

THE ROLE OF THE APOSTOLIC GROUP

- the Regnum Christi must be built up, not in the sacristy but in every field of human endeavour.
- the "restoration of all things in Christ" implies the responsibility of the layman as lay apostle. The unprecedented psychological advantage of the lay apostolate consists in the apostle belonging to the normal environment, to the milieu of those he wishes to win back for Christ.
- no lasting influence without an action on the milieu: Two aspects are essential in the apostolate—the individual person and his natural milieu must be simultaneously captured and "worked up" for Christ. "To change and to lead the social environment, to make of it favorable ground for the growth of Christian living; to create in it a climate where man can develop his human qualities and lead a truly human life, where the Christian can breathe freely and remain Christ-like such is if I am not greatly mistaken, the aim of Lay Apostolate". (His Em. Cardinal Saliége, Archbishop of Toulouse, stressing the importance of the social milieu in the apostolate of C.A.).

TWO BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE APOSTOLATE OF THE MILIEU

- the milieu is not to be won back for Christ merely by the good will of the first comer. Collective apostolate is always incomparably more difficult than the purely personal apostolate of good example and friendly exhortations. It is governed by definite social laws:
 - A. Apostolate of "like to like": the Christianization must proceed from inside the milieu itself. A stimulus to conversion can come from outside; but for a genuine inward conversion (a "turning round" of the whole personality), the crucial decisions must come from within. The first responsibility of the student is his own fellow-students and life of the University. The work of the Christianization in the University is entrusted in the first place to those who live in the same environment.
 - B. Apostolate of "community to community": the social reality of the milieu can only be captured, moulded and decisively converted through the action of another social reality, of a collective force. It is the Christian community, and not the individual, that works like a leaven within the natural community. Apostolate is carried on, not by the individual layman but by the laity, both in the general structure of the Mystical Body of Christ and in each individual milieu and institution. And also in the University the Catholic student group in the student body.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE UNIVERSITY LAY APOSTOLATE

- Catholic students are called to work for the Christianization of their own University.
- on their own responsibility, but as prolongation of the clergy.
- this work is to be done, not by lay students as individuals, but by Catholic students' organized communities.
- under the orientation of the Hierarchy.

HOW AND WHERE TO BEGIN

- to avoid the danger of importing "foreign" methods without adaptation
- each country to develop sound methods adapted to its own conditions
- the growth to be organic, from the individual to the faculty group and to the general group
- examine the milieu which consists of— (a) the faculty life and (b) the university life as shown in clubs and societies
- after having examined the milieu then judge where your Apostolate is needed, i.e. problems of the milieu, its moral standard, its religious life, its attitude towards study and examinations, all these backed with concrete examples
- then finally judge the circumstances in the light of Christian principles, and
- act!



CONCLUSION

- the restoration of the University to Christ the King can come only through:
 - A. giving ourselves completely to Christ
 - B. each person giving himself through the community to the University
- this unity of the human and Divine, i.e. the essence of the Incarnation, then can come, and through us Christ can come into the University.

THE THREE REALITIES THAT HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE APOSTOLATE:

- A. the Reality of God, the Church, the eternal truths of our religion, — all summed up in the Person of Christ.
- B. the reality of ourselves as particular persons, each with a Divine commissioned vocation
- C. the reality of the world about us, i.e. the reality of the milieu

It is necessary to look at these three realities in order to facilitate the formation of the group, its methods, and to help in the conducting of its meetings.

i. THE REALITY OF GOD, etc.:

- we learn about the Person of our Lord through the Church's teaching, i.e. the Church is Christ—changeless and yet growing, living the drama of Christ, continuing His Incarnation, a process in which we are invited to participate actively
- the methods: to pray together as a community, e.g. at the opening and closing of meetings, in order to dedicate the work and the members to God
- to link personal prayer and sacramental life with the life of the group—the Apostolic community—and with the whole Mystical Body, i.e. the spiritual life of each should form part of the community living the life of Christ in the secular world, i.e. the University or the professions. Thus each member's spiritual gain will be for the group, for the whole Apostolate and for the Church
- to know, love and serve Christ
- each group to develop communal awareness of life and the Person of Christ and His teaching through group meditations on passages of the Gospels, and Epistles, the writings of the Fathers, the liturgy, etc.
- meetings should not be mere discussions or for the sake of holding a programme; neither should they be a routine

ii. THE REALITY OF OURSELVES AS PERSONS:

- the Apostolate should not consist of mere activities, plans, projects, policies apologetics, the fight against heresies nor the developing and perfecting of techniques for influencing others—all these are useful but not the real heart and soul of the Apostolate
- the University is separated from Christ by false ideas and attitudes, and separated from Christ by us Christians not living the life of Christ.
- the group Apostolate is the practical means whereby each is aided to see the unique pattern of his life in God's plan? how?
 - a. a closer relationship between members of the group, to share themselves with others
 - b. to open our inner self to our fellow creatures; to hide this inner self tends towards destruction of true communion among men, the isolation of Christ from the world, and the failure of seeing oneself in realistic life
 - c. love—the spirit of love is the Holy Spirit. The full supernatural life of charity to sweep away natural inhibitions and barriers between persons and to lead to the joyous and real liberation of the spirit

- practical suggestions: each new member to give the main details of his life, e.g. home, background, education, the reason for the choice of vocation, the reason for his response to the Apostolate itself, etc.; then the periodic reports of his action and issues of his life, etc. This method will open the real content of the life of each to another, and the supernatural communal nature of the group will reveal itself really. Caution: this ought not to include matters of confessional nature and no hastening of the process; the purpose of this method is to help to reveal each member to himself.
- the benefits of the above method:
 - a. the group begins to exercise a very real moral authority
 - b. the focus of communal life proper to the Church, and to the ordinary lay world, with each member living his life both as a Catholic and a student.
 - c. through this means, the problem of how to relate the entire daily life to the message of the Gospels can be solved, and by grappling with the practical problems the group will begin to show forth the spiritual power which is all the lives of its members

iii. THE REALITY OF THE WORLD:

- the fact that we are placed by Divine Providence in a particular part of the world at a particular moment of history.
- has this some particular meaning or purpose?
- does God intend us to seek the particular meaning or purpose so that we conform our lives to His Will?
- are we to become aware of the state of the particular world so that we fully enter into it in a more Christ-bearing way?
- are we to know and understand the world so that we love and serve it as Jesus did?
- how best to know and understand the world? as a student or as a professor?
- as students with a particular commitment and eventually becoming in practice intellectuals, teachers, engineers, lawyers, doctors, social workers, and industrial workers—all maintaining a personal and communal relationship with the world
- stressing the ideas and values of the professions in social life in the economy of the Redemption
- to become fully in contact with the reality of his discipline (i.e. the course of study) and bring the life of Christ into it
- therefore the student is to open his heart, mind, and imagination to his course of study; he should enter it, understand it with all its ideas and values, and love it for its own sake—not for any ulterior motive, not even for a "religious" ulterior motive
- the particular discipline must find expression in the Apostolate as a community. how?
- the advance made individually must be shared by all as a community aware of its part and engaged in the search of Truth in the University. This is a contribution and share of spiritual gains.
- the process of entering the disciplines can form a part of the group meeting. i.e. each member preparing a paper in which he enquires into the crucial human problems underlying his study—such papers to be read and discussed during the part of the meeting
- other non-intellectual aspects to be included are the social and cultural elements of civilisation in which the students live, i.e. examining the whole fabric of human life etc. etc.



THE ROLE OF THE GROUP IN CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONAL FORMATION

I. Christian Professional Formation: In what does it consist?

- professional formation in its widest sense means the development of all elements which go to make up an integral Christian personality, in so far as the development affects future professional life.
- Christian professional formation wants to try to situate the elements particular to each professional field within the whole complex of a complete Christian formation. It is true to say that there can be no "integral formation" without preparation for the future profession, but also, inversely, professional formation can not be adequate, without formation of the whole Christian personality.
- what are the essential elements of this formation? They are: intellectual, moral, social, spiritual, and apostolic.

Intellectual Formation:

- "sapientia" must consist in an attitude of the soul towards truth. Intellectual formation is the search for truth in the fullest sense—that eagerness to accumulate knowledge.
- every student, however technical his profession, must know not only the rudimentary notions of general philosophy but also a philosophical concept of his particular profession—in other words the ontology of his profession and the basic philosophical concepts it involves.
- the right attitude towards truth, which is both at the beginning and at the end of all healthy intellectual growth, calls for a systematic initiation into the professional life, systematic not in the sense of ruling out creative activity but in the sense of establishing a framework, a background of first principles.
- keeping in mind that before all a student has to be a good professional, a general synthesis of Catholic thought, of revealed truth and its development in the teachings of the Church is essential in the first place for professional formation.

Forming a Christian Conscience:

- it is, then, in the light of reason or of Revelation and theology, in relation also to the concrete realities of the situation, that the student must learn to form practical judgments for the Christian exercise of his future profession.
- the various elements of his professional formation should be fused in his mind into a coherent code of professional behaviour which he endeavours to apply to the concrete case in point.
(social, moral, spiritual and apostolic elements of this formation will be treated in other lectures of the Seminar.)

II. Where should Christian professional formation be given?

- To be really effective Christian professional formation should be given in a Catholic setting. An experience of "lived Christianity" is an indispensable part of adequate preparation.
- Christian professional formation is beyond the scope of the modern University: different reasons like secularization, excessive specialization lack of positive religious orientation and tacit materialism contribute to make the modern University inadequate to form professional men and women in the sense which we pointed out was necessary.

- what of the Catholic University? Because they are few in number, and fewer still are those equipped to give technical professional training, and because of the overcrowding of curricula to meet national requirements, it is impossible to realize the ideal of formation which the Catholic University has set for itself.
- Christian professional formation: a challenge to the University Catholic group: the Christian formation of professional men and women for the disinterested service of society, and above all for the service of God, becomes an urgent task which, if not the University, someone else must be prepared to assume. This is how the responsibility of this task will fall upon the Catholic association or on one specially formed for that purpose.
- this formation must also coincide with the technical and professional formation of the University
- it must be given in the Catholic setting within the Catholic group in the University milieu



III. By whom should Christian Professional Formation be given?

- the existence of the University Catholic group and the good will of its members will not be sufficient to ensure adequate Christian formation for professional life. Technical facilities, library facilities, and above all competent personnel will also be necessary.
- nothing can take the place of the authority and personal influence of the specialist for whom the problems of the profession, its doctrinal, moral, and social problems, and its possibilities for the apostolate have been a matter of daily experience, and who makes himself accessible to the students, inviting them to a real dialogue in which his experience becomes in a sense their own. It is for the group to seek the collaboration of professors, doctors, teachers, lawyers, economists, etc. of Catholic associations and to determine the most fruitful manner of profiting by their knowledge and experience.
- in professional formation the role of the Chaplain must always remain indispensable: essential is a priest familiar with the problems of the professions and their relations to Catholic teaching, to philosophy, and ethics and to the moral and the spiritual experience of the twentieth-century Catholic.
- the practical application of these principles will vary widely according to local and national differences. Pax Romana Federations which have been active, so far, in the field of Christian professional formation would seem to point to three main types of organizations:
 - A. Faculty Groups which give an "integral formation"
groups in which Catholic students belonging to the same Faculty or specialized school receive their full Christian formation. The best example of this first type is found in France with the Conférence Laënnec, a professional formation centre for students of the Medical Faculty of Paris, and the Groupe Catholique de la Faculté de Droit, the centre for students of the Law Faculty of Paris.
 - B. Faculty Groups within a University Catholic Society
faculty groups established on a permanent basis within the framework of a more general Catholic society, the latter being responsible for giving to students of all Faculties the main intellectual, cultural, and moral and spiritual elements of their Christian formation, and for constituting the Catholic "community" within the University.

An excellent illustration of this second method is found in the work of the Newman Society of Victoria, which is made up of all Catholic Students of the University of Melbourne, Australia. For many years now Faculty Groups have been functioning with considerable success within the NSV. These groups for Law, Medicine, Engineering, Social Studies, Science, Arts, Agricultural Science, Music, and Commerce, meet separately but their work is coordinated by a Leaders Group.

C. Specialized Activities for Students of a Given Faculty.

Where Faculty groups have not been formed for Catholic Students either because division by faculty is against the spirit and traditions of the existing Catholic student organization, or because the Catholic student community is too small to allow such division, certain elements of Christian professional formation can still be given in the form of specialized activities designed for students of a given faculty. The following are examples of activities which do not necessarily call for permanent faculty organization:

- a) Study circles periodically bringing together students of the same faculty (F.U.C.I. in Italy)
- b) Lectures given by competent personalities and followed by discussion (A.C.U.S. in El Salvador)
- c) At times study circles or lectures may be organized by a Catholic professional society, with a view especially to the initiation of the students who are nearing the end of their University course (U.N.E.C. in Peru)
- d) Specialized study weeks or week-ends, where students of the same faculty can live together a real community life, shared also by members of the profession. In Germany, for instance, where student organization is not based on the faculty, this method provides for fruitful contacts on the professional level between members of different groups.
- e) Social action related to the profession: the free dispensaries and medical and legal consultations organized by groups of the Spanish Federations.
- f) Publications dealing with different aspects of Christian professional formation: articles in the Catholic paper for the University; articles in the neutral Faculty review or University paper; reports of specialized meetings, bibliographies, information sheets, etc.
- g) A library is an essential requisite for all systematic work in the field of professional formation.