to undergo a sort of magnification as

time went on. This might lead people without a proper historical background to think that things had changed, whereas there has been no change other than that of filling out, as a child would become an adult.

In other words the central idea of each Catholic doctrine was always there. New aspects may have presented themselves, and we are tempted to think that because we see a doctrine in fuller detail than the early Christians did, we see it better. I do not think that we would be justified in thinking so as a general proposition. The seeing of a doctrine in greater detail may not be a better seeing of it. For instance, does the modern Catholic who views Jesus in the light of all the protective and explanatory definitions of the Church see him any better than the early Christians saw him? If the pages of the gospel are closely read, they seem to show a faith in Jesus and an attitude towards him identical with what would proceed from the present-day Catholic.

Likewise, when one studies the pages of history which tell of the scenes of enthusiasm which attended the proclamation at Ephesus of Mary as the Mother of God, is one safe in supposing that we of today really appreciate her any better than did those rapturous lovers of hers fifteen hundred years ago? Forms may vary but the essence remains the same.

And this is not to say that Ephesus was the point of origin of that understanding love of her, as some people imagine. It is to be noted that the very cathedral in which that proclamation took place bore the name of Mary, proving that Ephesus inaugurated nothing new for the common believer. It only assured him that he was right. Mary in her completeness was there before Ephesus. How much before?

It was the first thought and teaching of apostolic Christianity that the Redemption reversed the Fall and reversed it in detail. Adam stood for Christ. Eve stood for Mary. All the circumstances were reproduced in Redemption with reverse action; that is restoring where the Fall had destroyed.

This teaching is of the first authority and is endorsed by the Church. Therefore, the relation of Eve to Adam is to be taken as an indication of the relation of Mary to Jesus. What was this?

Satan came to Eve and she believed in his word. She drew Adam into her sin and the human race fell: not in Eve but in Adam who was the head of humanity. After the Fall, Adam and Eve combined to have offspring through whom the original fault was passed on. It is important to be precise about Eve's part in order to see how it bears on Mary's place in the scheme of restoration. As said, mankind fell in Adam, not in Eve. If Eve alone sinned, mankind would not have fallen. But it is plain from scripture that only for Eve, Adam would not have sinned. She brought about his fall. This procedure is strangely reproduced in the case of Jesus and Mary. Man was not redeemed by Mary but by Christ. But this would not have taken place but for Mary. Her faith in Gabriel's announcement reversed Eve's faith in Satan's argument. She brought down Jesus from Heaven, just as Eve had brought down Adam in a different way. She inaugurated Redemption much as Eve had brought about the Fall. Mary's part was in strict proportion to Eve's.

Then Mary united with Jesus to bring forth a spiritual offspring – the Mystical Body. If her part in this is to be likewise proportionate to Eve's, then it has to be immense. For Eve's part in producing and bringing up children was

in quantity a greater part than Adam's. Adam generated the children, but Eve had most of the burden of them. It was her body that gave the child all its substance, and after that she had the absorbing duty of feeding and caring it. Adam was the head, but Eve had the direct care of the children. These circumstances would seem to be intended to indicate to us the place of Mary in Redemption. The race rose in Jesus and not in Mary, but Redemption would not have taken place except for Mary. Then if we apply Eve's function in the family to Mary, it would put Mary in precisely the same position that the doctrine of her mediation would, or that the True Devotion would. We belong to Mary as young children do to their mother, and we are utterly dependent on her. She does the housekeeping in the family of God. She administers the various graces which are equivalent to giving the innumerable cares that a mother lavishes on her children. Our Lord is the head and provides the elements of support which make family life possible, but he does it through the immediate agency of the mother.

The Adam and Eve parallelism with Jesus and Mary was taught from the first moment by the apostles. It is true that St Paul confines his references to Jesus as the New Adam. But to every hearer that would carry with it the thought of the New Eve. If it did not, then the brains of those early Christians were of a different sort to our own, because Adam and Eve are not merely successive thoughts; they are a single thought.

Then why did St Paul not name the New Eve as he did the New Adam? Because of the reverse with which the apostles and the early writers surrounded so many of the sacred things. Their special preoccupation was the bringing out in relief of the divine character and mission

of Jesus. Items which could be misunderstood in those purely pagan days, for example the Mass, the Eucharist, Our Lady, etc. were treated with that reserve.

The other great parallel placed before the early Christians to aid them to understand their relation to Christ and to each other was the comparison of the Church to the human body. Christ is the head of the Mystical Body and we are its members. The variety of roles is almost infinite, but one law governs all; dependence on Christ from whom flows the divine life which gives value to our acts. As in the human body, each member depends on and supports the others; and even the divine head depends on his members.

Where did the ancients place Mary in relation to that image of the body? I would imagine that it was simply as Mother of the Body that they regarded her, just as they thought of her as mother of the head. The idea of likening her to some organ of the body as Our Lord is compared to the head seems to date from the Middle Ages. St Bernard assigned to her the role of neck in the Mystical Body, and in this others followed him. Many did not consider this image as sufficiently expressive of her co-operative influence and have compared her to the heart. But all these ideas work down to the same thing: the effort to find images which would worthily show forth her secondary, but essential, place in the life of the Church. And this brings us back again to the New Eve doctrine, which is perhaps the most striking of all in its implications.

We call Mary the Mediatrix of All Graces. Jesus is the great Mediator or Accomplisher of Salvation. But his design has included Mary as his helpmate, although she is as nothing compared to him. He has incorporated her in his redemptive mission from beginning to end.

She has not any jurisdiction independent of his; she is totally dependent on him. But neither is she a mere mechanism; she is a responsible co-operator with his will. She fulfils faithfully the office which he has committed to her. Subject to him, she is also most perfectly united to him. She is fully mother; everything connected with the children of God is placed under her influence. She administers the divine life to them, and by her incessant maternal care she causes them to grow up in Christ. Her hand is on every item of the Christian life, every grace, prayer, duty.

That is her function. There she is as God intended her to be. Some, finding it hard to understand why 'He who is mighty has done those great things to her' (Lk 1:49), are unwilling to acquiesce. They prefer to leave her out of their philosophy. They forget that they must be amenable to God's philosophy. To them we could address a phrase of St Augustine: 'You run well, but you are off the road. Where will you get to in the end?'

On the degree to which we adapt ourselves to that arrangement of God will largely depend our life's work. Obviously then our first effort must be to seek to understand the greatness to which Mary has been appointed, and here the inspired treatise of de Montfort will be invaluable to us.

We must respond with some degree of adequacy to her mother-love. The True Devotion proposes a method. It is based on the principle that as we are placed by God in a relation to Mary which is equivalent to, but much more intense than, that of very young children towards their mother, we must behave to her accordingly. She gives to us everything she has. So we must give to her everything that we have. As we do not love or pray or work without

her help, we must try to realise this fact intellectually, so that specifically at some times, and indefinitely at all times, we will acknowledge her influence.

Some persons are held back from the True Devotion by the supposition that it requires them to address the bulk of their prayers to Mary. But the True Devotion is a state and not any particular prayers. Provided that Mary's sway over us is appreciated and occasionally brought to mind with deliberate advertence, we are free to direct our prayers where we will. It is that appreciation which is the pivotal element in the True Devotion.

De Montfort attaches large promises to the worthy practice of the Devotion. It would be nothing less than a supreme tragedy if he were to be imagined as exaggerating, because he does not exaggerate in the slightest way. The soul that Mary is enabled really to mother grows beneath her touch.