

LECTURE
BY
MR LÉON HARMEL
AT THE
CATHOLIC CIRCLE OF SÉEZ
17 OCTOBER 1881



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This is an English translation of the original French text, made for the website leonharmel.com in 2026. It follows the original sentence by sentence, without cuts or additions.

The text is given in full, translated from the 1881 edition. It has been typeset in the spirit of the original: title pages and headings follow the layout of the book; the illustration has been cut out of the digitised document and restored.

The numbered notes are those of the original work; here they are numbered continuously from beginning to end. The notes marked with an asterisk * have been added for this edition, to shed light on the historical context.

Léon Harmel, le Bon Père du Val-des-Bois

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On 17 October, an audience even larger than on 20 September thronged the great hall of the Séez Circle to hear Mr Léon Harmel. A great number of clergy, come from every part of the diocese, the Canons of the Cathedral, the Major Seminary, directors and students, the Superior and the Professors of the Minor Seminary, notable figures of the department, the lady patronesses of our diocesan Associations, and Catholics belonging to the nobility, the middle class, commerce and agriculture, wished to bear witness by their presence to the importance they attach to the attempt at social regeneration undertaken by the Association of Circles.

In the absence of His Lordship the Bishop, Abbé Fourmy, vicar general, presides over the meeting and opens the session with prayer.

The Vicar General expresses the keen regret of His Lordship at being unable to preside in person over a meeting that has all his sympathy. He thanks the Catholics who, at the invitation of the Séez Committee, have come from every part of the diocese to hear Mr Harmel and to show by their presence that they understand the high importance of the Association of which the industrialist of Val-des-Bois has made himself the untiring apostle.

To bring the Christian faith back into the hearts of the workers, and with it order and good morals, love of the family and the respect for authority that always go with it, and finally to improve the mater-

ial lot of the workers by raising their moral condition: such is the noble aim this Association sets itself.

The revolutions that have overturned society for a century, the savage demands that ring out every day in the socialist newspapers, the hatred they stir up below and the mistrust they arouse everywhere, show clearly how necessary this work of religious and social regeneration is.

The wonderful successes obtained at Val-des-Bois by Mr Harmel happily prove that the undertaking is possible.

And so the Vicar General is glad to express the feelings of all in thanking the Apostle of the factory for kindly stopping in our town, to let us profit from the light of his mind and heart and the counsels of his experience.

The Vicar General then gives the floor to Mr Léon Harmel, whose Lecture we are able to reproduce almost word for word, thanks to the intelligence and devotedness of a person who has often rendered us the same service before. So as not to lengthen this pamphlet too much, we are obliged, to our great regret, to confine ourselves at times to mere outlines.

Ladies,

Gentlemen,

Allow me, first of all, to express my regret, which is also yours, at not seeing here, to preside over this meeting, that venerable Pontiff whose hale old age bears so valiantly the heavy burden of the Episcopate. If a passing indisposition keeps him away at this hour, his heart and his thoughts are with us, full of affectionate interest in the great work to which we wish to devote our common efforts.

Before addressing you, I went to ask for his blessing, and in granting it with fatherly kindness, he was pleased to speak to me of his dear flock, where pastors and faithful vie with one another in zeal and devotedness to procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

He deigned to encourage my humble efforts, and I am happy to come before you sheltered under his venerated patronage.

I also wish to invoke the gentle and holy memory of the late lamented Mgr de Ségur, whom your pious Bishop had made his honorary Vicar General, who was the founder of the *Union of Works for Workers*, and who applauded the foundation of your Diocesan Office. He loved to preside over our meetings and our labours; and if God has deprived us of his so precious support, it is, let us not doubt it, to secure for us a powerful protector in heaven, where he has gone to continue his supreme *Alleluia!* I often had occasion to hear him praise this fine diocese of Séez, which lends all Catholic works such intelligent and generous support. I know that I am speaking to masters, and I do not claim to open a new path for you: I come simply to tell you what we have done, and perhaps to give you a few more means of achieving the good that we are pursuing together.

If we cast our eyes over our contemporary society, and if we seek the causes of the deep evil that gnaws at it, we are struck first of all by that general disintegration which, in the moral order, leaves individuals isolated from one another. The divine Creator had established in the world a kind of social paternity which made the greater, on whatever ground, birth, wealth, talent, influence, the born protector, the support, the friend, the responsible guide of the little ones; while these, for their part, owed him the help of their affection, their devotedness and their labour. Thus all men, members of one same family, were bound to one another, and received their share of the common patrimony. But this admirable order hindered the evil passions, and from the beginning they joined forces to overthrow it. This was the error of mankind in Cain, who answered God after the first crime had been committed: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” This was the error of our country in that baneful age of the Renaissance which, by proclaiming the independence of the human mind as a dogma, gave birth to that contemporary liberalism which is undermining our poor

society and leading it to its ruin. Liberalism, ah! gentlemen, you know its terrible ravages well enough; the great voice of the Roman Pontiff has often been raised to denounce them to the world and to point them out as the supreme danger against which all our efforts must be directed, to remind us all that we have charge of souls and to entrust to us the salvation of society.

What, then, have we to do in the face of so widespread and so fearsome an evil? Two things, very simple in their statement, immense in their scope: to know our duties and to fulfil them.

I

And first, to know our duties. Have you noticed with what insistence the Holy Books return again and again to our duties towards our neighbour? The old law and the new law are full of divine precepts on this subject. “God has entrusted to each the care of his neighbour,” we are told. Our Lord, after proclaiming the great precept of the Law: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,” at once adds, placing it as it were on the same level: “And this is the second, which is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself for the love of God.” There is more: the Saviour regards as done to himself what we do for our brothers: “What you do to the least, you do to me.” In the story of the wicked rich man, he gives as the only reason for his condemnation his indifference to poor Lazarus. It is not said, indeed, that this rich man had acquired his fortune by unlawful means, nor that he spent his life in sinful pleasures: “He lived well, says the Gospel,” as is the accepted way among people of his rank and fortune; but he forgot to share with the poor man, seated at his door, goods of which he was meant to be only the trustee and the dispenser.

See again, when Our Lord speaks to us of the Last Judgement, what place he gives to brotherly charity: he seems to count all our

other duties as nothing; that one alone suffices for our reward or our condemnation. To the elect he will say: “Come, you blessed of my Father: I was hungry, and you fed me; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was naked, and you clothed me; come, possess the kingdom prepared for you from all eternity.” But to the reprobate: “Depart, you accursed, into the eternal fire: for I was hungry and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give me to drink; I was naked, and you did not cover me.” What a sentence, gentlemen, and what a responsibility it lays upon us! Do we understand it in its full extent?

Assuredly the Saviour does not limit his great precept to material almsgiving, however meritorious it may be: man has moral sufferings, a thousand times more cruel and more deserving of concern than his physical sufferings. In our society, disorganised by sin and deprived of that social paternity of which we spoke a moment ago, there are souls starving for love; they seek souls that will answer them, that will satisfy and warm them with a mutual affection, and, finding around them only isolation and indifference, led on by the spirit of evil, they feed on hatred, and nurse against the happy guests at the banquet of life fearful acts of vengeance whose outburst has already caused rivers of blood to flow!.....

There are minds that thirst for truth: they pursue it, they call upon it, and if no one helps them to find it, if they are left to the uncertainties of independent reason alone, they soon plunge into the foul mire of error, and we see these maddened crowds give themselves up to every aberration of mind and senses!

There are hearts, finally, stripped of all the goods of life, who want to enjoy in their turn, who claim their share of riches, honours and pleasures. And if no one relieves their nakedness by giving them, as the father of the prodigal son once did, the portion of their inheritance, they band together with infernal fury for violent demands that overturn society and cover the soil of the fatherland with smoking

ruins! Ah! gentlemen, that was yesterday's story, and do you not feel, from the trembling of the ground beneath your feet, that it will be tomorrow's?

But what! even in the face of such great evils, are we allowed to lose heart, we who are Christians and Frenchmen? God has placed the remedy in our hands by clearly marking out for us our *social duty*. To hatred, let us oppose love, that true, deep, generous love which embraces all individuals because it has its source in God himself. Love produces love: the more we love God, the more we shall love our brothers; and the more we love our brothers, the more we shall love God. And this charity will not remain barren: we shall draw to ourselves those hearts that are embittered, but not frozen. They will open, they will expand under this gentle influence, and we shall renew those bonds of affection and mutual obligation that the heavenly Father had formed among all his children.

To error, which reigns supreme, we shall oppose truth: we shall dispel prejudices, we shall clear up the doubts of our brothers. In these days when there is so much talk of education and progress, we shall strive to spread sound doctrines, good reading, and that religious knowledge which, though it surpasses all others, is nevertheless the only one neglected. What a fine apostolate we have to exercise in thus making ourselves, with gentleness and tact, the auxiliaries of truth in the world!

Finally, we shall procure for these disinherited of life their share of well-being and enjoyment, by taking an interest in their lot, their work, even their pleasures, by devoting ourselves to them entirely, by giving them our time, our strength, our various resources. Oh! how powerful a means of social regeneration this duty, well understood, would be for our dear country! Courage, then, gentlemen, it is for us to save it: France cannot perish! No doubt she does not have, like the Church, the promises of immortality; but God makes use of France so manifestly to accomplish his work in the world that he seems to asso-

ciate her with the destinies of the Church, and to grant her, in return for her fidelity and her devotedness, a share in its glorious prerogatives. Let us then be holily zealous to bring our fine country back to its noble traditions, and to make it worthy once more of the favours of the God who loves the Franks.

II

It is not enough to know one's duties, one must fulfil them: and this is assuredly the most daunting part of our programme. But I am eager to point out to you two powerful levers whose alliance will overcome every difficulty; these two levers are Patronage and Association.

I. — By *Patronage* we mean, in a general way, the moral influence exercised, in whatever degree and in whatever condition, by the superior over his inferior. Thus in the family, the patronage of the mother extends over her children and her servants; that of the landowner reaches his tenant farmers and his workers; that of the merchant, his shop assistants and his clerks. This Patronage, admirably organised for the workers during the ages of faith, was lost with so many other beneficent institutions in the great shipwreck of the Revolution: and hence, no doubt, the fearful crises we have gone through for eighty years. Today, all who sincerely desire the good of the working class are striving to restore those touching relations of mutual affection and devotedness between employers and all those whom they employ. But to be effective, this Patronage requires three conditions: it must be Christian, discreet and active.

1. We are not engaged in a work of speculation, of political economy or of vain popularity. The influence we wish to exercise over the working classes has no other aim than to bring them back to the knowledge and the practice of their Christian duties, and so to restore the reign of God in society. It is therefore from a sincere and practical Christianity that we must take our inspiration: and that is why the

ruling classes must first work to reform themselves, so as to add to their word the far more powerful authority of example. But see, gentlemen, what an admirable chain: in working for the good of our brothers, we necessarily become better ourselves, and I know of no higher school of perfection than the exercise of zeal and charity. Patronage will therefore be Christian in the one who exercises it, Christian in the direction it gives. Thus we shall above all apply ourselves to fostering among our workers the growth of religious feeling and practice. But we must not be satisfied with appearances and content ourselves with what I shall call a Christianity for show. Because on some solemn day, such as the patronal feast of the mill or the Bishop's visit, our workers have kept a moved and recollected bearing in church, we shall not think everything won. It is inner reform that we want, that we pursue: and as long as we have not seen the number of sins decrease and solid virtues increase, we shall not declare ourselves satisfied.

2. Yet, without losing anything of its ardour and zeal, Patronage must always remain discreet, that is to say it must keep in the background as much as possible and leave a wide field to the personal initiative of the workers and their Councils. This is the condition *sine qua non* of any serious good, in the mill and elsewhere. I recently had the honour of receiving a visit from the venerable Bishop of Liège. He spoke to me of an immense network of workers' corporations that he has succeeded in restoring or organising in all the parishes of his diocese, and he said to me: "Where I have an overbearing parish priest who, even with an excellent aim, claims to monopolise all influence and all direction himself, nothing works, everything languishes, and, far from good being done, the spirit of division soon spreads through the parish. If, on the contrary, I find an intelligent parish priest who is the soul of all good, but who knows how to stand back with tact and leave to his faithful the apparent direction and the merit

of the good he inspires in them, everyone feels his own responsibility engaged and no one fails in the task.”

Well, gentlemen, this is true of every influence that seeks to impose itself. We breathe such an air of independence that authority seems suspect by the mere fact of being exercised, and, to be accepted, it must keep entirely in the background. Thus, in our mills, we multiply workers’ councils as much as possible, leaving them full latitude for the supervision and direction of the workers entrusted to them. Last year we wished to take exact stock of their number, and on the occasion of the birthday of our father, whom all call “the Good Father,” and who was celebrating his 87th year,^{*} we resolved to offer a small present to every member of a Council. All, or nearly all, gathered; out of 850 members belonging to the various groups, 141 councillors came forward to receive our keepsake. These 141 councillors share the direction and watch over the common work with jealous care. But, it will be said, with these principles you destroy all your influence, you ruin your authority. Believe nothing of the kind, gentlemen: our authority, which in any case always judges in the last resort, subsists *ipso facto* and in spite of all: if we succeed in making ourselves loved, we shall always be respected enough.

3. Finally, Patronage must be active, that is to say it must take an interest in everything. I quoted a moment ago the words of the venerable Bishop of Liège, who wants the parish priest, without displaying his influence openly, to be nevertheless the soul of all the good done in his parish. This phrase perfectly expresses the role of the Employer among his workers: he is seen nowhere, but he is everywhere; his influence works in secret, like that of the soul on the human body, imparting impulse and life to all the members. It is to the Employer that the various Councils report on their work and from him that they ask the broad lines of direction to follow. His watchful eye follows

^{*} **NOTE** Jacques-Joseph Harmel, the “Good Father”, was born on 23 May 1795: he turned 85 in 1880.

day by day the progress achieved, and if some bad tendency tries to appear, it is he who prescribes the remedy, without fearing then to show his firm and energetic hand to repel the common danger.

II. — But I said, gentlemen, that for this great work of the workers' regeneration, the alliance of two levers was necessary. I have just explained to you Patronage as it must be understood; I am eager to show you the effectiveness and the benefits of *Association*.....

When, twenty years ago, * our good father came to settle in the department of the Marne, at the Val-des-Bois mill, he found a population of 800 workers living outside all religious practice. He then undertook to form little by little, with a small number of workers chosen from among the best, nuclei around which would gather, more numerous day by day, all those whom the influence of word or example could reach and bring back to the good. Success has surpassed his hopes, and our associations have become powerful hearths from which warmth and life radiate over our whole working population.

Three conditions are necessary for Association to attain its object. It must be Catholic, hierarchical, and universal or general.

1. Association must be Catholic in its aim: it is extremely important to define its character clearly and to present it frankly for what it is: a means of religious progress, an effective help to obtain it. Without that, no solid results.....

Catholic in its members: it is not necessary to belong to an association, but from the moment one belongs to it, it is necessary to show oneself a sincere Catholic, fervent in the practice of all one's duties. I said this one day to a worker who was applying for admission: "But then," he said to me, "if you join the Association, you are obliged to make your Easter duty? Certainly, my friend," I answered him; "but note well that it is not I who oblige you to, it is holy Church, speaking in the name of God himself, and I know of no authority here below

* **NOTE** Jacques-Joseph Harmel bought Val-des-Bois in 1840 and the mill was working there from 1841, some forty years before this lecture.

capable of outweighing hers and of letting you escape the hell promised as the sanction of this law.”

Catholic in its spirit: Association becomes the support of all who wish to remain faithful to their baptism and its sacred commitments. The most formidable enemy our workers have to fight is human respect.

You cannot imagine, gentlemen, what human respect means for the worker in the mill or the workshop. For us who live in a world, if not better, at least more polite, human respect is a look, a smile, a jibe that we dare not face! But for the worker, it is a question of life or death. The worker who resists the secret societies, the pull of bad example and of perverse doctrines, is cast out by his companions like a pariah, branded as a traitor, and often exposed to the worst ill-treatment and even to death. I could cite here the case of three workers whom we took in at Val-des-Bois after the last strikes in Reims. They had wanted to go on working regardless: driven out, hounded by the ringleaders, they could no longer find a place in any workshop and saw themselves in danger of going without bread.

The Catholic Association becomes a centre of resistance to be set against a centre of attack, and this mutual grouping restores somewhat the equality of the struggle. How many hearts, weaker rather than guilty, have found in our associations the principle and the example of the courage they had lacked until then to practise virtue faithfully!

2. In the second place, Association must be hierarchical: hierarchical in its organisation.... in its principles... and in its action....

3. Finally, Association must be universal or general. General in its object: it must embrace all the needs of its members. Religious needs, by making pious practices, instruction and frequenting of the sacraments, etc., easier for them; family needs, by fostering Christian marriages, encouraging large families, taking care of the children and training them in virtue from an early age; temporal needs, by taking

an interest in the sick, the poor and the old, arranging visits, consolation and help for them. General in its members: it must extend to all ages, from the cradle to the grave, so as to provide each with powerful means of sanctification and salvation. At Val-des-Bois we have a pious ceremony that takes the child at three months. He is presented at the church, he is given a holy picture as a keepsake, his first robe is blessed by the priest, and the medal of the Immaculate Conception is hung round his neck. This blessing is renewed four times a year, and it is accompanied by consecration to the Sacred Heart and to the Most Holy Virgin.

At seven years old, the child enters the first Association, where he takes up a few easy practices suited to the weakness of his age: the Association of St Aloysius Gonzaga for the boys, of St Philomena for the girls. Then come First Communion and the development of the children's moral faculties: the boys enter the Little Circle, the girls the Sodality of the Holy Angels, where they are already trained in the duties of serious piety. At sixteen, the young men are admitted to the Great Circle for the rest of their lives; the girls are received into the Sodality of the Children of Mary until their marriage, and at that time they find in the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, under the

patronage of St Anne, a powerful help in fulfilling their family duties and bringing up their children in a Christian way¹.

Brothers and nuns are at the head of the Associations of boys and girls. As for us (I say us, for we are three brothers, living together, animated by the same spirit), we have reserved for ourselves the direction of the Great Circle, happy to mingle with our dear workers and to help them with all our power. The governing Council of each Association is the agent of all the good done in it. It exercises the most salutary influence on the workers, whether to bring them back to God or to train them in the practice of virtue; and the effectiveness of this apostolate is such that where formerly no one made their Easter duty, we count with joy nine hundred Communions a month. Our councillors vie with one another in zeal to pass on to their brothers still far from religion the blessings they have received themselves. I cannot tell you, gentlemen, with what delicacy, what gentleness and what perseverance poor women, simple and unlettered, devote themselves to this work of zeal and brotherly charity. It is not rare, and we had three examples of it last year, to see poor souls, separated from God for thirty and forty years, at last yield to the affectionate entreaties of a companion, herself lately converted as they are, and

1. In his *Manuel d'une Corporation chrétienne* (duodecimo, published by Mame, and at the Secretariat of the Association of Circles, 10 rue du Bac, Paris), Mr Harmel shows that these various associations, for both sexes and for all ages, are possible in the parishes of town and country: "*Among rural populations*, where faith grows weaker day by day, associations are the best means of restoring the parish. By reaching the different members of the family, and the men of the upper class as well as the workers, they awaken everyone's zeal, they bring the strength of union, and they bind all devotedness into a single sheaf.... One must first gather people of good will, begin with the easiest association, and take care to leave out none of the principles that give the works their strength.... One will strive to arrive as soon as possible at an association of *men*, even if it is small.... One must not rest on the way, but press on with energy so as to arrive at a complete rural corporation, if not on the temporal side, at least on the spiritual side.... One will do wisely to get in touch from the outset with the Association of Catholic Workers' Circles, which has the right principles and the best plan. We found in it the method that experience had taught us (p. 385)."

eager to show in this way her gratitude for the grace received. In the absence of the woman councillor, a poor woman worker makes herself an apostle, and when at last her zeal has borne fruit, she comes, happy and abashed at once, to bring her new recruit to the Council and to apologise for having acted on her own: “But a soul had to be saved,” she says, “and an opportunity seized that might never come again.” A worker, after his long day’s work, still takes two hours from his rest to teach the catechism to one of his comrades, and in this shared study he draws for himself light he had never suspected.

I confine myself to these two instances so as not to be too long, but I could cite a hundred others. The good done to our workers by these associations is incalculable, and certainly, if we had been shown in advance the goal we were to reach, we would have been frightened by so crushing a task! We went forward step by step, observing day by day the Christian progress of our dear workers and multiplying religious help according to their dispositions and their needs. Shall I confess it to you, gentlemen? At the beginning of our works we met opposition where we should least have feared it, among the mothers of families. I told you what the deplorable state of this working population was twenty years ago,^{*} indifferent to every religious duty and given over to the pull of evil pleasures. In this village of 2,000 inhabitants there were three dances a week, and I leave you to imagine what had become of the young people. And so our first Association was for the girls. But what! no more going to the dance? Who would ever resign themselves to that? The mothers resisted more than the children. Where, then, were husbands to be found for their daughters? At last a small nucleus of girls was formed, courageously renouncing this dangerous pleasure. Their example and their zeal drew others, and soon the Sodality of the Children of Mary, numerous and flourishing, became the safeguard of these young people so worthy of

^{*} **NOTE** See the note on page 12.

interest. These girls, on marrying, became pious mothers of families and asked for a special Association. Then the Confraternity of Christian Mothers was established: thus the various associations followed one from another, without our ever having planted them by our own authority. A Conference of St Vincent de Paul links them all together by the bonds of an intelligent and devoted charity, which generously sets aside the share of the poor, not from the superfluity, but from the necessities of these working-class families.

Finally, an Association of an exceptional kind was founded in 1870: here are the circumstances. One day I was visiting one of our workers, a member of a Council, who was gravely ill. The poor man, stricken with a cruel disease of the chest, the result, alas! of the disorders of his youth, was bringing up blood by the mouthful and wearing himself out in these painful efforts. We were talking of our works, and I did not hide from him my sadness at still too often seeing evil gain the upper hand again and snatch from us souls we had thought saved. This good man shared my grief and seemed given over to a kind of inner struggle. It did not last long; and soon, his face radiant with an ineffable joy: “Alas! I can no longer,” he said to me, “work actively for the good of my brothers; but I offer to God with all my heart my long sufferings, my blood and my life for the salvation of the workers!” And as I pointed out to him the full extent of his sacrifice (he was the head of a family, married to a woman utterly incapable of bringing up their five children): “God will take care of them,” he went on, “and he will not let them want for anything.” And the poor sufferer firmly renewed his sacrifice. God accepted it: for a long time still, unbearable sufferings, draining his life, increased his merits without wearying his generosity. And when at last he died, it was with a smile on his lips, without a regret for the life he was sacrificing while still young, nor for his children whom he cherished and whom he was leaving without support in the world!

The impulse had been given, and this generosity soon found imitators. It is an admirable thing to see how readily these simple, rough souls accept self-denial and self-immolation. They drink in heroism as a sponge drinks water, and seem to have no idea of the sublimity of their devotedness. I could give you many examples of it among our workers at Val-des-Bois: I prefer to show you how this work has spread even beyond.

It was at Avignon: one of my brothers had gone to give a lecture on our works for workers. A member of the Circle, a simple worker, was present; he had done his time as a soldier, and, as a reward for his conduct and his wounds, he had obtained a small post in the town's water service with a salary of 1,200 fr. An officer also employed him at his home and gave him 300 fr. for it. Lastly, he kept a little shop whose takings completed a modest competence for him. A few days after the Lecture, the administration, informed that he belonged to the Circle, took his post from him. Almost at the same time the officer left, depriving him of his second resource. He was bearing these trials in a Christian way when one day the signboard of his shop suddenly came loose and fell on him, so unfortunately that a splinter pierced his leg right through. He was taken to hospital, and the wound appeared so serious that amputation was judged necessary. The president of the Circle went to visit him, and as he wondered at his calm and serenity: "Ah!" said the sick man, "you have not forgotten, any more than I have, what Mr Harmel told us lately. I offered my life with all my heart for the salvation of my brother workers; the good Lord accepts my sacrifice, how could I complain?" As his condition worsened, the president of the Circle came back to see him and asked him whether he was still of the same mind. "Oh! certainly," he answered with joyful enthusiasm; "as a soldier I very often risked my life for France; but, however fine it is to die for one's country, is it not a thousand times finer to die for the salvation of

souls and for the glory of God!” And he did indeed die in the most admirable dispositions.

But this heroic act is not the exclusive privilege of the working class. Last year I was at Annonay, at the home of the Viscount de Sauras, an active and devoted member of the Association of Circles. Still young, he had married a charming wife five years before; a fine child of three, obtained through the intercession of St John Francis Regis, had come to crown their happiness: talent, position, fortune, family joys, everything in life smiled on him. I spoke to him of this Association and of the sublime sacrifices it inspired in our dear workers. “I will not hide from you,” he said to me, “that I feel incapable of such courage. What! this happiness that is so sweet to me, these beloved beings, wife, child, I should renounce them of my own will?” And as I added that this offering of one’s life did not necessarily always shorten it, that God was content with the merit of our good will: “Do not insist,” he went on, “it is beyond my strength.” I left him, but a week later he wrote to me: “I have made my sacrifice entire, and I find in it a sweetness, a peace that astonishes even me.” This took place around 15 November. In January, Mr de Sauras was returning from a drive; his horse bolted, the carriage overturned so unfortunately that his head was shattered. Carried home, he had hardly regained consciousness when he asked his wife to inform me of his accident and to assure me that he renewed more than ever his sacrifice, so soon accepted. I replied at once, expressing the hope that God, as with Abraham, would be content with his good will and would stay his arm ready to strike the victim. Indeed, a new letter soon told me of an unhoped-for improvement, the forerunner, it was thought, of a complete recovery..... Alas! a fortnight later, death had come to seek, in the midst of his happiness, this heroic victim who, at 27, renounced his dearest joys to immolate himself for the salvation of the workers, and left this life in such sublime dispositions!

That, gentlemen, is what makes our hope and our strength: these acts of devotedness, these sacrifices which rise to God from every class of society and implore his mercy for our dear workers. Every day we see their consoling effects. And do not think that the good done at the Val-des-Bois mill can be attributed to the personal merit of its heads: after the grace of God, the means employed alone have done everything. Wherever they are put to work, the same result will follow, be sure of it. You have many examples of it in our country and even in this department.

But here I hear the voice of the pessimists, of those who never do anything because they need the certainty of success before they begin. They tell us: You are the few; will your isolated efforts change the fatal outcome of the present situation? — No doubt, humanly speaking, we must foresee a cataclysm such as our country has not yet suffered. But we trust in God who loves the Franks. We know that he will not save us in spite of ourselves, but we also know that his mercy asks only for pretexts to intervene; and these pretexts are the acts of devotedness that arise wherever there are souls animated by the noble passion of sacrifice.

Courage, then, ladies and gentlemen: let those who still love Jesus the Worker rise up, and let them devote their lives to the brothers of God made man. Let us all make ourselves apostles of Charity; let us act without looking at our small number, with the certainty of success; let us hope against all hope; let us work for the social reign of Jesus Christ, that is to say for the reign of peace, love and union; and we shall save our country by calling forth a new intervention of the God who loves the Franks.

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To encourage the establishment of the various associations spoken of at the Diocesan Assembly of 20 September and in Mr Harmel's

Lecture, we reproduce here several rules that have been published by the Diocesan Office with the approval of His Lordship the Bishop.

CONFRATERNITY OF MEN & YOUNG MEN

In the religious and social Association of Catholic Workers' Circles, the Confraternity that meets in church can take the place of a Circle, and the local Committee that the Association sets up within the ruling class, that is to say among the most influential Christians of the parish, can have as its mission to organise, protect and encourage, under the direction of the clergy, the Confraternity, which recruits from the whole population.

I.

STATUTES OF THE CONFRATERNITY.

Art. I. — A Confraternity of St Joseph², attached to the Archconfraternity of Beauvais (Oise)³, has been established, by the authority of His Lordship the Bishop of Séez, in the parish of on

It is organised for men and young men, according to the Principles and General Plan of the Association of Catholic Workers' Circles, which have been approved by the Sovereign Pontiff and endowed with numerous indulgences.

Art. II. — The Director of the Confraternity is the parish priest or a curate appointed by the proper authority.

Art. III. — The Confraternity has two kinds of members: *Candidates* and *Members*. Boys may be admitted after their First Communion, and they remain in it with the title of Candidate until the age of

2. The Confraternity may be placed under the patronage of the patron saint of the parish or of another saint honoured in the region.

3. For all information, apply to the Chaplain of the Boarding School of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, at Beauvais.

sixteen. (In large parishes it might be useful to hold special meetings for them.) Candidates over sixteen years of age, enrolled for at least three months, and the most deserving by their good spirit and Christian conduct, may be appointed Members.

Art. IV. — The Members elect from among themselves, from a list presented by the Director, Councillors, who, always presided over by the Director, decide on the admission or exclusion of Candidates and Members. It is from among the Councillors that the Members elect, every year at Christmas, the President and Vice-President of the Confraternity, who are eligible for re-election, and who, together with the Council, appoint the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Banner-bearer.

Art. V. — The appointment of the Members is proclaimed at one of the meetings of the Confraternity, at the foot of the altar of St Joseph, by the Director, who hands them the Member's card and the badge of a Member of the Association of Circles. This is a small radiant cross bearing the Sacred Heart, adorned with the motto *In hoc signo vinces*, which is fastened, by a pin or a button, on the left side of the breast.

Art. VI. — The members of the Confraternity, Members or Candidates, recite three times each day the *Hail Mary*, with three times the invocation *St Joseph, intercede for us*, so that they may gain the indulgences granted to the Archconfraternity of St Joseph of Beauvais.

Art. VII. — All the members of the Confraternity gather in the church, before the altar of St Joseph, at least on the first Sunday of each month, after Vespers, to sing a hymn or canticle in honour of St Joseph, recite his litany, hear a short address, receive Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and recite the *De Profundis* for deceased brethren. They may also meet, when the Director thinks fit, to follow classes in singing, history, geography, etc., or else to enjoy innocent recreation.

Art. VIII. — The members of the Confraternity walk together in processions, under the banner which the Committee of the Association of Circles offers to new foundations, and which is the same for all. On one side the banner bears the cross with the Sacred Heart and these inscriptions: *Association of Catholic Workers' Circles. In hoc signo vinces*; and on the other the name of the parish where the Association is established.

Art. IX. — Not only do they make their Easter duty, but they are invited to approach the Sacraments on the principal feasts of the year, and especially on the feast of St Joseph, patron of the Confraternity and of the Association of Circles. It is to be desired that this feast be preceded by three days of short, practical instructions, given especially for the members of the Confraternity. On the following day, they attend a *Requiem* Mass for deceased brethren.

Art. X. — The members of the Confraternity keep holy Sundays and holidays; they use their influence to prevent swearing and blasphemy; they avoid frequenting cafés and taverns; they are united among themselves by the bonds of a great charity; they assiduously visit their sick brethren.

Art. XI. — On the death of one of them, they attend the burial with the banner veiled in crape. A *Requiem* Mass is celebrated for him, a few days later, in the name of the Confraternity, all of whose members are invited to attend it.

Art. XII. — Candidates and Members pay, as far as possible, an annual subscription, the former of 50 centimes, the latter of 1 franc: 1. in order to have Masses celebrated for deceased brethren, and to contribute to the other expenses of the Confraternity; 2. in order to help sick brethren, if they are in need.

Art. XIII. — Brethren who have left the parish may continue to belong to the Confraternity and to enjoy the many spiritual benefits attached to their title, by remaining united in prayer and feeling with their brethren. If a similar work, Confraternity or Circle, exists in

their new parish, they are invited to join it, and the *Diploma Pass-book*, instituted by the Association of Circles to establish a common bond between all its foundations, makes their admission easier.

II.

THE LOCAL COMMITTEE AND THE CONFRATERNITY.

I. — The members of the local Committee, whose aim is to organise and support the Confraternity, are united among themselves by their adherence to the Principles and General Plan of the Association of Catholic Workers' Circles, and by their acceptance of its religious bond, which consists in the following resolutions (which do not have the force of a vow and do not bind under pain of sin):

1. To wear on one's breast the medal of the Immaculate Conception;

2. To say each day, for the intention of the Association, the *Memorare*, followed by the invocations: *Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. — O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us. — St Joseph, pray for us. — St Vincent de Paul, pray for us. — Holy Patrons of labour, pray for us;*

3. To attend every year, on 19 March, the feast of St Joseph, a Mass offered for the intention of the Association, unless seriously prevented, and, as far as possible, together with all the brethren of the same locality;

4. To make one Communion a year for the salvation of the workers, our brothers.

The Association and its members are consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

II. — The Committee chooses from among its members a President, a Treasurer and a Secretary, who sends, on the 25th of each month, a report or minutes of the monthly meeting to the Committee of the Association.

III. — The members of the Committee are by right members of the Confraternity, and the President of the Committee is its Honorary President. They make it a duty to attend, as far as possible, the meetings of the Confraternity.

IV. — The Committee meets at least once a month, on the Sunday or on one of the other days preceding the meeting of the Confraternity, to attend to the interests of the Association, seek the means of exercising the apostolate it requires, and attain its aim, which is always, in the country as in the town, the devotedness of the ruling class to the working class.

V. — It is the Committee which, together with the Director of the Confraternity, admits the candidates and members until the Internal Council of the Confraternity can be formed. It is also together with the Committee that the Director presents to the members the list of candidates from among whom they are to elect the Councillors, the President and the Vice-President of the Confraternity.

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ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS.

The purpose of these model rules is to make it easier to establish the “Association of Christian Mothers” not only in the towns, but also in *all* rural parishes, small or large.

STATUTES.

Art. I. — The “Association of Christian Mothers” has been canonically erected in the church of on by His Lordship the Bishop of Séez, and affiliated to the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers.

Art. II. — The aim of the Association is the personal sanctification of Christian mothers and that of their children, for whose con-

version and perseverance they unite their prayers and their good works.

Art. III. — The patronal feast of the Association is the feast of⁴

Art. IV. — Only married persons who piously fulfil the duties of religion may belong to the Association.

Art. V. — The Association is governed by a Council consisting of: 1. a Director, who shall be by right the parish priest; 2. a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer, designated by the Director or appointed by the members of the Association.

Art. VI. — The Council shall decide on the admission of new associates, who shall be presented by one of its members. — It shall also fix the day of the month on which the meetings are to be held.

Art. VII. — At these meetings, which may be held on Sunday after Vespers, a hymn shall be sung, and an instruction or a pious reading heard, followed by the recitation of a few decades of the rosary⁵.

Art. VIII. — The Associates shall receive an admission card which shall contain, with the Brief of indulgences, the prayers to be recited each day. — These prayers consist of invocations to the Blessed Virgin, to the Guardian Angels, to St Joseph, to St John, to St Anne, to St Augustine, to St Aloysius Gonzaga and to St Monica.

Art. IX. — Absence from three meetings *in succession and without reason given* shall be regarded as an Associate's voluntary renunciation of membership of the Association.

Art. X. — The Associates are urged to go to confession once a month, or at least on the principal feasts of the Blessed Virgin. For Holy Communion, they shall follow the advice of their confessor.

4. The Director should choose a feast of the Blessed Virgin, or else the feast of St Anne, if it is wished to place the Association under her patronage.

5. The Director may ask His Lordship the Bishop for permission to give Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament at the meetings.

Art. XI. — The Secretary shall call the Associates to the burial of deceased members. A Mass shall be said for them every year, within the octave of the patronal feast or within the octave of All Saints.

Art. XII. — The resources of the Association are: 1. gifts made to the Society by its members or by benefactors; 2. the proceeds of collections which the Director may authorise on its behalf.



ASSOCIATION OF THE CHILDREN OF MARY.

To make the founding of this Association easier, the Diocesan Office offers the parish priests a set of rules which, with a few slight modifications, can be applied in every parish.

STATUTES.

Art. I. — An Association or Sodality of Children of Mary has been canonically erected in the church of

on by His Lordship the Bishop of Séez

and affiliated to the Sodality of Rome known as the *Prima Primaria*⁶

Art. II. — The aim of the Association is: 1. to honour and imitate the august Mother of God; 2. to help girls to persevere in the Christian life and to make progress in virtue.

Art. III. — The patronal feast of the Association is the feast of⁷.

6. For a Sodality to obtain this affiliation, it must already have existed for some time, for a year, for example; it must have its organisation, its President and its Assistants; it must be recognised and approved by the Ordinary. This being so, one must write to the Very Reverend Father General, or to the Secretary General of the Society of Jesus, in Rome. For greater ease, one may apply to the Superior of one of the houses of the Society, who will forward the petition to Rome. (*Manuel des enfants de Marie*, by Fr Cahour.) — This affiliation might also be obtained through the Secretariat of the Bishop's House.

7. The Director should choose a feast of the Blessed Virgin.

Art. IV. — There are three degrees in the Association: the Aspirants, the Approbanists and the Sodalists. All attend the meetings; the insignia may be given to the Approbanists; only the Sodalists shall take part in the elections.

Art. V. — Any girl who made her First Communion at least three months before may be admitted as an Aspirant.

Art. VI. — At fourteen she shall be received as an Approbanist, if she is judged worthy.

Art. VII. — After a year of probation, she may be definitively admitted as a Sodalist.

Art. VIII. — The Children of Mary recite each day, in the name of the Sodality, the *Memorare* or *Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary*.

Art. IX. — They shall be urged to go to confession once a month, or at least on the principal feasts of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin. — For Holy Communion, they shall follow the advice of their own Director.

Art. X. — When a Child of Mary is ill, her companions shall make it a duty to visit her, to pray for her and to help her. If she dies, the whole Association goes to her funeral and has a Mass said for the repose of her soul.

Art. XI. — Every year, within the octave of the patronal feast or within the octave of All Saints, the Association has a Mass said for deceased members, and all the Children of Mary attend it.

Art. XII. — The Association is governed by a council consisting of: 1. a Director, who shall be by right the parish priest; 2. a President, a Vice-President and four women Councillors.

Art. XIII. — The members of the Council are elected every year, on the day of the patronal feast, by secret ballot, by the Sodalists, by an absolute majority of the votes. They are all eligible for re-election. There are three ballots: the first for the election of the President; the second for that of the Vice-President; and the third for that of the

Councillors. — The Director may, if he thinks fit, appoint the Council himself.

Art. XIV. — The Council may choose, from among its members, a Secretary, a Treasurer, etc.

Art. XV. — In the meetings of the Council, important questions are decided by an absolute majority of votes. The Director does not vote, but no decision is valid without his approval.

Art. XVI. — The Children of Mary meet once a month to sing a hymn, hear an instruction or a reading, and recite the rosary, or at least a few decades of the rosary. These meetings shall be held in the church and, if possible, in the Lady Chapel.

Art. XVII. — At the meeting of the patronal feast, the elected President publicly renews, in the name of the Association, before an image of the Blessed Virgin, the act of consecration to Mary. At the same time, each one shall make it a duty to renew her promises in the depths of her heart.

Art. XVIII. — The reception of Aspirants, Approbanists and Sodalists, after being decided by the Council, takes place solemnly at the meetings of the Association.

Art. XIX. — The resources of the Association are: 1. gifts made to the society by its members or by benefactors; 2. the proceeds of collections which the Director may authorise on its behalf.

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