

BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated The Catholic Review)

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is for Catholic Action, before all things else, that the Pontificate of Pius XI will be famous in history. From the very first days of his reign the Holy Father has poured forth his tireless energies, his heart and soul, into the labour of establishing and organizing this apostolate of the laity. He has called it the 'thing most dear' to him; the 'apple of Our eye.' He has said that the idea of it is due to 'inspiration from on high,' and nobody acquainted with the almost miraculous quality and quantity of his pronouncements, exhortations and instructions on the subject will wish to gainsay him. Loyalty and obedience to the Vicar of Him who bade us all go into His Vineyard compel us to seek to understand and act upon this call to Catholic Action.

In England, unlike other countries, there is little or no literature to supply the need for a straightforward, orderly explanation of what Catholic Action means and what it involves. With the generous assistance of a team of contributors we hope, in some measure, to have supplied that need in this number.

Some explanation of the logical sequence of the contributions may be helpful. The first two articles may be said

to deal with the general conception and principles of Catholic Action. Fr. Victor White explains briefly the generic idea of the apostolate of the laity; Mr. Kildany, who has made a first-hand study of the subject in Rome itself, deals more specifically with the actual organization of that apostolate in contemporary Catholic Action. From these fundamental notions we pass to more immediately practical issues and applications. Mr. Quinlan, after an instructive expression of a layman's reactions to some exhortations to Catholic Action, urges the timeless truth that the life of Action is vain without the life of Contemplation, explains the Holy Father's insistence that intellectual and spiritual formation is an indispensable prelude to undertaking the external works of the apostolate, and concludes with words of great comfort to those who are precluded from active collaboration in organized Catholic Action. Mr. H. C. Thomas, whose recent essay on British Fascism will be well remembered, outlines the principles governing the solution of one of the first problems which face Catholic Action: its relation to political activities and the adjustment of its claims with those of citizenship and civil allegiance. Dr. van Gestel, O.P., an eminent sociologist of Louvain University who has made extensive study of social conditions and organizations in many European countries, treats of the implications of Catholic Action for the workers and of the measure of identity and distinction between the Social Movement inaugurated by Leo XIII and the Catholic Action of Pius XI. He shows that the former is by no means excluded from the wider significance of the latter. This generally accepted conclusion is taken for granted by Fr. O'Hea, Secretary of the Catholic Social Guild and President of the Catholic Workers' College at Oxford, who finds inspiration for a possible line of practical social action from the treatment of the unemployables at Turner's Court Farm Training Colony.

The series of articles would be incomplete without mention of one, at least, of the many forms of individual apostolic enterprise, which though of their nature not belonging to corporate and hierarchic Catholic Action, are none the less apostolic. Mrs. Leitch, whose name will be familiar to discriminating novel-readers, discusses briefly the possibilities of such work for the playwright and novelist. *An*

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article on 'lay initiative' is aimed at dispelling certain common misconceptions and misgivings about Catholic Action: and Catholic Action in practice is shown in the person of Pier Giorgio Frassati. A review of some standard French works on the subject suggests material for further study and concludes what we think may claim to be in some sense the first Primer of Catholic Action to be published in England.

In saying this, we would inake it clear that this number is in no sense an *official* organ or pronouncement of Catholic Action; in no way would we anticipate the directions or decisions of the Board of Catholic Action which our Bishops have set up. But there are certain general notions manifest in the pronouncements of the Holy See and certain commonly accepted opinions which arc of universal application. It is these that our contributors have sought faithfully to express. From these, aided by their **own** thought and experience, they may make legitimate deductions and suggestions which are put forward with all deference, but without any pretence that they represent the considered decisions of the authority to whom alone the making of such decisions belongs.

Service to Catholic Action and to the needs of the lay apostle is the chief object of the existence of **BLACKFRIARS**. There is a real sense in which *every* number is a 'Catholic Action number.' We do not refer only to the frequent articles which we publish dealing directly with the subject; we refer to the entirety of our regular contents. The Holy Father has repeated time without number that the first indispensable condition of Catholic Action is a spiritualized, informed and thoughtful laity. A deepening of the spiritual life, an understanding both of the meaning and implications of the Church's teaching and of the problems of the world in which we live, as well as of their mutual applications, are essential to anybody who would respond to the call to undertake the grave responsibilities of the apostolate in any of its forms. To this end converge our regular articles on principles and models of holiness, our articles on points of Theology, Philosophy and the teaching of the Church, our articles and reviews on scientific, social and economic problems, as well as on all manner of current literature and art, our constant endeavour to provide a

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forum of Catholic opinion, both clerical and lay, which has latterly become more and more widely known and appreciated both inside and outside the Church.

We are pleased to be able to include in the present number three articles other than those forming part of the direct exposition of Catholic Action. Mr. Shewring contributes a memoir of two great men who were most faithful friends, not only of one another, but of the Dominican Order and of BLACKFRIARS. Mr. Swinstead writes of old and new forms of sanctity, and Mrs. Crawford disposes of the fallacy which confuses the Corporative Order of *Quadragesimo Anno* with the Corporate State of Fascism.

Among outstanding contributions to forthcoming numbers are *Poetry and Intelligibility* by Miss M. D. Petre, *On Understanding America* by Fr. Dunstan, O.S.F.C., *The Survival of B. Thomas More*, by Mr. Richard O'Sullivan, K.C., as well as a stimulating series on *Enlisting Revolution*, by Fr. J. F. T. Prince.