

The GOOD CATHOLIC TEACHER

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BSE IV



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WE HAVE always taken pride in the distinction that ours is the only Catholic country in the Orient. We have cherished the privilege of being called the diehard defenders of the Catholic Faith in Asia, not only because of our superiority in numbers as compared to members of other religions, but also because our country was the first in this part of the world to embrace as a whole Christianity.

To really live up to this distinction that other nations have given us, to be able to maintain this open tribute that other countries have held high for us, it is necessary that our youths who are "the fair hope of the fatherland" be given a truly Catholic education. A good Catholic education, however, can come only from good Catholic teachers, who, as Pope Pius XI has said, "are those with clear, professional Catholic conscience, a soul burning with apostolic zeal, and an exact idea of doctrine, which must penetrate all their teaching." With this ecclesiastical pronouncement as our main basis, let us make a clear dissertation of what a good Catholic teacher is.

First of all, a good Catholic teacher has foremost in her mind the intention to serve the noblest cause. She must possess the insatiable desire to serve God, her fellowmen, and her country. She must take joy in giving such services with the thought of contributing her God-given talents to the propagation of her Faith as her compensation. She is the teacher of truth and virtue. She must "cherish a pure and holy love for the youths" who are under her guidance and care. A good Catholic teacher understands the youths for what they are: the likenesses of God and the living temples of the Holy Spirit; she regards

them as persons whose individualities are as distinct as their fingerprints, and with such awareness, gives each individual student proper consideration and tries to reproduce in his soul the living image of Jesus Christ. Knowing that a child is in the delicate stage of physical and spiritual growth, she inspires him through her sound advice and good example and gives him hope, confidence and self-respect. Thus she becomes the children's guardian angel on their way to heaven.

Secondly, a good Catholic teacher realizes her enormous responsibility to society in her duty of molding the moral character of the youth. In conjunction with this awareness of the importance of her task, she prepares herself thoroughly in the subject matter she teaches. She varies her teaching methods and aids with the aim of stimulating and challenging the students' thinking power and for the purpose of meeting the needs of the individual pupil. She knows that the balanced diet a dietician prepares for the dining table differs largely from the intellectual fare which she has to offer her students. For a child, as a developing individual, improves his reasoning power as he grows with the years. Being aware that an intellectual diet must be changed every day, she gives interesting and challenging motivations in her daily classwork in such a manner that enthusiasm and sincerity are manifested in her cheerful disposition. Her subject matter, methods, motivations and enthusiasm are permeated with Christian piety.

Thirdly, a good Catholic teacher is a practical Catholic. She realizes that the measure of her own personal perfection depends upon her nearness to God. She is not only a preceptor but also an ex-

emplar of what she preaches. She knows that the principles she implants in the minds of the distinct personalities in her classroom are null if she does not practice them herself; she believes that the effectiveness of her teaching lies in making herself a good example to follow and to emulate. Her "personal life, her hopes, beliefs and loves, her attitudes toward God and fellowmen, toward victories and defeats, toward joy and sufferings" are reflected in her teaching. Thus, she conducts herself in a manner beyond reproach with the firm consciousness that what she teaches can only be truly effective if she herself practices it in her everyday undertakings. She uses, therefore, all available natural means but above all she draws upon the rich supernatural sources of grace which she and her pupils "can obtain abundantly from the floodtides of the sacraments and prayers." (*Pius XII*)

Fourthly, conspicuous in a good Catholic teacher is her humility and self-sacrifice: humility, because of the loftiness of her vocation; self-sacrifice, because of the example of Christ, the Teacher Himself. She must not be heard to complain of the late hours she must spend in preparing the next day's lesson, checking themes and examination papers, writing anecdotal records of students with problems and in performing the many other tedious chores incident to the exercise of her profession. She must be apt to recognize her innate talents and to use them to the fullest extent and at the same time keen in considering her limitations. She must keep abreast of the progress of science, economics and the arts. She must have within her reach materials for improv-

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A Pause from Strife.

The persons whose ideas about teaching were just quoted, meant what they said: Teaching is the noblest profession.

The foundation upon which the dignity of teaching rests is the truth that God's greatest work is man and that man's master art is leading man to God. Since the teacher's endeavor is to develop the intellectual and spiritual powers of man; his vocation is that of repro-

ducing, to some extent, the creative power of God Himself. The enthusiastic teacher discovers and observes the native abilities in his pupils, watches over the development and growth of the inborn powers of the human soul, regulates the child's ambitions, enriches his imagination. In short, the teacher fashions the child's ideals, molds his character, and helps him in the formation of the new man, "reborn in baptism, unto the

stature of a perfect Christian."

— (Pius XII)

Teaching, according to St. John Chrysostom, is the most excellent art. Says he: "To form the minds and mold the characters of youth, is the art of all arts." It is the art of helping and guiding man in his ascent to God. And "teachers have the assurance of receiving this mission from God" Himself.

— (Pius XII)

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

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educational world. So are such schools as Holy Name College in Bohol, Aklan College in Aklan, St. Theresa's College and Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepcion in Cebu, Ateneo de Davao and Immaculate Conception College in Davao, St. William's College in Ilocos Norte, Colegio del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus in Iloilo, St. Paul's College in Leyte, Lourdes College in Misamis Oriental, St. Louis College in Baguio, La Consolacion College and Don Bosco Technical Institute in Negros Occidental, St. Paul's College in Negros Oriental, San Nicolas College in Surigao, Ateneo de Zamboanga in Zamboanga del Sur, and, of course, the four universities just mentioned maintain standards of instruction and offer educational facilities comparable with the best in the country.

It is unfortunate that the masses of our elementary school children do not receive a solid foundation in the "two great pillars of human happiness" — religion and morality. It is true, though, that many high schools and colleges are conducted by different religious groups. Religion is implemented in these educa-

ing her knowledge of current events, educational legislation and history. Moreover, she pursues studies, joins professional organizations, attends seminars for the purpose of broadening her cultural outlook and deepening her professional interest with the end in view of improving her teaching competence.

Lastly, the good Catholic teacher must possess a deep psychological insight. Youths have high hopes, ambitions and ideals. They are in general optimistic. A good Catholic teacher sustains their optimism by her charm, cheerfulness and scholarship. Students cannot help but admire a teacher who has a cheerful face and possesses profound human understanding of the deficiencies and limitations of others. She does not point

tional institutions. But it also remains true that the high schools and colleges can only improve what the homes and the elementary schools present to them. The high school and the college seldom, if ever, can build up a character the foundation of which was not laid in the earlier formative years of the child. ‡

TEACHING: The Noblest Profession

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for you to make them all worthy of that high destiny. This boy has talents that should enable him to do great things for God and for the Philippines. His talents are entrusted to your keeping, and must be developed by you. That other boy is less gifted intellectually but has in him the making of a real man, and the material to inspire thousands with the example of his struggle against odds... This girl has the marks of a religious vocation and it is for you to develop, by example and precept, her character, into one worthy of her sublime calling. Those other girls may some day be nurses, teachers, or mothers of families; and one and all should be trained by you for the best that they are capable of."

The Catholic teacher.

"The Catholic teacher has been called to a sublime office. She is... the teacher of truth and virtue, the representative of the parents and a spiritual mother, the gardener in the parish nursery, the visible guardian angel of the children, the custodian of the likenesses of God, the guardian of the living temples of the Holy Spirit, and the guide and companion of the pilgrims on their way to heaven."

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out the students' shortcomings bluntly devoid of any suggestion for improvements, for this attitude will surely thwart their eagerness to learn. On the contrary, she tries to discover the good things the students can do and help them further to improve themselves. She commends whatever little achievement a student accomplishes. In other words, a good Catholic teacher builds up her teaching upon the facts of Original Sin and grace. She knows, therefore, that in every child there are disorderly inclinations which must be corrected and good tendencies which must be encouraged and regulated from tender childhood. And Pius XI continues: "Above all the mind must be enlightened and the will strengthened by supernatural truth and the means of grace." The good Catholic teacher has something of the goodness of Christ Himself.

A good Catholic teacher loves the profession more than the material compensation she gets from it. And she recognizes the fact that hers is the highest and the most dignified profession, for Jesus Christ, the Greatest Teacher of all time, in His Last Will made teaching the noblest of all the professions when He said: "Go and teach..." ‡