

Address

Delivered by

Hon. Charles Murphy

B.A., K.C., LL.D.

Postmaster General of Canada

Before the

Catholic Women's League of Montreal

On Tuesday Afternoon

January 26th, 1926

A PLEA FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND
NATIONAL GOODWILL

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Madam President,

Members of the Catholic Women's League of Montreal.

THE invitation that was extended to me to speak here this afternoon was gratifying in a double sense: first, because of the honour it implied, and, secondly, because it gave me permission to set a time-limit on my own address. That I have done; and, having done so, you will not regard me as lacking in courtesy if I dispense with some of the preliminary observations that are customary upon an occasion of this kind and compress the expression of my gratitude for the privilege you have granted me into the assurance that I am deeply appreciative of your kindness and heartily thankful for it.

About the time that I received your invitation, an announcement was made that the Holy Father had recommended to the faithful as the general intention for the month of December last the subject of "Catholic Leadership". This impressed me as such a happy coincidence that I decided to speak to you about some phases of Catholic Leadership that, it seems to me, might engage the activities of the Catholic Women's League of Montreal, in addition to those upon which it has already entered.

There is a widespread impression that Women's organizations are of comparatively recent growth, and that those composed solely of Catholic women were the last to enter the field of action. Nothing could be more fallacious.

About forty years ago, Josh Billings used an expression which should be frequently recalled: He said: "It is not so much the "ignorance of mankind that makes them ridiculous as the "knowing so many things that ain't so."

I think of that every time I hear some popular orator assert that only *in our day* have women won the age-long struggle for liberty and equality, and that only *now in our day* are women emancipated. History is filled with the refutation of this baseless obsession.

Not to go farther back than the fifth century, we find in Ireland a woman occupying a position, and exerting an influence for

which there is no parallel in our time. The versatile author of "Education, How Old the New" presents this remarkable woman in a remarkable rôle.

Presiding at Kildare over a great school, conducted mainly by and for women, and at which there were probably three thousand students at one time, St. Brigid, we are told, did for the women of Ireland what St. Patrick had done for the men. "Perhaps the "most interesting feature of the education of Kildare is that it was "not concerned exclusively, nor even for the major part, apparently, "with book-learning," observes the Author, whom I am quoting. And he goes on: "At Kildare, however, certain of the arts and "crafts were cultivated with special success. Lace-making and the "illumination of books were two of the favorite occupations of these "students at Kildare, in which marvellous success was achieved."

But not alone for the promotion of book-learning and of the arts and crafts was the Abbess of Kildare esteemed by her contemporaries. Such was her reputation for piety, worldly wisdom and the art of government, that she was given a voice in the appointment of the Bishops of Kildare; and that privilege was accorded her successors for hundreds of years.

Passing on to the Seventh Century, it will serve the purpose in hand if I pause only long enough to make you acquainted with one of the great characters in English history. I refer to St. Hilda, the foundress and first Abbess of Whitby, who governed both a convent for nuns and an adjoining monastery for monks. The institutions under her direction became "the most noted centre of "learning and culture in Britain. And so great was her reputation "for knowledge and wisdom that not only priests and bishops, but "also Princes and Kings, sought her counsel in important matters of "Church and State."

For the benefit of some of those to whom Josh Billings alluded, and who seem to regard the so-called feminist movement of our generation as the pioneer movement of its kind, I may mention that the celebrated Parliament of Whitby which was held in the year 664 was summoned and presided over by St. Hilda, and that its decisions established the connection of the English Church with

Rome and remained the basis of that connection down to the time of the Reformation.

The student of history will find recorded in the annals of Italy, Germany, France, Spain and other European countries, examples such as those I have cited in Ireland and England. Not only that, but he will find in the records of the Middle Ages and of the succeeding centuries the proofs of the gradual extension of woman's work into fields which some people imagine are now occupied by women for the first time. This is notably the case in connection with Nursing and "the practice of the healing art."

During the Middle Ages there were, as H. J. Mozans tells us, "in various parts of Europe, but especially in Italy and France, "among women, outside as well as inside convent walls, many "daughters of Aesculapius and Sisters of Hygeia, who stood in such "high repute among their contemporaries that they received the "same honors and emoluments as were accorded to their masculine "colleagues."

And the same author proceeds: "Women asked for no favors "in the intellectual arena and expected none . . . We thus find them "achieving distinction in civil and canon law, in medicine, in "theology even, as well as in arts, science, literature, philosophy "and linguistics."

And, as indicating the great diversity of women's work, and the fact that it was not solely intellectual at the period of which I am speaking, we have this testimony from the Catholic Encyclopedia:—

"The industrial work of women kept pace with the "development of civilization. When the guilds arose at the "time of the founding of the cities, women were not excluded "from them."

It is not surprising, therefore, that Catholic women, as well as men, were prominent in many of the famous guilds, associations, confraternities and societies which have left their mark upon European civilization, and that the impress of their work now shapes and moulds so many feminine activities on this side of the

Atlantic, not only in the United States and Canada, but in South America as well.

Time will permit only a passing reference to one further phase of Catholic Women's leadership in the direction of social betterment.

In the last quarter of the last century, through the recognition of the fact that Social aid must supplement legal enactment in order to meet the justifiable demands of women, and through the subsequent founding of the "Ligues des femmes chrétiennes" in Belgium, of "Le féminisme chrétien" and "L'Action Sociale des femmes" in France, and of other like organizations in other European countries, Catholic women gave the lead to many of the movements that have absorbed most of the energies of their non-Catholic sisters during this generation.

Brief, and necessarily incomplete as is the outline that I have thus hurriedly sketched of women's place and influence in the past, it is, I trust, sufficient to indicate that it has a two-fold relevance to the women's movements of the present time.

In the first place, it disposes of the popular and almost universal misconception of present-day emancipation, with its implied calumny on the Church, which many non-Catholics honestly believe; and, in the second place, it justifies the Catholic women's activities of to-day, not only to themselves, but also to those Catholics, if there are any, who look at them askance.

And it is because of this two-fold relevance that I say to the members of the Catholic Women's League of Montreal that, in the pursuit of their chosen work, they are well within Catholic traditions and practices, and not, as some suppose, merely caught up in the current of non-Catholic innovation, with its wide departure from the Catholic mind and outlook.

Resting upon such an historical basis, the Catholic Women's League is in a position to give Leadership in many directions. Allow me to point out a few of them.

Through the courtesy of your officers, I have had the privilege of reading some of your publications, and in them I noted, with great interest, how you have divided and sub-divided your work. All this indicates practical ability to deal with practical affairs, and it also encourages me to make some suggestions that I might otherwise hesitate to make.

Since the earliest Christian era, Catholics have increased the world's store of knowledge, enriched its art, its poetry, its music, its literature, its sculpture and its architecture; they have explored the depths of science, solved the most subtle of its mysteries, and turned them to man's use and benefit; they have navigated the waters of the globe, discovered many of its most remote regions, and made them tributary to the moral, the intellectual and the physical needs of the human race; they have endured unspeakable tortures, and welcomed agonizing deaths in order to spread the Gospel; they forced Magna Charta, the Charter of English liberties, from an unwilling King; they humanized the forms of Government, and stood between the poor and those who would oppress them; and in every age and every land they have upheld the dignity of woman and the sanctity of marriage. If you would prove yourselves worthy of the matchless inheritance that, as Catholic women, you enjoy, spread a knowledge of it among your non-Catholic friends and neighbors, as well as among your own members.

But, you may reply that you are doing so. That, I admit, and I have nothing but praise for your work thus far.

My suggestion is that you would extend your sphere of usefulness and provide leadership in new fields that promise abundant returns.

The latest of these is one that has been opened up by a Catholic business man of Pittsburgh, whose example should be an incentive to millions of his co-religionists in Canada and the United States.

His method consists in publishing daily advertisements about the Catholic Church in the New York and Pittsburgh Daily Papers, and in this way he reaches more than two million readers. The advertisements are not only devoid of a single trace of bitterness, but they do not contain anything of a controversial nature, as

they are confined to a statement of facts designed to acquaint the public with Catholic doctrine and belief, and, at the same time, to inform the public regarding the achievements of individual Catholics.

Each advertisement is divided into three parts: the first contains either a Biblical quotation (always taken from the King James Version of the Bible), or a brief explanation of some Catholic doctrine or practice; the second part consists of a short sentence mentioning the name of a Catholic of distinction and the achievement for which he is noted; and the third part consists of one sentence always in the same words, namely: "These ads. inserted daily and paid for by a native Pittsburgh Catholic business man 'who believes in his religion'".

As a sample of these advertisements, let me quote the one that was published on October 31st last:—

WE DO NOT BOAST

These ads. are neither controversial nor intended to boast. They are plain, straightforward explanatory statements of facts, supported by Biblical and historical authority, put forward with good will, for educational purposes. The great names appended daily show that the Catholic Church, from the beginning of Christianity till the present, has produced a wonderful share of the world's greatest geniuses. Ponder deeply; a Church that can attract and hold such minds must be genuinely Christ's Church. Should not you and I be likewise attracted to it?

**VERDI, ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST
MUSICAL COMPOSERS, WAS A CATHOLIC**

These ads. inserted daily and paid for by a native Pittsburgh Catholic business man who believes in his religion.

The first part of the advertisement published on November 10th last was as follows:—

WHY THESE NAMES?

The names of famous Catholic scientists, discoverers, explorers, artists, musicians and patriots are published from day to day, not because we wish to boast, or think Catholics have a monopoly of brains. We wish to indicate there is nothing in the Catholic faith preventing intellectual development to the highest peaks of achievement in every department of human activity, and that Catholics have contributed their full share to the upward and onward march of humanity.

In form, all the advertisements are alike; but the first part is changed every day and so is the second part containing the name of the individual to whom attention is called. In my judgment, the list of names is the most impressive part of these advertisements and the one most likely to influence public opinion.

What would be more likely to affect the mind of an honest reader to whom the history of the Catholic Church is not known, but who is desirous of learning the truth, than to see published in his daily paper, day after day, throughout the year, a list of names from which I select the following:—

Magellan, who first sailed round the world, was a Catholic.

The Founder of the Red Cross, St. Camillus of Lellis, was a Catholic.

Fabre, the World's greatest Naturalist, was a Catholic.

Dante, the World's greatest Poet, was a Catholic.

Ampère, after whom the unit of electric current was named, was a Catholic.

The World's greatest Painter, Raphael, was a Catholic.

Pasteur, the leading Scientist of the 19th Century, was a Catholic.

Gutenberg, the Inventor of Printing, was a Catholic.

Lavoisier, the Father of Modern Chemistry, was a Catholic.

Jenner, the Discoverer of Vaccination, was a Catholic.

Morgagni, the Father of Modern Pathology, was a Catholic.

Galvani, Discoverer in Electricity, who gave the world galvanized iron and the galvanic battery, was a Catholic.

Leonardo da Vinci, the Greatest Architect, Engineer and Painter of his time, was a Catholic.

Balboa, Discoverer of the Pacific Ocean, was a Catholic.

Laennec, Father of Physical Diagnosis, and Discoverer of the Stethoscope, was a Catholic.

The Submarine was invented by Holland, an Irish Catholic Christian Brother.

Marshal Foch is a Catholic.

Roentgen, discoverer of the X-Ray, was a Catholic.

The word 'Volts' comes from Volta, the great Catholic Electrician.

The World's greatest Architect, Bramante, was a Catholic.

Lord Howard, the Victor of the Spanish Armada, was a Catholic.

Gioja, the Father of Scientific Navigation, and the Discoverer of the Mariner's Compass, was a Catholic.

Chauliac, the Father of Modern Surgery and the Modern Hospital, was a Catholic Ecclesiastic.

Columbus, the Discoverer of America, was a Catholic.

Becquerel, the Father of Electro-Chemistry, was a Catholic.

Jacques Cartier, the Discoverer of Canada, was a Catholic.

The reading of the names contained in such a list day after day must have the same effect upon prejudice or ignorance as the constant dropping that wears the stone. My suggestion therefore is that the Catholic Women's League, under the direction of their Honorary Chaplain and Executive Board, might undertake the publication of sets of these advertisements that may be found ready for use in booklets issued in Pittsburgh and that would need but little change to make them appropriate throughout Canada.

In your League Calendar I notice a programme of public addresses that cover a period of six months. May I suggest that a great public service would be rendered if the greater part of that programme were devoted, year after year, to addresses upon the

history and achievements of Catholics who have attained fame in the arts and sciences, in music, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, and every other line of human endeavor. And if to the ordinary address were added the attractions of lantern slides and moving pictures wherever such would be appropriate, the resulting increase in the popular knowledge about Catholics and their religion would enormously increase the good relations that ought to prevail among citizens of the same country.

To the suggestion last made let me add another that is intimately connected with it, as well as with your Motto "For God and Canada". As part of your lecture programme, I would suggest a series of addresses devoted exclusively to Catholics who are outstanding figures in Canadian history. From Jacques Cartier in the 16th century to Sir John Thompson, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Lord Shaughnessy in the 19th and 20th centuries, there is a long list of heroes and heroines, of warriors, statesmen, and pioneers—Champlain and de Maisonneuve, Marie de l'Incarnation, Madame de la Peltrie, Jeanne Mance and Marguerite Bourgeoys, the Jesuit Martyrs—Jogues, Lalemant, Brèbeuf, Goupil, Daniel, Lalande, Garnier, and Chabanel; the soldiers, explorers and founders—Frontenac, Dollard, Cadillac, and a host of others whose achievements should be made known to a generation that has too little reverence for the past and seldom troubles itself about the future. Than work of this kind, I cannot imagine anything more useful or timely from a Canadian point of view. Therefore, I again urge you to open wide your treasure-house, share its riches with your non-Catholic friends and neighbors and you will find that your heritage, instead of diminishing, will increase an hundred fold.

Taking another glance at your Year Book, I observe that you have an Immigration Committee and that in their Report mention is made of the number of incoming boats carrying immigrants that were met by your representatives. May I suggest that it is not the gangways of the ships on this side of the Atlantic that require watching, so much as the gangways of the same ships when on the other side of the ocean. Vigilance of this kind would, I am sure, have been brought about through your organization had you known a few years ago that women who were physical and

moral defectives were allowed to come to Canada without medical examination. That scandal continued until 1922, when official action put an end to it. My advice to you on the subject of Immigration is to make yourselves familiar with the Immigration law and the Regulations administered by the Department at Ottawa, and you will find the officials there, not only appreciative of any assistance you can render in enabling them to discharge their important duties, but grateful for any practical co-operation that will keep the physically and morally unfit from coming to this country.

The subject of Immigration has such an intimate relation to our future citizenship that a word on its general aspect will not be out of place.

If the immigrants brought to this country are all of one class, or preponderatingly of one class, then, in time, the Dominion will become lop-sided and unable to function as a properly rounded-out nation. We need brain-culture as much as land-culture, and if both do not make equal progress, then our national status will decline in proportion to the discrepancy between the two. To guard against this danger, we must see to it that people of artistic temperament are attracted to our shores, as well as those who are "of the earth earthy". This need was emphasized by an incident that happened not long ago at Ottawa, when the Italians of the Capital, who are mostly poor people, placed a bronze bust of Dante in a small square adjoining their Church. This bust is the only public evidence of the culture of its people to be found anywhere in the Capital. You will search in vain for a monument, or statue, or bust, of Shakespeare, or Milton, or Byron, or Tennyson, but you will find copies in plenty of a picture depicting a bull-dog with undershot jaw and bow-legs standing on a flag beneath which is the truculent inscription: "What we have, we'll hold". Having regard to the Canadian of the future, and to the fact that what we do now will be reflected in his moral and intellectual outlook, you will agree with me when I say that what this country needs are immigrants whose cultural bent is in the direction of Dante or Shakespeare, and not in that of the undershot bull-dog.

So much for Immigration. Now let me bespeak your attention for a few minutes while I refer to another great public service that you can render by taking, not a passive, but a militant position, against war.

In the month of July, 1924, I wrote to a clerical friend in Montreal and pointed out that if the women of the world were properly organized, and their united efforts directed against war, there would be such a revolution in public opinion that the war-mongers would soon lose their jobs. I cited what was being done by the Presbyterian and the Methodist women of the United States in behalf of international sanity and international peace, and I urged that in Canada there should be a movement of Catholic women in the same direction and that the Catholic Women's League should take charge of it. And I concluded my letter by further pointing out that the practical course to follow was to compel all candidates for every kind of public office, civic, township, County, Provincial and Federal, to pledge themselves to take active and practical means to prevent war.

When writing in these terms to my Montreal friend, I was merely saying what the Administrative Bishops of the National Catholic Welfare Conference of the United States had already said in an historic Peace statement which contained the following sentences:—

“Political rulers will not earnestly strive for peace unless they are supported and compelled by public opinion; neither will they plunge their countries into war unless they are convinced that they have at least the tacit acquiescence of their peoples. Catholics in all the important countries can take a decisive part in forming a right public opinion.”

“We should get firm hold of the truth that conditions are to-day more favorable for the abolition of war than they have been at any previous time in the world's history. All the nations are sick of war. All now realize that in modern times at least, no people derives any advantage from even a victorious war. All are convinced by the experience of the recent conflict that the losses far outweigh the gains. Since the peoples of the world have this attitude

of mind, the question of peace is merely a question of effective methods. And this question resolves itself finally into the question of study and education."

Then, dealing with objections that might be raised, the Bishops said:—

"There are some who profess to fear the reforms suggested . . . would produce a generation of young pacifists, unwilling to take up arms in defence of their country, even against unjust attack. Whatever may happen in the indefinite future, there is no solid reason for fearing that the present generation . . . would undergo such a transformation. The instinct of national self-defence and the traditional teaching on that subject are too powerful to be immediately eliminated or forgotten through a course of balanced and rational instruction on the evils of war."

With all my heart I endorse that last sentence. Its truth is driven home when you reflect that the World War was won, Not by the Militarists, but by the Non-Militarists, who, to stop the greatest carnage of all time, offered themselves as victims to be sacrificed on the altars of Mammon and Mars—the twin Gods who are worshipped by the War Lords of every land.

The appeal made by the Administrative Bishops met with a ready response throughout the United States. At the last Convention of the National Council of Catholic Women of New York a resolution was adopted condemning war and setting forth that the peace of the world is "one of the most important objectives "toward which we may direct the attention of the organized "Catholic Women of America."

On the score of morality, I would add two other reasons why you should become crusaders in the cause of Peace.

One of them was supplied by Arthur Ponsonby, Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Ramsay MacDonald's Government. Writing in the "Nation and Athenæum", Mr. Ponsonby said:—

"All Governments must lie to their people when war breaks out in order to secure national unity and enthusiasm . . . The enemy must be represented as an undiluted

criminal . . . We and our allies must be represented as immaculate and the enemy as jet black; and ***this must be kept up when more men are wanted to continue the conflict.***

"Our Government knew that Germany alone was not solely responsible for the war, and although this fiction had to be put into the Treaty of Versailles, there is no responsible Minister who would maintain it now.

"Our Government knew that there were no corpse factories in Germany, but they framed their answers in Parliament to this ridiculous supposition by suggesting that there were."

Then he goes on to expose the falsehoods that were circulated about the mutilation of nurses and babies, and with cynical frankness states that "no Government in wartime would be foolish "enough to put any check on such valuable propaganda."

The lies that Mr. Ponsonby enumerates are among those that did yeoman service in Canada in 1917, and caused a rupture among our people that is yet far from being healed. If you want to prevent a repetition of this imported discord, then enlist in the Cause of Peace.

The second reason which would justify your doing so, is the increase in the number of divorces in Canada during and following the war.

From 1915 to 1925, inclusive, the number of Divorces granted by the Dominion Parliament showed an increase of over 744%.

During the same period, the number of Divorces granted by the Provinces whose courts have jurisdiction to grant divorces showed an increase of 1024%.

These figures will give you some idea of the extent to which the stream of our national life has been polluted by the war. Its cleansing rests, primarily, with those who believe in the inviolability of the marriage tie and who still cherish the old-fashioned conviction that National stability is based on National morality. If you

desire Canada to be stable Nationally, as I know you do, then your duty is plain—Oppose war with all your might. It is the product of greed and lies; it tears morality from its moorings, it makes woman the special object of its savagery, and it leaves behind it a train of evils that will inevitably breed further conflicts in the course of time.

Before concluding, it may be well to emphasize that nothing that I have suggested to you in the way of Leadership is outside the scope of what has been done by Catholic women in Canada even in our own day. It is not necessary to look abroad for such Leadership. You can find examples of it at home. Let me mention one who furnished such an example—

“A perfect woman, nobly planned,”—
whose earthly career came to a close only last year.

A model wife and mother, a student of the world and its affairs, the possessor of accomplishments as varied as they were attractive, this noble type of Catholic womanhood radiated happiness throughout a long and beautiful life in countless deeds that reflected all the fair flowering of the human mind and soul. On her demise, one biographer pictured the influence she exercised in these words:—

“She will be long remembered as a lady of wide culture
“about whom centered all that was best and most elevating
“in the community in which she lived.”

And another biographer wrote:—

“Religion, in her, has lost a bright and beautiful exemplar, humanity a friend, the poor a generous but unostentatious benefactor, charity a lovable and munificent exponent, piety a daily example, and Catholic culture an ornament.”

These tributes had their foundation in the fact that the life of her in whose praise they were uttered had been informed and directed by the spirit that breathes in your Motto—“For God and Canada.”

No happier selection of a Motto could have been made—
“For God and Canada.” May the spirit of that Motto impel

you to increase your efforts in patriotic National Leadership until the vision of him who has been called the Prophet of Canadian Nationality is realized in its fulness, even as he himself described it, in 1860, in these words of inspired eloquence:—

“I see in the not remote distance one great nationality bound, like the shield of Achilles, by the blue rim of the ocean. I see it quartered into many communities, each disposing of its internal affairs, but all bound together by free institutions, free intercourse and free commerce. I see within the round of that shield the “peaks of the western mountains, and the crest of the eastern waves,” the winding Assiniboine, the five-fold lakes, the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, the Saguenay, the St. John and the basin of Minas. By all these flowing waters, in all the valleys they fertilize, in all the cities they visit in their courses, I see a generation of industrious, contented, moral, men, free in name and in fact—men capable of maintaining, in peace and in war, a constitution worthy of such a country.”