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SPECIALIZED CATHOLIC ACTION
IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN THE UNITED STATES

By

RUTH SALLWASSER

BS, Saint Louis University

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine in a sympathetic manner that program of the Roman Catholic Church which is known as specialized Catholic Action, especially as it is related to college students.

B. Importance of the Problem

The Roman Catholic Church in the United States today is highly organized and very aggressive and its influence is increasing. It is seeking to win this nation to Catholicism. Certainly, then, it is important to study the program of the Roman Church and to discover its most effective techniques and appeals.

Fuller participation of the laity is the important new phase of the Roman Catholic Church's apostolate, and Catholic Action is the name given this lay participation. This new emphasis on the importance of the laity has been resorted to, according to Civardi, because the clergy cannot suffice for the work of restoration since they are too few, they have lost much of their authority, and the enterprise is entirely

too vast.¹ Furthermore, the laity need experiences of giving vigorous co-operation to the clergy in the work of "the peaceful triumph of the Reign of Jesus Christ."²

The inadequacy of the clergy is caused by the growing paganism of society. Although environment does not impair one's free will, it does exert a powerful influence upon human activity. The individual who has purposed to be Christian and to act as a Christian under all circumstance finds this determination difficult to carry out in a secularized society. And that modern civilization is cursed with secularization cannot be denied. Someone has said that if we do not Christianize industry, industry will de-Christianize the world. Ferree therefore urges, "We must convert our modern social institutions in order to make accessible to mankind the fullest measure of perfection."³ The mind of the Papacy is reflected in these words from Fitzsimons and McGuire:

"Beginning with Pius IX, the call of the Popes has become ever more insistent till, with the Pontificate of our Holy Father, Pius XI, no one can ignore the necessity of lay participation in the apostolate of the Hierarchy. As long ago as 1924 he has said: 'All must co-operate in Catholic Action, even if they can do so only to a small degree.'"⁴

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1. Luigi Civardi: A Manual of Catholic Action, p. 220.
2. Ibid.,
3. William Ferree: Keynote Address on Master Plan of Catholic Action. The YCS Bulletin, September 1948, p. 11.
4. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: Restoring All Things, p. 66.

A program occupying such attention from such an organization as the Roman Catholic Church demands the attention of the Protestant church.

C. Delimitation of the Problem

In this thesis the consideration of this lay program is limited to its work on college campuses both because of the importance of reaching the college population which will furnish most of the world's leadership and for the purpose of staying within the scope of such a paper as this.

Further, this paper is restricted to that aspect of Catholic Action on campus which is specified by the term "specialized." Pius XI has said of Catholic Action that "it has been perfectly realized by the Jocist movement and interpreted in its publications."¹ Jocism showed the opportunity as well as the effectiveness of specialization and originated the technique of specialized Catholic Action.² The writer's interest was aroused by contact with several young men active in specialized Catholic Action at St. Louis University.

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1. Pope Pius XI: Discourse to the Jocist Pilgrimage to Rome, September 22-29, 1929, quoted by Eugene S. Geissler: Militants, p. 11.
2. Lelotte: Fundamental Principles of Catholic Action, p. 124.

D. Definitions

1. Catholic Action

The classic definition at which Pius XI affirms he arrived "not without divine inspiration"¹ declares that Catholic Action is "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's Hierarchy."² Civardi declares this to be a perfect definition because it contains all the elements essential to Catholic Action.

Several phrases which Civardi has used to designate Catholic Action may make more vivid the picture of this organization. This "modern Crusade" is destined to set free Christ Himself." This "secular arm for the protection of the Church" is "like the outer rampart of the Church." It is a vast and compact phalanx.³ It is the "long hands" of the Pope.

Catholic Action has been described by Hugo as "the outpouring of what is deepest and richest in Christianity" and "the expression of the essential nature of Christianity...love...identical with perfection."⁴

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1. Pius XI: Discourse to the Young Women's Section of the Catholic Action of Italy, March 19, 1927, quoted by Civardi: op. cit.
2. Luigi Civardi: op. cit., pp. 4 and 5.
3. Ibid., pp. 108, 112, and 117.
4. John J. Hugo: In the Vineyard Essays on Catholic Action, p. 61.

According to Pius XI, it is "a pacific army of apostles, wishful to win souls to Christ and to the Church."¹

To prevent misunderstanding, it must be pointed out that these two words can be used in a wide sense or in a restricted one. In its widest sense, Catholic action refers to all the acts performed according to Catholic principles. More specifically, the term might be reserved for those Catholic acts which have an apostolic aim. In its most restricted meaning, written always with capital letters, Catholic Action designates an institution, an organization with well-defined characteristics. This thesis will always use the two words together in this latter sense, even as the Pope is wont to use the term.²

In pointing out that the phrase Catholic Action has been often abused, Fitzsimons and McGuire declare:

"It is not political action, it is not economic action, it is not merely an intensification of the devotional life. It is the action of the Church on the world. And it marches."³

Bruehl further emphasizes this when he says:

"Catholic Action is the practical expression of the

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1. Pius XI: Letter to Cardinal Segura, quoted by Civardi: op. cit.,
2. Lelotte: op. cit., pp. 17 and 18.
3. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit. p. 66.

idea of the Kingdom of God, since the aim of Catholic Action is to bring to proper recognition in the totality of life, private and public, Christian principles and Christian ideals."¹

2. The National Catholic Welfare Conference

Catholic Action, like all Catholic activity in the United States, is under the direction of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington, D. C. Because of the vastness of these United States, the Roman Church felt the need for an organization to affect "concerted action on problems affecting the entire country, and... adequate representation before the various departments of government."¹ So the National Catholic Welfare Conference was established in 1919 with the purpose of:

"...unifying, co-ordinating and organizing the Catholic people of the United States in works of education, social welfare, immigrant aid and other activities."²

The National Catholic Welfare Conference, more briefly known as the N.C.W.C., is not a council or legislative assembly but a voluntary association of the bishops of this country with the intention of co-ordinating and supporting Catholic activity here. It is a representative body directed by an Administrative Board of ten Archbishops and Bishops elected at the

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1. The National Catholic Almanac for 1945, p. 379.
2. Ibid.

annual meeting of this country's hierarchy. It has a complex and highly specialized structure. The Board forms the general policy for the entire organization and appoints episcopal committees to handle various problems. Individual members of the Board direct the eight departments of the organization, which departments are subdivided into bureaus for more intense and specialized work.¹

Lehmann lists the general objectives of this Conference as follows:

"TO SERVE as the channel for the interchange of information and service between the Conference and the laity in their common work for the Church.

TO PROMOTE, under ecclesiastical supervision, unity and co-operation among clergy and laity in matters that affect the general welfare of the Church and the Nation.

TO PARTICIPATE, through Catholic lay representation, in national and international movements involving moral questions.

TO BRING ABOUT a better understanding and a more widespread appreciation of Catholic principles and ideals in our educational, social and civic life.

TO PROMOTE locally and nationally 'the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy.'²

Regarding this Conference, Pope Pius XI has commented:

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1. Ibid., pp. 379 and 380.
2. L. H. Lehmann, Catholic 'Shadow-Government' in America. The Converted Catholic Magazine, September, 1948, pp. 208 and 209.

"It is not only useful, but also necessary for you. Since you reside in cities far apart and there are matters of a higher import demanding your joint deliberation...it is imperative that by taking counsel together you all agree on one common aim and with one united will strive for its attainment, by employing, as you now do, the means which are adequate and adapted to present-day conditions."¹

The newest department of the N.C.W.C. is the Youth Department, created in November, 1940, to follow the trend in this country toward greater co-ordination of youth work. This Department develops the National Catholic Youth Council with its Diocesan section and its College and University section. This latter section includes the two national student federations: the Newman Club Federation in non-Catholic schools and the National Federation of Catholic College Students on Catholic campuses.²

Obviously, the lay work of the Roman Catholic Church is highly organized and effectively centralized, and student work is given proper emphasis.

3. Specialized Catholic Action

Specialized Catholic Action is Catholic Action. It has in it all the characteristics of that institution. However, it employs a special technique which distinguishes it from other Catholic Action groups. It also

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1. The National Catholic Almanac for 1945, p. 379.
2. Ibid., p. 386.

narrows its field of activity to one social milieu. It is defined as an organized apostolate restricted to one social milieu.¹ Its species include the Young Christian Worker and the Young Christian Students.

4. The Young Christian Students

Although the National Federation of Catholic College Students is represented on more college campuses than any other Catholic student group, a new organization has been growing rather rapidly in the past few years. This organization, the Young Christian Students, is representative of specialized Catholic Action. It is found in some twenty or more colleges and universities, where it endeavors to integrate Christianity with student² life.

In the YCS Bulletin for September, 1948, is reported the Keynote Address of the Catholic Action Study Workshop which was held at St. Bonaventure College in June of 1948. Reverend William Ferree, S. M., challenged:

"Our primary responsibility as Catholic Actionists on the college level is to make Christ reign supreme in our own personal lives, and in the entire student community."³

To encourage the student Catholic Actionist in

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1. The National Catholic Almanac for 1945, p. 402.
2. The National Catholic Almanac for 1948, p. 440.
3. William Ferree, S. M.: Keynote Address on Master Plan of Catholic Action. YCS Bulletin, September 1948, p. 11.

his endeavors to Christianize his own milieu of school, home, and community life, the Young Christian Students established an office in Chicago in the summer of 1947. This office is the headquarters for specialized Catholic Action in the student world.

E. Sources

The sources used for this study are almost entirely Catholic.

Only books and articles which have been written in or translated into English can be used for source materials by this writer. Few books on the theory of Catholic Action have been produced by writers from this country. Most of what is written about the program and work here in the States is confined to pamphlets and articles in Catholic periodicals.

Classes at St. Louis University and conversations and other contacts with students at that Jesuit school have contributed much to the writer's interest and understanding. This knowledge will be drawn upon frequently.

Correspondence with Catholic Actionists will furnish a large part of the second chapter of this thesis.

Background reading includes the encyclicals of

Pius XI and Leo XIII, various books on philosophy and the theory of social reconstruction, and the Minutes of the St. Louis University Y.C.S. group.

F. Method of Procedure

The writer of this study is primarily interested in discovering what the Roman Church is doing with its college students through the means of specialized Catholic Action or, more specifically, through the Young Christian Students. Since a general understanding of what Catholic Action is and what it aims to do is prerequisite to any consideration of its program in any specific situation, a large portion of this thesis will be given to a study of this necessary background material. First there will be a brief glance at the origin and history of this organization for the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy. Then an understanding of its essential characteristics will be sought.

With such a background it will be possible to examine the program of the specialized Catholic Action groups at representative Roman Catholic colleges. The strong points of the movement and its chief appeals to the student mind and heart, as these have been disclosed through the study, will be pointed out.

Because of the nature of the subject of this

thesis and because of the tension existing between Romanism and Protestantism, it has been considered wise to use frequent direct quotations.

Let it here be emphasized that this thesis is concerned with what is actually being done on Catholic campuses through specialized Catholic Action, not with what Protestantism is or should be doing.

CHAPTER I
HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

A. Introduction

Official Catholic Action is a distinct and
¹
unique organization but it is not a new movement.
Actually, Romanists claim, Catholic Action is as old as
the Roman Church in the sense that from apostolic times
the hierarchy has recruited laymen to assist the clergy
in its work of spreading Christ's Kingdom. In fact,
Catholic teaching is that Catholic Action has existed
"since that moment when our Lord gave a Mission to His
first Apostles."² But although lay participation has
been a law of the life of the Church which has existed
"from the beginning", its importance and demands are just
now being realized. Today Catholic Action has taken on
a fuller meaning. Lelotte points out:

"Never before in the long history of the Church has
a call gone out to all the laity without exception to
be organized and incorporated into the official
apostolate of the Church. The Holy Father asks that
not only individual laymen but the laity as a body be

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1. Francis N. Wendell: The Formation of a Lay Apostle, p. 57.
2. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., p. 68.

drafted for the apostolate."¹

Thus Catholic Action is not a new thing but rather a new technique, "a new method of approach to the people of a changed world."²

This chapter will first present a brief history of the movement. For a better understanding of the whole program of this gigantic organization it would be well in following the history to consider both the development of the theory which resulted in Catholic Action and the organizational growth of the movement.

The second part of the chapter is concerned with the essential notes which comprise Catholic Action. The formula of the description will be broken down into its four parts: participation, laity, apostolate, and hierarchy. These terms will be examined for their implications, which include the necessity of organization.

B. History

1. Development of Theory

Although Catholic Action is claimed to have been in existence since before Christ died, more realistically, it all began with Leo XIII. From the begin-

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1. F. Lelotte: op. cit., p. 11.

2. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., p. 68.

ning of his reign, Leo stated his program thus:

"To reconcile Catholicism with modern times, and to make the two-thousand-year-old Church work as a living force upon and within modern society."¹

Proceeding from the Thomistic conception of a divine order, Leo sought again to find a place for rational thought in the Catholic scheme of the universe, to enlist science in support of faith, and to employ the Thomist method of classification to obtain understanding between the Church and the social ideals and demands of the new age.² He recognized that in an era of imperialism social questions overshadowed all other problems, so that a new social duty confronted the Church.³ Seeing that in the future the greatest power would reside in the masses and the one who could win them, Leo XIII resolved "to take up the struggle for the soul of the working class and to carry the action of Catholicism into the midst of the Proletariat."⁴ In every way possible he fostered the growth of this Roman Catholic social movement, pointing out that the workers themselves must build up a new society and the church must assist them in every possible way. In his Encyclical *Graves de*

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1. Rene Fulop-Miller: *Leo XIII and Our Times*, p. 42.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-73.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 125 and 126.

commune (1901) he insisted that this was not purely an economic problem but first of all moral and religious and would therefore be solved mainly from the pronouncements of religion.¹

The program of Pius X sought salvation only in the inner forces of the Church, but he too declared his aim to be restoration of all things in Christ.²

Pius XI, like Leo, recognized the absolute necessity of a fundamental reform of social conditions and urged a reorganization of society on a functional or vocational basis. In his *Quadragesimo Anno* he observed:

"If we examine matters diligently and thoroughly we shall perceive clearly that the longed-for social reconstruction must be preceded by a profound renewal of the Christian spirit, from which multitudes engaged in industry in every country have unhappily departed...Christianity alone can apply an efficacious remedy for the excessive solicitude for transitory things, which is the origin of all vices."³

To renew the Christian spirit, Catholic Action was proposed by the Pope in his encyclical of December 23, 1922. Originally it was intended to furnish a framework within which clergy and laity could work together in the Christian apostolate⁴ and to dispel the notion that the priesthood was "a thing utterly apart from normal life, in

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1. Ibid., p. 138.

2. Ibid., p. 151.

3. Pius XI: *Quadragesimo Anno*.

4. Cuddiby and Shuster: *Pope Pius XI and American Public Opinion*, p. 22.

which the layman had no share."¹ Thus, Catholic Action, "Pope Pius' pet offspring," was designed to strengthen the church's ecclesiastical organization by organizing her laity in Catholic Action.²

Maritain describes Catholic Action as restricting itself to the spiritual and apostolic realm:

"But as it works to infuse a Christian vitality into the lives of individuals and the communities where they gather together, it prepares from within--from the soul--the first conditions necessary for a renewed social and political life."³

In discussing the Pope's plan for social reconstruction Breuhl emphasizes the importance - even the necessity - of the diffusion of the Christian spirit for the improvement of economic conditions. "We cannot have a better economic order, even in a material sense, unless we return to practical Christianity."⁴ More than that:

"Religion must not only help to save the individual in spite of the world, but so remold the world that it will contribute to the salvation of souls."⁵

Such is the theory that underlies the Roman Church's lay movement, Catholic Action.

2. Progress in Organization

Pius XI has said, "Catholic Action has no limits

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1. Ibid., p. 37.
2. William Teeling: Pope Pius XI and World Affairs, p. 95.
3. Jacques Maritain: Ransoming the Time, p. 215.
4. Charles Bruehl: The Pope's Plan for Social Reconstruction, p. 328.
5. Ibid., p. 329.

of times or places: we can say of it--Always and Everywhere."¹ Already has been pointed out the fact that Catholic Action in essence goes back to apostolic times but that this technique of a highly organized laity is of more recent origin. Civardi quotes Cardinal Maffi's pastoral on Catholic Action:

"In a world ablaze with electric light, a man would be looking after himself but ill were he obstinately to keep to poor little oil or tallow lights! And who could so delude himself as to stop short at the venerable but laggard printing-press of Gutenberg, and hope to pit it with success against the torrential output of modern engines?

Examine, examine our new needs, that our new forms of life have created, and you will see how you must hasten to alter your way of speaking! You will have to say that Catholic Action, with its half-military discipline, far from being a 'novelty', is a most urgent and serious necessity."²

The year 1865 might well mark the beginning of modern Catholic Action. Under the leadership of the lawyer Gian Battista Gasoni of Bologna was founded the first national Catholic organization in Italy. This Catholic Association for the Liberty of the Church of Italy was formally recognized by Pius IX the following year, but it was soon ordered dissolved by the Government. The leaders of the movement were banished, but their example had inspired many Catholic laymen to unite

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1. Pius XI: Speech to the Catholic Action Directors, April 19, 1931, quoted by Civardi: op. cit., p. 76.
2. Luigi Civardi: op. cit., pp. 121 and 122.

to defend their religious and moral principles and to safeguard the inviolable rights of the Holy See.

A new movement, the Italian Catholic Youth Association, sanctioned by the Pope in May of 1868, spread rapidly and by 1874 the first Italian National Catholic Congress was held at Venice. The yearly congresses which followed gave the Roman Catholics who attended a feeling of solidarity, but it soon became evident that they would be merely academic affairs unless there were some organization capable of carrying their resolutions into effect. So it was proposed that each parish have a Parochial Committee composed of at least five laymen. By 1881 these Parochial Committees, along with the Diocesan Committees and Regional Committees which developed from them, were formally established under the name of Opera dei Congressi e dei Comitati Cattolici. Its aim was:

"To unite Catholics and their associations in one common and concerted action, for the defence of the rights of the Holy See and of the religious and social interests of Italians, in conformity with the wishes and constant urgings of the Holy Father, and under the guidance of the Hierarchy and of the clergy."¹

In 1896 was born within the Opera dei Congressi a new movement, Democrazia Cristiana, which soon demanded a radical reform of the Opera dei Congressi to allow of

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Ibid., p. 101.

more elasticity and greater power of expansion. When the asked-for reform was conceded by Leo XIII in 1902, however, the Christian Democrats were not satisfied but sought complete autonomy. Two years later the Opera dei Congressi was dissolved and the individual dioceses of Italian Catholic Action placed under the direction and responsibility of the Bishops.

Then Pius X ascended the throne. It was his

"...constant will and never-failing endeavour...to safeguard Catholic Action from every influence, penetration or infiltration of a political party character, so that all the lay organizations which took part in Catholic Action had to limit their activities to the exclusively cultural and religious plane."¹

It was under his direction in 1905 that five national organizations, independent one from the other, were formed and continued to work side by side till 1915 when a co-ordinating Board of Direction of Catholic Action began governing Catholic Action. After the Great War, with the rapid growth of the syndical movement, the foundation by a group of Italian Catholics of a political party, and the consequent desertion of Catholic Actionists who were attracted to these economic and political activities, the Unione Popolare and its Board of Direction declined.

Then on February 6, 1922, Pope Pius XI, the Pope of Catholic Action, ascended the Pontifical throne.

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1. Ibid., p. 114.

He soon abolished the Unione Popolare. He announced that Catholic Action was to be his collaborator in the work of his pontificate and defined its nature, its end, and the means for its accomplishment of its end.¹

Meanwhile the idea had been spread to other lands. In Belgium it had been growing steadily since the days of Pius X. It was never hurried and rigid organization did not appear until after 1919, when Father Abel Brohee began what became the Secretariat General des Oeuvres apologetiques. Today, Catholic Action is nowhere stronger or better organized than in Belgium.

In France the work began in 1886 when Albert de Mun founded the Catholic Association of French Youth. Then in 1926, the Young Catholic Workers of France was born. This group, known as J.O.C.'s, has grown quickly and made a real impact on the nation because of its program which emphasizes education, action, and organization. They developed the "cell technique" which will come into prominence in this thesis later.²

Teeling has said, "Catholic Action may be suited for Central Europe, but it isn't really required in the British Empire or the New World."³ Nevertheless, Catholic Action has found a place in this country too and is devel-

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1. Ibid., pp.198-118.

2. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., pp. 165-168.

3. William Teeling; op. cit., p. 281.

oping under the general direction of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. This Conference publishes a monthly called "Catholic Action."

Thus, the organization of the Catholic Action movement has grown out of the theory which underlies it and has developed as it was needed. Today the laity is not only challenged to an apostolate, but also organized for education and work.

C. Characteristics

By definition, Catholic Action is the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy. Examination of the essential elements in this formula will give a fuller appreciation of the nature of the subject.

1. A Participation

The word "participation" carries in it the ideas of partiality and dependence and of active co-operation. Therefore, as a participation in the hierarchical apostolate, Catholic Action is itself an apostolate and it derives its very being from the hierarchy and the hierarchy's mandate, which incorporates Catholic Action into the hierarchy itself. ¹ Action is certainly one of the features of Catholic Action, and this action is always

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F. Lelotte: op. cit., p. 38.

in accordance with the dictates and desires of the Holy See.

Thus, the first word of the definition reveals that Catholic Action involves activity that is directed to the same end as the hierarchy and is obedient to the dictates of that hierarchy. In fact, Catholic Action is actually a part of the hierarchy, to which it is subordinated and obedient.

2. A Lay Movement

Lay participation is emphasized in this formula. It is the laity that is active and apostolic and obedient to the hierarchy of the church. This term "laity" not only distinguishes laymen from clergy but at the same time also designates an organized body of all laymen rather than several or even all individual laymen. Furthermore, there is only one laity. Its organization¹ is confided to lay directors.

Thus, the second concept in the definition of Catholic Action reveals all laymen organized into a single association under lay directors.

3. An Apostolate

Catholic Action is an apostolate. Now an apostolate is a mission for the glory of God and the sal-

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1. F. Lelotte: op. cit., pp. 22-32.

vation of souls.¹ Therefore, Catholic Action is concerned primarily with winning souls to Christ. Cardinal Pizzardo accordingly states:

"The fundamental reason, then, for the existence of Catholic Action is the conquest of souls or the bringing back of those who have strayed. It is souls that Catholic Action must ever have in mind."²

The specific end of Catholic Action evidently is to help the church in the exercise of her mission.

Lelotte points out clearly:

"Catholic Action, therefore, is not primarily a school of formation, moral, spiritual, or otherwise, nor an association of prayer, but it is, before all else, a movement of conquest, or reconquest. It is turned toward extension, toward action; the word Catholic Action emphasizes this clearly enough."³

But to act successfully requires preparation for action. To improve a Catholic Actionist's apostolate, the apostle must first be improved. Therefore, Catholic Action has a two-fold object: 1) the formation and training of each individual militant in making his life and self more Christian, 2) the actual apostolate, which is making others in the environment and the environment itself more Christian.⁴ Fitzsimons and McGuire express it thus:

"The immediate task of Catholic Action is not to

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1. Luigi Civardi: op. cit., p. 6.
2. Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo: Conferences on Catholic Action, p. 9.
3. F. Lelotte: op. cit., p. 60.
4. Eugene S. Geissler: op. cit., p. 8.

transform society, but to form consciences. The transformation of society can only appear as an effect of transformed consciences. If consciences are rightly ordered, there will be right order in society."¹

From the term "apostolate", then, is gleaned the further information that Catholic Action exists for the glory of God and the salvation of souls and that this end is achieved both through the formation of consciences and through acts designed to Christianize society.

4. An Organization

Because of the demands of the times, any work is made more effective by organization. Therefore Catholic Action is an organized apostolate.² This organization is particularly necessary for Catholic Action because its mission is social.³ Since Catholic Action is modeled after the hierarchy, its organization is universal and appointive. Since it exists in many different countries and situations, its organization is variable, always with the two essential constituent elements of apostolic aim and organization of the lay apostle under the direction⁴ of the hierarchy. Pius X once said:

"Even as Catholic Action has its own proper nature and end, so it must have its proper organization, unique, disciplined, and able to co-ordinate all other Catholic

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1. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., p. 66.
2. Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo: op. cit., p. 14.
3. The National Catholic Almanac for 1948, p. 411.
4. Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo: op. cit., p. 23.

forces."¹

Thus from the definition of Catholic Action is seen the necessity of an organization which is universal in its principles and at the same time adaptable to a variety of situations.

From this discussion of its characteristics it is apparent that official Catholic Action is something very precise, exact, and definite.² Again quoting Lelotte:

"Catholic Action is the general mobilization of all laymen of good will who organize among themselves in one and the same association and place themselves entirely and without restriction in dependence upon the diocesan authority in order to help in the realization of any important point of the apostolic mission."³

In summary, these are the chief characteristics of Catholic Action:

- (1) It is a mission for the salvation of souls.
- (2) Its specific end is to help the Roman Church in the exercise of her mission.
- (3) It aims ultimately to restore all the world to Christ.
- (4) It aims immediately to train individual militants.
- (5) This formation of its members has action in view and is a means, not an end.
- (6) It is an offensive.

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1. Pius X: Letter to Cardinal Segura, quoted by Civardi: op. cit., p. 78.
2. Eugene Geissler: op. cit., p. 7.
3. F. Lelotte: op. cit., p. 75.

- (7) It calls its members to action and also to prayer.
- (8) It is consecrated to a religio-social apostolate.
- (9) It is inspired by the dictates of Christian morals.
- (10) It is under the jurisdiction and direction of the church and her hierarchy.
- (11) It is dependent for its very existence on the hierarchy.
- (12) It uses the means indicated by the church, according to the demands of time and place.
- (13) It is universal in character, calling all men to a complete surrender to Christ and an active participation in the universal mission of the Church.
- (14) It is organized to attain its aims.
- (15) It is organized hierarchically.
- (16) It is, however, more a movement than an organization.
- (17) It is a movement of the laity.
- (18) It has lay directors.
- (19) Its leaders should be characterized by docility, self-denial, charity, and harmony.
- (20) It is the Roman Church's answer to a real need.
- (21) It is almost as indispensable as the priestly ministry.
- (22) Its field is as vast as that confided by Christ to the hierarchy of the church.
- (23) It is undergirded with good Catholic theory.

- (24) It is a definite something.
- (25) It is promulgated by the Popes.
- (26) It is on the march!

D. Summary

As far back as the reign of Leo XIII the Roman Catholic Church recognized the new needs of the developing industrial civilization. It formulated a plan for meeting these new requirements by organizing the laity and giving to laymen new privileges and duties on the basis of well-thought-out theory. From the theory grew the organization, which has developed and spread.

This movement has certain characteristics essential to its nature. It is a participation conformed to, dependent upon, and obedient to the Roman Catholic hierarchy, of which it is a part. It is a lay movement to which all laymen are called. It is an apostolate, aiming for the restoration of all things to Christ and His church. It has its source in the universal hierarchy and it is modeled after the hierarchy in organization, even to the point of having no elective offices.

This chapter then has shown that "the idea of the Kingdom of God constitutes the doctrinal basis for Catholic Action," since it seeks the Christian transfiguration of the whole range of human life, including the

social order.¹

The next chapter will study a more limited aspect of this movement.

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1. Charles Bruehl: op. cit., p. 16.

CHAPTER II

SPECIALIZED CATHOLIC ACTION ON CAMPUS

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SPECIALIZED CATHOLIC ACTION ON CAMPUS

A. Introduction

Having examined the general outline of Catholic Action, this thesis turns to its more specific interest - specialized Catholic Action on college and university campuses in the United States.

As has been stated, specialized Catholic Action originated with the formation of the Young Catholic Workers, or J.O.C.'s, in France and Belgium. It was introduced in the United States in 1935,¹ and it has been successfully followed since 1940 at the University of Notre Dame² and other schools in this country.

In this chapter the characteristics of this portion of the larger movement of Catholic Action will be considered. A brief description of the Young Christian Students will be followed by reports on the effectiveness of Y.C.S. to conclude this study.

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1. The National Catholic Almanac for 1948, p. 440.
2. Catholic Action Students of University of Notre Dame: Foreword to Eugene S. Geissler: op. cit., p. 3.

B. Characteristics of Specialized Catholic Action

Specialized Catholic Action is defined as an organized apostolate restricted to one social milieu. The aims of the movement in this country, according to the 1948 Almanac, are:

(1) To undertake the complete Christian formation of the wage earner, the professional man, and the student.

(2) To transform progressively and methodically the social life of these vocations.

(3) To create organizations which will defend and aid the individual pursuing the Christian way of life.¹

As a part of Catholic Action, this specialized movement is an apostolate, desiring to form consciences and to win others to Christ.

As a part of Catholic Action, this is a lay participation. However, because it restricts itself to one social milieu, only those laymen who are within the occupation or vocation of the organized group are called. Within the milieu, however, all are called into a single association of laymen organized under lay directors for as apostolate of like by like.

As a part of Catholic Action, it is obedient to the hierarchy of the church.

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1. The National Catholic Almanac for 1948, p. 440.

As a part of Catholic Action, it has a tremendous mission which is universal within the bounds of its own milieu.

As a part of Catholic Action, it is a corporate, organic structure. It is organized to accomplish its ends, but it is not an organization so much as it is a movement - a living, growing, active thing.

One essential feature of specialized Catholic Action is the cell inquiry method.¹ The J.O.C. formulated the principle of method which demands realism in all things,² and the cell inquiry technique, which has been so successful that it has been transplanted not only to other countries but also to other walks of life.³

A cell is a small group of approximately six to twelve persons, of the same age, sex, and occupation regularly coming together with a priest for Catholic Action. It proceeds on the fundamental principle of "everything by the layman and nothing without the priest."⁴

To avoid confusion it must be noted that there are two types of cells, the "leaders' cells" and the "team cells." The "Leaders' cells" are made up of mili-

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1. The National Catholic Almanac for 1948, p. 440.
2. F. Lelotte: op. cit., p. 124.
3. Catholic Action Students of Notre Dame: op. cit., p. 3.
4. Eugene S. Geissler: op. cit., p. 11.

tant members of Catholic Action who attend formal meetings and who embrace and seek to understand the whole Catholic Action program. This is the group that is meant when the word "cell" is used alone without a modifier. Then there are also the "team cells" which meet informally under a militant from the leaders' cell to discuss ways and means¹ of influencing those in their environment.

Characteristics of the cell group, as outlined by Fitzsimons and McGuire, are:

(1) Togetherness. The group pray together, study together, and act together.

(2) Smallness. The effectiveness of a small group has been clearly emphasized by Geissler:

"It is essential that the group be small, because the small group is psychologically and socially effective. In the small group everybody is important; everybody talks; everybody belongs; everybody develops; everybody leads. The small group takes the individual out of his isolation and fortifies him socially, morally, spiritually, and psychologically; it gives him courage; it gives him ideas; it checks him up; it gives him power."²

(3) Authority. The group receive a mandate from the Bishop.

(4) Parochial organization. The priest provides³ guidance and the means of grace.

To this list Geissler adds a fifth characteristic.

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1. Francis Wendell: op. cit., p. 59.

2. Eugene Geissler: op. cit., p. 11.

3. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., pp. 201-203.

(5) Organically organized. Each of the few militants in a group gathers about him a team of able and responsible team members who are able and want to assist Catholic Action. As team members develop in zeal and ability, a new cell is formed.¹

The cell meets every one or two weeks for an hour or an hour and a half and follows the following general pattern:

Prayer

"Check-Up": to determine how the group carried out the resolutions of the previous meeting and to discuss special obstacles.

Gospel: to acquaint the Catholic Actionist with "Him Whom he has to imitate" by a brief reading and discussion.

Liturgy: to give something of the story of Christ's Mystical Body.

Inquiry: to help the Catholic Actionists determine and execute prudent action.

Prayer.²

The Inquiry mentioned above is made up of three elements: observation, judgment, and action.

To observe is to look at things as they are, to get a picture of some part of daily life or some problem

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1. Eugene Geissler: op. cit., p. 11.
2. Francis Wendell: op. cit., pp. 61-67.
3. Eugene Geissler: op. cit., p. 12.

as it is. So during the first part of the Inquiry there is a report of the facts about some situation.

To judge is to set a standard against a thing as it is, to compare what is with what it ought to be. So in the second step of the Inquiry a decision is made as to what remedy for the situation is indicated.

To act is to decide on a plan of concrete action and to carry it out, to make the situation or thing more like it ought to be. So at this point the members together decide what they shall do and go forth to act.

This process is summarized by Geissler in these words:

"There is implied in this method of OBSERVE, JUDGE and ACT an analytical process of taking life apart piece by piece, and a synthetic process of setting it back together again according to the Christian standard of the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church."¹

He further explains:

"The purpose of the Inquiry Method is not only to obtain an adequate, permanent, and Christian solution for the actual problems of an environment...but also to engender in the Catholic Action man a sense of responsibility that will make him accept the work of apostleship."²

Lelotte states the purpose of Catholic Action meetings and publications thus:

(1) To make members more observant (partly by pointing out the complexity of the world in which they live)

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1. Eugene Geissler: op. cit., p. 12.
2. Ibid., p. 20.

and to gather the results of this observation.

(2) To clearly expound the Roman Catholic doctrine on the subject involved.

(3) To determine the manner of modifying the attitude of the milieu on the point in question and thus prepare for action.¹

(4) First of all, to launch an offensive.²

To summarize, the task of specialized Catholic Action is to make the members aware of the duties of their state in life, to bring them to fulfill them better, and to aid them to create around them an atmosphere which is more favorable because it is more Christian.

C. The Young Christian Students

As has been seen, the Young Christian Students is the student phase of specialized Catholic Action in this country, and it has for its aim the restoration of all things in Christ. "Student Social Responsibility", the report on the Y.C.S. Study Week in Cleveland last year declares:

"YCS is a movement of students within the student world--and of the student world within the framework of the social order itself. It aims very concretely at the total transformation of that segment of society in which it operates, in which its apostolate peculiar-

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1. F. Lelotte: op. cit., pp. 126-128.
2. Ibid., p. 133.

iarly and providentially lies; it aims at effecting a social, Christian revolution within the student world as the student contribution to the evolution of spirit required in order that the whole world be re-orientated in the direction set out for it by its Creator and restored to it by its Redeemer."¹

One student at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles explains:

"The responsibility of YCS is to make the school all that it should be, spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically...It aims for the achievement of a student community in which each student will be free to seek truth and assist others in seeking truth by means of a life of charity and with an educational system in which he learns his true responsibility to God and to the world community."²

Y.C.S. claims to share in the four important aspects of the specialized movements; vision of the new world, vital concern with the re-forming of social institutions, the motivation of Christ, and concrete and practicable means of action.³

The Mid-West is the heart of this specialized student movement. In Chicago a Y.C.S. office was opened with one full-time worker in the fall of 1947. Today there are two full-time workers whose first responsibility is to encourage students. This they do through personal contacts and letters, planned conferences, and a newsy mimeographed Y.C.S. Bulletin every month.

The overhead organization, as can be seen from

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1. Student Social Responsibility, p. 1.
2. Jean Pew: Personal Letter to writer, February 19, 1948.
3. Student Social Responsibility, p. 11.

the above, is quite loose, existing mainly as a clearing house of ideas and a source of inspiration. For Y.C.S. is not a top-heavy organization, but rather is:

"...a movement whose life lies...in the small group in an individual college who share an inquietude for the problems of their school and a sense of responsibility for that school, who together search and inquire into their environment to find the problems...The inquiry results not in the gathering of objective data but in an intense and total personal commitment, a Christian realism and experiential knowledge."¹

Although the basic unit of Y.C.S. is the group who share together and are the small community necessary to building the larger community,² on campus Y.C.S usually follows a rather formal plan. About five to ten students (always of the same sex) make up the group. If more than one group exists in the school, the leaders of each will meet together once in a while to discuss problems and to make plans. All the groups in a school are called a section, and the average number of groups in a school is probably about two or three.³ A monthly general meeting for all militants and team members is held for the purposes of co-ordinating activities, of stimulating those present through brief reports on what various cells are doing, and of fostering a Catholic Action spirit.⁴

At present the term "cell" is going out of use

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1. Student Social Responsibility, p. 11.
2. Ibid., p.11.
3. Jean Pew, op. cit.
4. Eugene Geissler: op. cit., p. 25.

in American schools because of its European flavor and is being replaced by "leaders' groups" or merely "groups".

Ideally, each member of the leaders' group has a team of as many as ten members upon whom he can depend to carry out various projects of the cells. Requirements for team membership are regular attendance at general meetings, willingness to work with others, and regular contributions to the treasury of the group.¹

In summary, there are team members under the leadership of individual militants who are members of the Y.C.S. group and work together under a group leader to effect the programs of the Inquiries. The group leaders, in cases where more than one group are active, meet in what is called a section to map and detail the group program.²

There is a great deal of emphasis placed on the fact that Y.C.S. on campus operates inconspicuously but not secretly. It does not try to attract attention to itself but instead seeks to work through other organizations and make them more alive to social problems. If it is not possible to get some other organization or channel of the school to tackle and solve some evident problem, the group itself will usually initiate action. The group

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1. Ibid., p. 24.
2. Ibid.

has no official position on the campus or the student council, but it does seek the approval of the administration and must have the assistance of a chaplain.¹

This year at the national Study Week, Student Social Responsibility was chosen as the general program for the year 1948-49. The seventy-five young leaders at Cleveland then felt there was an urgent need for defining the student's social responsibility to society and for stimulating his concern to fulfill his responsibility. This program seeks to go beyond "the exclusive preoccupation with problems within the student milieu...toward problems of the student milieu as a sector of the social whole."²

The spirit of Y.C.S. can be seen in the Introduction to the Study Week Report:

"Our Study Week and our program require for their understanding a deep penetration of the spirit in which we approach the apostolate and the particular field of work for the year. We are called to be more than reporters, statisticians, and pressurizers: we are called to be apostles, to be anxious, to change, to love, to suffer. The movement is alive; it lives by its spirit; its spirit is the love of God - Father, Word, and Spirit - for man, His unruly creature. In a sense, social responsibility is the total program of Y.C.S., whatever year it is whatever form it takes. It has humanitarian connotations, based on the natural solidarity of mankind and the providential character of the age in which we live - which underlines our opportunity and duty and vocation. But its root is

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1. Jean Pew: op. cit.
2. Student Social Responsibility, p. 2.

deeper and more startling; it derives from the (literally) earth-shaking fact that Christ The Head of the Mystical Body...has need of the members. More than by command, more than by dogma, we are all members of the Body of Christ, and He is the head, and He has need of us."¹

The Young Christian Student has chosen a large task and a great mission for himself.

D. The Young Christian Student in Action on Representative Campuses

Miss Joanne Gealy, Vice-President of Y.C.S., was unable to give data on the extent or effectiveness of Y.C.S. on campuses in this country, but she suggested contacts with a representative group of Young Christian Students leaders: Les Reitz of De Paul University in Chicago, Bob Reynolds of Notre Dame University in South Bend, Adele Mrakovic of Mundelein College in Chicago, Jean Pew of Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, and Tom Fleming of Fordham College in New York. To this list were added John McKay and Bob Kneille of St. Louis University in St. Louis because of the writer's personal contact with the work there.²

An examination of the answers received from these leaders will be of interest and help in under-

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1. Ibid., p. 3.
2. Copies of the letters from these young people are in the appendix.

standing Catholic Action on campus. As far as possible, these reports will briefly summarize the history of specialized Catholic Action on that campus, its present organization and program, some of its accomplishments, and some personal comment of the one who sent the information to the writer of this thesis.

1. De Paul University, Chicago, Illinois

The one cell there was discontinued at the start of this school year "to attack specific needs." Mr. Rietz observes that "often Y.C.S. people and Y.C.S. results show up in quite un-planned for ways and places." Y.C.S. training and inspiration lead young people into fields of service.¹

2. Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana

Catholic Action has been organized at Notre Dame since 1940. However, just two years ago a new organizational set-up according to colleges replaced the former organization according to residence halls, because it was felt there were more interests in common among men who attended the same classes and wanted to go into the same general type of work after graduation than there were among those who happened to live in the same halls.

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1. Les Rietz: Personal letter to writer, February 27, 1947.

Mr. Reynolds writes:

"So far, it has worked out well. We seem to be able to have a greater influence this way, and it certainly gives a chance to tackle larger problems."¹

There are thirteen leaders' groups at Notre Dame; three in the College of Commerce, three in Arts and Letters, one in Engineering, one in Science, one in Law, and four in the Freshman class. There are approximately 110 members and three active chaplains. In each of the five colleges and in the freshman class an effort is made to have a section composed of two or more groups. The leaders of the groups are officers of the section and meet once a week to co-ordinate activities. Twice monthly the officers of each of the sections plus the president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer of "the whole outfit" meet with the chaplain in what is called a Federation meeting, where there is a consideration of the larger questions of projects which affect the whole university and of relations of Y.C.S. with the administration and with other campus organizations.

The freshmen groups are given a training year concerned primarily with the fundamentals of specialized Catholic Action and of education and are then sent into whichever group their course of studies naturally leads

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1. Bob Reynolds: Personal letter to writer, February 16, 1949.

them. The other groups are following the current program of Student Social Responsibility. Since the program stresses responsibility in politics, labor, and economics, the Commerce groups at the moment are studying government's responsibility and role in society, the Taft-Hartley Law, and capitalism as an economic system, each of their three groups taking one of these topics; the science group is discussing socialized medicine; and the engineers group held a forum on the various parties before the November elections.

Two outstanding achievements of Y.C.S. at Notre Dame are Concord, which is a magazine for the purpose of spreading the ideas of Y.C.S. to all students, and Fides Publishers, which was established by graduates for the publishing of books for the apostolate.

In closing, Mr. Reynolds said:

"I think your thesis would be far from complete if it stuck to organization and numbers, because Y.C.S. is much more than that. Despite all its failures, and there have been many, it is still the only student movement I know of which is capable of turning out formed leaders, and the only one which is deeply worried about students and their problems. To put the welfare of others before your own convenience is a rare thing in these times, it seems to me. To work for an ideal which you never quite attain is not fun. And all we seem to learn as we go on is that in the final analysis it is Christ, not us, who is going to restore the student world."¹

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1. Bob Reynolds: op. cit.

3. Mundelein College, Chicago, Illinois

Y.C.S. was started at Mundelein by one girl who had "true Y.C.S. spirit." She led and indoctrinated her group properly and created in them much of her spirit for the movement, but after she left school the group lacked a leader capable of handling and leading the students who had previously been very interested and active. As a result, although Y.C.S. grew in numbers through the years, it declined in quality until its members "just floundered around" during the last few years.

So Mundelein, too, is presently reorganizing its groups with new leadership. There are five groups in the school with about forty people in the entire section. Most of them meet once every two weeks. Each group is now working out its own inquiries, hoping thus to avoid the lack of initiative and understanding which developed before when the problems and recommended remedies were presented to the group, which was then expected to act on them. The group leaders meet once a month to discuss problems and other business and to plan for the monthly section meeting. This large section meeting is attended by all the group members and their team members each month.

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1. Adele Mrakovic: Personal letter to writer, February 13, 1949.

These Catholic Actionists attend daily Mass and Communion and meditate on the daily liturgy that is the Proper of the Mass. At present they are also studying Wendell's "The Formation of the Lay Apostle". The groups try to stay in line with other campus organizations.

Miss Mrakovic confesses:

"We are a very long way from perfection and it is only through our prayers and persistent efforts that Y.C.S. will ever exist as it should...I only regret that I do not have much much more to say about things we have accomplished. Maybe in ten more years we can be more proud of our action."¹

4. Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, California

A secular priest from Los Angeles introduced the Young Christian Students unto the campus of Immaculate Heart College about 1942 and remained as its chaplain for a short while until a sister on the faculty of the college took over the group. In 1947 this group began contacting other groups in the city and in the midwest; they consequently were much strengthened.

This year there are five Y.C.S. groups there, one in each of the four classes and one among the resident students. Each cell has about six or seven members.

Specific projects worked on this year include inaugurating a big sister program, beginning a community rosary, leading the two sororities of the school to an

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1. Ibid.

attitude of service to the school and the community, sponsoring class parties to increase friendliness, and making students who were of age aware of their responsibility to vote in the November elections last year.

The groups have wrought changes in attitude in individual students and in the whole student body. The school paper now attempts to put over the ideas of the apostolate and of social responsibility. The student council is bringing Y.C.S. principles to bear upon the type of programs and lectures they plan. A realization of their inadequacy for meeting problems has resulted in a notable deepening of spirituality in many Y.C.S. members. There has been an increase in the attitude of service and love among the students as a whole.

Writes Miss Pew:

"As to whether Y.C.S. is achieving its purpose or reaching its goal, that is a hard thing to say. The ultimate aim of specialized Catholic Action is a perfect society, an ideal world community, and though we can strive for it we know that perfection is not possible in this life. However, many things have definitely been accomplished on the individual campuses yet sometimes in a way that you are not aware it is Y.C.S. working."¹

5. Fordham College, New York, New York

Tom Fleming has written a "few remarks on a cell's quiet demise," for there is no longer a Y.C.S. cell

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1. Jean Pew: op. cit.

at Fordham. He points out:

"It was not discouragement or spiritual inertia or anemia, but a questioning over a three month period, of the very method and principle at the basis of a student cell."

The cell failed primarily because of the feeling among its members that there is an intellectual life and a cell life but it is impossible to live both and that they must choose the intellectual life. Other major reasons for failure were the attitudes of the administration and the cell toward one another--that of mutual contempt, the tendency of the members to diffuse their energies because of the lack of a definite policy for choosing and initiating action, and the failure to make new contacts and extend the group.¹

6. St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri

The first meeting of a Catholic Action cell at St. Louis University was held January 26, 1947. In their first Inquiry they observed the need to understand Catholic Action and the means to its goal, judged themselves to be responsible to enter upon this work, assigned reports to be given at their next meeting, and elected John McKay, Jr., their leader.² From this beginning the group has progressed with activity and interest increasing, especially

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1. Tom Fleming, Personal letter to writer, March 11, 1949.
2. Minutes of Y.C.S. group at St. Louis University, January 26, 1947.

after the first year of faithfulness.

However, there is still only one cell in the immense school. Its ten or twelve members represent quite different environments and so attempts to work on things as a group have not been appreciably successful. Secretary Bob Knille writes, "The meetings have been more or less a comparing of notes of what has been done individually."¹ Since October of 1947 this single cell has joined sections from other colleges in the area in monthly meetings.

Activities have included picnics, breakfasts following Mass, discussion groups, study of encyclicals, the collection of clothing for relief, a Holy Hour to pray for the Italian elections, retreats, and a Great Books program.² The members have been active on the problems of student housing, racial discrimination, prayer before class, a book exchange, and the "selling"³ of philosophy, Catholic literature, and daily Mass. Members were frequently sent to the Chicago office and to the national and international student meetings and conferences of Y.C.S. to discuss problems and to be indoctrinated or instructed. As on most campuses, the group has worked through other organizations whenever

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1. Bob Knille: Personal letter to writer, January, 1949.
2. John McKay: Personal interview, December 27, 1948
3. Minutes of Y.C.S. group at St. Louis University.

possible, never attracting attention to itself. An example is the city-wide May Day Mass Rally for students which Y.C.S. members sponsored through the local chapter of the National Federation of Catholic College Students last May.¹

With great enthusiasm their first leader writes:

"Catholic Action is not a technique, it is a complete reorientation of our whole way of life. - It's dynamite! It means essentially the total integration of Christ and Christian principles into every field, thought and action. It is St. Augustine's 'City of God' taking flesh as it took flesh soon after the fall of Rome."²

E. Effectiveness of Y.C.S.

In this crusade to restore all things to Christ by means of the laity, the Roman Church has recognized the law that the will cannot proceed but must follow the understanding.³ Further, she recognizes the difference in ability to respond to knowledge. Civardi speaks for her:

"We must adapt our moral lessons to the conditions of life and psychological requirements of each, since duties differ according to state of life, and different are the paths to perfection according to individual situations."⁴

How effective has the Roman Church been in activating its

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1. John McKay; Personal interview, December 7, 1948.
2. John McKay; Letter addressed to writer, October, 1948.
3. Civardi: op. cit., p. 21.
4. Ibid., p. 38.

students by indoctrination and graded projects?

The literature on Catholic Action indicates what some of its appeals are. First, it gives the Roman Catholic layman a cause to fight for, challenging him with "heroic opportunities."¹ Catholic Actionists have the task of shaping "new Christendoms throughout the whole world."² It is the lay apostolate that must face the new paganism of our day as it did the paganism of the first century³ and convert it again to Christianity. Pius himself once declared that Catholic Action "is almost as indispensable as the Priestly ministry."⁴

To university students Pope Pius XI says very pointedly:

"University men and women are certainly not on the borders...but hold a place which is, in a certain sense, the first...From among the university men and women, therefore, the Holy Father is waiting for a good general staff for Catholic Action."⁵

Then the Catholic Actionist is assured of his own importance as an individual. "If each Catholic is winning his own little world, then the whole world is being won. And how else can it be won?"⁶ Each individ-

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1. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. ix.
4. Pius XI: Discourse of December 4, 1924, quoted by Lelotte: op. cit., p. 29.
5. Pius XI: Discourse of December 22, 1935, quoted by The National Catholic Almanac for 1945, p. 402.
6. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., p. 73.

ual is important and must do his best. This sense of personal importance is emphasized by the statement that Catholic Action is not an activity for a mediocre individual¹ but for one who is willing to be prepared.

For this work the individual is promised grace. Furthermore, he is assured of the possibility of victory. "According to the inspired Word of God, sanctity is a distinct possibility and not a nebulous probability,"² teaches Wendell. Also, "in God's providence, there is always an answer to a problem, there are always people to answer a need."³

Catholic Action also offers the individual the strength of unity. The sense of belonging to a family "vast as is the world."⁴ The Catholic sense of universal solidarity and renunciation of spiritual egoism and religious individualism⁵ is a great appeal.

The best means at hand for evaluating these appeals and determining their effectiveness is a study of the letters which furnished most of the information for this chapter.

The greatness of the task set out for them appears to be the biggest appeal for these students.

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1. John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire: op. cit., p. 26.
2. Francis Wendell: op. cit., p. 15.
3. Student Social Responsibility, p. 38.
4. Luigi Civardi: op. cit., p. 104.
5. Ibid., p. 101.

Mr. Reynolds speaks of Y.C.S. as the only student movement he knows of which is capable of training leaders to be Christian and which is concerned about leading students to put the welfare of others before their own convenience. The ideal set before them is unattainable by them but still demands their best efforts.

Miss Pew also speaks of the great responsibilities of Y.C.S.; it is to answer problems of the student milieu, to change anything that is unchristian, to make the school all it should be, and to make the whole student body aware of its responsibility. Miss Pew, like Bob Reynolds, realizes the impossibility of attaining the ultimate aim of specialized Catholic Action, which aim is "a perfect society, an ideal world community."

Mr. McKay sees our secular culture on the brink of self-destruction and in need of being saved by Christianity for the good of the human race. The task of Catholic Action is the great one of completely reorienting our whole way of life and of making Christ and Christian principles an integral part of every field, thought, and action. Miss Pew also thinks of Catholic Action as a way of life to its members.

Miss Mrakovic and Mr. Fleming realize the importance of good leadership and proper training.

The very essence of Catholic Action is so

attractive to John McKay and Adele Mrakovic that they declare that to know it is to love.it.

But there is a dark side to the picture also. Of the five schools said to furnish a representative picture of the Young Christian Students forty per cent no longer have any Y.C.S. group on campus. Apparently at De Paul it was felt that Y.C.S. did not express itself concretely enough to satisfy its members. While acknowledging that much inspiration is engendered by specialized Catholic Action on campus, Mr. Rietz advises that the De Paul cell was disbanded so its members might attack specific needs in other fields. The greatness of the task of restoring all things to Christ was appreciated and attractive, but the students did not find Y.C.S. too well adapted to the accomplishment of that end and they left the movement.

Mr. Fleming gives the following reasons for the demise of Fordham's cell this year:

(1) The cell members decided cell life interferred with intellectual life and that the latter was more important, at least for themselves.

(2) Mutual contempt existed between the administration and the militants and prevented any real program.

(3) There was no clear policy regarding the action to be pursued so that energies were diffused and therefore ineffective.

(4) They failed to grow through the addition of new members.

So the group at Fordham reached the conclusion that "the cell has no necessary existence in Catholic schools."

One of the sections is presently reorganizing their work in an effort to bring its groups to life after many years of a degenerate program. At Mundelein the lack of interest, initiative, and action can be traced back to inadequate leadership and improper training. They plan to start from scratch now and build up quality rather than quantity.

The other two of the five schools and the added St. Louis University seem to be going ahead with their former program. However, they too should be re-examined for weaknesses.

St. Louis University still has only one group. The members there appear more interested in their own individual apostolates than in an official Y.C.S. program. Although they recognize their heterogeneous character and know specialized Catholic Action urges small, homogeneous groups, they have not divided.

Notre Dame is the oldest and largest of the sections in this country. According to Mr. Reynolds, their present program involves working on government's responsibility and role in society, the Taft-Hartley law, capitalism as an economic system, and socialized medicine, all of

which appear to be more subjects for discussion than for action. Perhaps they depend upon the publication, Concord, to assume their responsibility to be active through its publicizing of the findings of the study groups at Notre Dame. But that does not live up to Y.C.S. requirements as they are stated in their October 1948 Bulletin:

"The distinctive YCS act is precisely that - ACTION. We get together to arrive at a common action on the concrete, objective situation of our school. There is no other reason for the YCS meeting. We can do such a thorough observation in our inquiry that every detail of social psychology contributing to a problem is discovered and analyzed to the nth degree. We can judge as though the pope himself were judging.

BUT UNLESS THIS IS A BASIS FOR ACTION IT IS NOT A YCS INQUIRY."¹

The activity at Immaculate Heart College, as reported by Miss Pew, seems to come closest to what Y.C.S. should be. The dean of the college there remarked on the increase in the attitude among the students of "what can I do for the other girl" and she attributed this change to the Young Christian Students there.

F. Summary

In this chapter specialized Catholic Action has been found to be a part of Catholic Action and therefore an apostolate of the laity, obedient to the hierarchy of

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1. YCS Bulletin, October, 1948, p. 5.

the church and participating in its tremendous mission while organized into a corporate, organic structure for the purpose of accomplishing its ends. It is differentiated from the more general movement by its restriction to a single milieu of workmen, professional men or students and by its use of the cell inquiry method. This method involves observation of the milieu, judgment as to its conformity with Christian standards and as to what action is warranted because of this, and action intended to make the situation more like it ought to be. All three of these elements must form a part of the group activity if it is to be real specialized Catholic Action.

The Young Christian Students, the student phase of specialized Catholic Action, was found to have a great mission, an informal national office in Chicago, and some twenty or more colleges and universities affiliated with it. The organization of the teams and groups on campus was noted. This year's program, Student Social Responsibility, was briefly summarized.

The work of representative Y.C.S. groups of greater or lesser maturity were then reviewed for their history, present program, and recent accomplishments. Two of the five to whom the writer was referred by the Chicago office were reported disbanded. One was reorganizing this year. Two were continuing their program of past years, as is St. Louis University also.

Notre Dame, where the first Y.C.S. group was established in 1940, has thirteen leaders' groups. Mundelein and Immaculate Heart colleges each have five. St. Louis University has only one group and that one not very homogeneous.

The appeal most frequently mentioned by these students in their letters was that of the magnitude of the task and its consequent challenge.

The chief causes of ineffectiveness in these groups were failure to make concrete and clear the means of working toward the goal of a Christianized milieu, misunderstanding of the doctrine, and poor leadership.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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The Roman Catholic Church is aggressively seeking to make all the United States Roman Catholic. Realizing the inadequacy of the clergy in this secularized culture, she has appealed to the laity. Laymen responsive to this call of the church are organized into Catholic Action, which is defined as the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy.

This technique of a highly organized laity originated a little more than eighty years ago during the pontificate of Leo XIII, who sought to reconcile Catholicism and the modern world. In 1922 Pope Pius XI defined and established Catholic Action and made it his collaborator in the work of his office. Of course, the idea spread to other countries and finally to the United States.

Essentials of this lay movement are an apostolic aim and an obedient dependency on the hierarchy.

Catholic Action has been permitted to take various forms depending on the situation in which it arises. One such form is specialized Catholic Action, which is an organized apostolate restricted to one social milieu. Its distinguishing feature is the cell inquiry method. This involves a small homogeneous group who meet

frequently to report their observations of some aspect of their milieu, to determine what conditions should obtain in that situation, and to carry out whatever action is decided upon as necessary to make the milieu more Christian.

One species of specialized Catholic Action is the Young Christian Students. This organization was studied and its program on representative campuses was reported on. It was discovered that two groups have recently disbanded, one is reorganizing for more effective work, and three are continuing their former program.

Of the various appeals which specialized Catholic Action presents to students in Roman Catholic universities and colleges, the one which was mentioned almost to the exclusion of all others in the letters from young Catholic Actionists was the challenge because of the immensity of the work they are called upon to do. Underlying this was an appreciation of the fact that the work is Christ's and only He can accomplish the Christianizing of the student milieu and then ultimately the whole of society.

Chief among the causes of ineffectiveness in these groups were improper indoctrination and poor leadership.

With all the young people studied there seems to be a sincere desire to live Christ-centered lives, aggressively to seek to combat secularism in their present student milieu and later in whatever milieu is theirs, and

to win others to such a life of dedication to Christ.
Such purposes and the zeal with which they are pursued
are commendable.

APPENDIX

Dear Ruth,

*... Believe me you have taken on a tremendous task, or so it appears to me. In order to understand Catholic Action in any part, it is necessary to understand the Christian Revolution that is now taking place and the new social order that is going to come to life. To attempt to understand C.A. as only an isolated movement, involving certain techniques will only give a misconception of its true nature. As background reading I would recommend "Growth and Decline" by Cardinal Sularde and "True Humanism" by Maritain. Get all the Papal Encyclicals you can get your hands on -- this is where it all begins with Leo XIII. Catholic University in Washington has developed a good school of social science, you might write to them for more books, etc. Of course you are primarily interested in C.A. in Universities and Colleges, which is a help, but you must get the whole picture first.

C.A. is not a technique, it is a complete reorientation of our whole way of life. -- It's dynamite! It means essentially the total integration of Christ and Christian principles into every field, thought, and action. It is St. Augustine's "City of God" taking flesh as it took flesh soon after the fall of Rome. St. Augustine took the classical culture of the dying ancient world, infused it with the vitality of Christianity and found his City of God.

Today our secular culture is on the brink of self-destruction; it must be saved by Christianity for the good of the human race. It may be too late even now, but I don't think so. As the invaders from the North brought Rome to her feet, so also will Communism bring modern civilization to hers. I can only see the church surviving, as it did after the fall of Rome.

You would do very well to write to:
 Young Christian Students
 3 East Chicago Ave.
 Chicago, Ill.

Explain your problem, and have them send you all the information they can. As you know that's where Concord, the national student magazine is published. But they are so close to the work that I doubt if they see it in its totality. They can, however, give you some idea of the student situation.

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* Personal contents of first paragraph omitted.

In New York, Father Wendle is the man you want to see. Look him up in the Catholic directory. Mazie Ward of Sheed & Ward can give you some leads if she's back in New York. Friendship House in Harlem might be a good place to get some help. By all means visit the Catholic Worker on Mott St., New York.

Savardi's "Manual of Catholic Action" is a classic, so is Preist Workers in Germany". But the more of C.A. that you can see, smell, touch and love, the more it will really mean to you. Fanfani's "Catholicism, Protestantism & Capitalism" would be worth reading, if you can find it.

Your second chapter - on St. Louis University C.A. will be a simple problem once I give you the details at Christmas. But your third - psychological principles will become clear when you see that each puts on the new man who is Christ and lives in Christ. It might be better to say, that instead of psychological principles, that the principles are supernatural. That the individual becomes an instrument of God's will. But more of that at Christmas.

Write if I can help in any further way.

John

92 Larina Ave.
 Toronto 3, Ont.
 Canada
 Ooctober 1948

Young Christian Students
 3 East Chicago Avenue
 Chicago 11, Illinois

Miss Ruth Sallwasser
 235 East 49th Street
 New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Miss Sallwasser,

I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed; office work in the YCS office has piled up rather heavily. As far as the "program" of Catholic Action in the Universities is concerned, the best source of information should be Student Social Responsibility, Program for YCS, 1948-9, published by Fides Press, 325 Lincoln Way West, South Bend, Indiana, and costing \$1.00.

There have been several articles in CONCORD, either for 1947-8, or the current year, by present or past leaders of the YCS movement, which have dealt with the place and program and purpose of the movement, as these leaders have seen it. I regret that I cannot refer you to specific articles, but in any case the magazine as a whole contains a great deal of information and thought about the movement, by movement people. CONCORD offices are also at 325 Lincoln Way West, South Bend.

There is no data that I know of on the extent or effectiveness of YCS on university campuses. YCS groups, of greater or lesser maturity, exist on many campuses in the country: I would suggest you contact Les Reitz, De Paul University, Chicago; Bob Reynolds, Notre Dame U; Adele Mrakovic, Mundelein College, Chicago; Jean Pew, Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles; Tom Fleming, Fordham College, New York; for local pictures, This is a relatively representative group.

Let us know if there is any other information we can give you.

Sincerely,

Joanne Gealy December 13, 1948
 Vice-President, YCS

January 20, 1949

Dear Ruth:

As you will see, these are the minutes of a rather stumbling and ineffective group. I suppose some of the reasons for the inactivity are lack of time and diversity of the group. The latter reason is probably the most important: the school here is immense, as you know, and the 10 or 12 persons in the group are representatives of some quite different environments (one fellow does not even go to St. L. U.). Because of these different contacts, different colleges, etc. attempts to work on things as a group have not been successful to any appreciable extent. The meetings have been more or less a comparing of notes of what has been done individually. Maybe from YCS at 3 East Chicago Ave., you could get the names and addresses of a few secretaries of groups in other cities from whom you could borrow minutes of meetings.

Sincerely,

Bob Knille

*Gift of Author**MAY 1 26 / 49**26997*

February 13, 1949
Sunday

Dear Ruth:

I hope I didn't waste too much time in gathering all this information for you, but I wanted to get as much material for you as I possibly could. I shall proceed to tell you a little about YCS at Mundelein College.

We are reorganizing our cells at Mundelein right now because of the lack of interest, initiative, and action on the part of the kids in the movement. We keep running into barriers such as a lack of time, not understanding the years program or seeing problems to which it could be applied, and criticism from the faculty as well as from the student body. We found that we ourselves were lacking in spirituality and proper indoctrination on YCS principles and because of this we were not able to work as YCS people. We have now set up a program for revitalizing and reorganizing the section we had at Mundelein. There are five cells in the school with about 40 people in the entire section. In order to ease up on the time element some of us are meeting once every two weeks rather than the customary weekly meeting while others of us are trying to find more convenient times for meetings. Rather than working out inquiries that we received direct from the federation heads we are going to work out our inquiries ourselves within our own cell groups in order that we must find the problems and then proceed to plan our action accordingly, with each and every girl taking a part in that process and discussing the issues to be discussed. Previously the problems and actions were presented to the group and they were to act on them. This made for a lack of initiative and understanding. We are planning to study a pamphlet entitled "The Formation of the Lay Apostle" by Father Wendell which seems to be the best one on the subject. At our meetings we will study, with our chaplains, the common of the Mass. We attend daily Mass and Communion and meditate on the daily liturgy that is the Proper of the Mass.

As well as our small cell meetings we have large section meetings which are attended once a month by all the cell members as well as team members. In addition the cell leaders meet once a month to plan for the section meeting and to discuss problems, talk over criticisms, or any other business that must be taken care of in the cell or has arisen from the cell meetings.

In planning our actions for the cells we try to stay in line with other campus groups such as working on the mock election

which was sponsored by the League of Women Voters. Here we tried to bring people in to vote, talk to kids about the candidates, and to make them realize the necessity of voting. I can't give you much in the way of figures or percentages because of Mundelein's lack of action so far this year. As explained above we have had many difficulties due mainly to the kids failing to be real YCS kids. Year after year we have grown worse. This can be brought out in a discussion of the history of YCS at Mundelein. It was started in Mundelein by one girl who had true YCS spirit but who had no leadership following her. While she was in school she led the group, indoctrinated them properly and created in them much of the spirit she had for the movement. After she left the group lacked a leader who was capable of handling and leading the people who had previously done so much work. As a result, year by year YCS grew in number but not in quality until during these past two, three years the people in YCS have just floundered around because they have not had the proper leadership and training. Our plan is to start from scratch now and build up our quality rather than our quantity.

I have enclosed one program kit and three Bulletins which should give you enough material on our Student Social Responsibility Program for this year. The Bulletins are monthly publications which are sent to Cell Leaders and Section Leaders plus anyone else who subscribes. It contains YCS news and views.

Since I had so little information to give you on projects and actions carried on at Mundelein I contacted our Federation Head who is a student at another of Chicago's Catholic Women Colleges, Rosary. Rosary has been the most active school in our Federation this year. I have enclosed the letter she wrote to me. Perhaps the fact that it was written to me and that Katie expected me to rewrite it will give you a more honest and sincere idea of how YCS operates in our Chicago schools. We are a very long way from perfection and it is only through our prayers and persistent efforts that YCS will ever exist as it should. I sincerely hope that I have been of some help to you. I only regret that I do not have much more to say about things we have accomplished. Maybe in ten more years we can be more proud of our action.

May God Help You,

Adele Mrakovic

Rosary College
River Forest, Illinois

Where to begin, Adele?

The following is a very brief, short, and most stinky outline of Rosary doings.

The theory and purpose of YCS I leave to you, but suggest you send her a program kit, old inquiries, etc. since any long narrative will no doubt be ignored as she will write it up her own way.

The overall purpose or plan of attack at Rosary is to make every student aware of her individual and indispensable contribution to the student world and as such develop her to accept and fulfill her position as a citizen of the Mystical Body.

Some of the means to this end attempted at Rosary include a student sponsored book exchange which facilitates book exchanges, and cheaper, too. The erection of the Kulture Kanteen, a sort of information booth open during lunch periods three days a week. It serves as a reading and entertainment guide, all criticisms posted contributed by girls. Theater and radio tickets are obtained by YCS girls as a service to their members. Organization of Student Leadership Conference quarterly meeting (weekend) of all club officers, etc. to coordinate all school activities and keep a balance and plan school calendar.

For house students (seniors) obtained all night lights, if desired; some smoking privileges. Distributed tickets for political rallies, outside speakers - on candidate, literature and publicity on all issues, and finally an election. Speaking of rallies, made a big to-do about last spring's SG elections. Used community singing, parades, etc. and the turn out was 99 44/100 %. First time in history.

The Labor Institute, actually enaugurated by the Dean, planned, supported by the YCS. Developed interest in Catholic Labor Alliance and have a steady 5 or 6 people helping out.

Socially, have acquired a series of mixers which have been held or not according to school morale. Have a minor scale date bureau for dances which proves (the dates, that is) more interesting than romantic.

All of this work has not been that merely of YCS. We have tried to include several groups and have supported others who have taken the initiative.

The work outlined is the result, still incomplete, of four years sweat, toil, and heart-break. Remind our thesis-writer, too, that this is purely one side of the picture and that even as presented it looks better than it always operates. Remind her, too, that the Lord's Unfinished Business has been left in human, all too human hands---- and wish her our luck and prayers.

Hope this helps.

Katie

325 Lincoln Way West
South Bend, Indiana
February 16th

Dear Ruth,

I'm afraid this won't be much of a letter, because I'm in the midst of CONCORD's April issue at the moment, and am way behind in my studies and in my own thesis, which is due the 14th of April, but I'll take a shot at answering your questions and let you judge. If you want more details, perhaps a later letter would clear that up, but right now I'm going to have to give you whatever I can put down in a hurry.

We have cells organized according to colleges, with three in the College of Commerce; three in Arts & Letters, one in Engineering, one in Science, one in Law, and then four in the Freshman class. We usually keep the frosh groups engaged in a combination training-action stage, then send them into whichever group their course of studies naturally leads them into. This training year, the frosh groups are concerned with fundamentals of YCS and of education, too, such things as curriculum, study habits, choice of a major course of studies, etc--the YCS fundamentals for themselves, the other stuff issuing into action that affects the whole freshman class.

The other groups are following the program which Notre Dame YCS representatives helped to plan at the national Study Week in Cleveland last June, viz., the "social responsibility" program designed to show students their responsibilities to other members of society, both during their student years and after graduation. The program has been developed particularly along lines of responsibilities in politics, labor and economics. Commerce groups at the moment for example, are working on 1) government's responsibility and role in society, 2) the Taft-Hartley law, and 3) capitalism as an economic system. Each of the three Commerce groups has one of these topics. The Engineers group had a forum of professors explain the stands of the various parties before the general elections in November, and tomorrow nite the Commerce group which is studying Taft-Hartley is presenting a study of the law by a professor of law and two professors of economics who hold opposite views, so that all angles of the law will be covered. Our Science group is working on socialized medicine, or health insurance. In each of these inquiries, the aim is first to find out what the students' attitudes on these various things are, then to seek to put on some action which will make (or help make, at least) those attitudes Christian. I'm sure you know about the Observe, Judge and Act

phases of the Inquiry so that I don't have to go into that here.

As for the organization of the cells themselves. In the first place, the term "cell" is going out of use as being too European. Cells are now called "leaders' groups" or simply "groups." In each of the five colleges and in the freshman class our aim is to have a section, composed of two or more groups. Group leaders are officers of the section, and these leaders meet once a week to coordinate activities and formation of groups and group members in the section. Twice monthly the officers of each of the sections, plus the President, Vice-President and Secretary and Treasurer of the whole outfit meet with the Chaplain in what is called a Federation meeting; we try to keep these meetings clear of as much detail as we can to give us time to consider the larger questions of projects which affect the whole university, of relations between YCS and the administration, between YCS and other campus organizations, etc.

We've been organized here at Notre Dame since 1940, but the new organizational setup (according to colleges) is only a year or two old. After trying the organization according to residence halls (in which most of the students live) we felt there were more interests in common among men who attended the same classes and wanted to go into the same general type of work after graduation than there were among them because they happened to live in the same halls. So far, it has worked out well. We seem to be able to have a greater influence this way, and it certainly gives a chance to tackle larger problems.

I have no figures, Ruth. I suppose we have about 110 members and 3 active chaplains. I could perhaps fill this in for you more at a later time. As for publications, the Notre Dame YCS began in 1940, right after the organization got under way, to publish, for Notre Dame YCS members, the "CAS Leaders' Bulletin." (CAS standing for Catholic Action Students, as we were then known.) Through succeeding years, beginning CA groups at other schools became interested in this bulletin for use in their own work, and we built up, eventually, a circulation of about 600, monthly. The publication went thru a number of changes of name ("Leaders' Bulletin" to "CAS Leader" to "YCS Leader") and a number of changes in form--it began as a mimeographed ten-page thing, then became a printed pamphlet-form publication, then finally, when we ceased publication in June of 1947, to a 16-page, illustrated color job. In June of 1947, at the national Study Week, we had a discussion on publications, and decided that most of the functions of the "Leader" could be handled by a mimeographed bulletin sent to YCS leaders

monthly from the soon-to-be-formed office in Chicago, and that we needed a magazine to spread the ideas of YCS (not to get more members) to all students. Hence, without a dime in the bank but a multitude of prayers and good will, we began CONCORD, which is now drawing close to the end of its second year of publication. Also, a group of former Notre Dame YCS men, one of the now a teacher, another in industrial journalism, still another in the grad school at the University, began Fides Publishers, who have published many books for the apostolate, and information on which you can get by writing to them at the same address as the one on this letterhead.

Don't know how much help this will be, Ruth. Forgive the bad typing job, but I've had about a million things on my mind since I started this letter, and my reflexes aren't what they usually are. If there is more help I can give, I'd be happy to, if you can wait a week or so until the next issue of the magazine is out and until I've had a chance to catch up on some other correspondence and get some reading done on my thesis.

Would enjoy seeing a copy of the thesis when it's done, if it's not too much to ask. If it would mean typing another copy, forget it. I'm well aware that I'm not the only busy person in the student community. You should get from Fides, if you don't already have a copy, the "Students' Social Responsibility Program", which is actually a report of our last year's Study Week. It contains a good deal which this letter has left out--especially the spirit of YCS. I think your thesis would be far from complete if it stuck to organization and numbers, because YCS is much more than that. Despite all its failures, and there have been many, it is still the only student movement I know of which is capable of turning out formed leaders, and the only one which is deeply worried about students and their problems. To put the welfare of others before your own convenience is a rare thing in these times, it seems to me. To work for an ideal which you never quite attain is not fun. And all we seem to learn as we go on is that in the final analysis it is Christ, not us, who is going to restore the student world.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bob Reynolds, Editor

February 19, 1949

Dear Ruth,

I will do my best to supply you with the information you want regarding YCS. The Young Christian Students is the student phase of specialized Catholic Action and has for its aim the restoration of all things in Christ. The responsibility of YCS is to make the school all that it should be, spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically. It operates in the student milieu as it is based on the principle of the apostolate of the like by the like. It is the responsibility of doctors to Christianize the medical profession, laborers the working class, and likewise students the student world. It aims for the achievement of a student community in which each student will be free to seek truth and assist others in seeking truth by means of a life of charity and with an educational system in which he learns his true responsibility to God and to the world community. I have said that YCS seeks to restore all things to Christ. It does this by carefully examining the student milieu where it exists and locating anything that is unchristian or disordered in this milieu. Anything is unchristian which does not conform to the proper order of things, where the body and soul of man are not free to develop according to their human and divine rights and so attain their ultimate destiny. Thus in a school there are problems in a student government which does not fulfill its function because the leaders will not spend time planning; a sociology class which has no tie-up at all with actual life or no concern about the slums a mile away; a school where the faculty will grant no freedom to the students to form student government and so hinders any development of a true sense of responsibility in the students; students who spend money extravagantly each week and who have no concern for those students who can barely live on the money they earn at a part time job; a school where no negro students are allowed or where they are forced to live in segregated conditions; a school where emphasis is placed on the grade and the attainment of a degree and where the students study only so that they may get a better job upon graduation. These and many other problems are seen in schools, large and small, Catholic and non-Catholic; and YCS takes the responsibility for answering these problems, for changing anything that is unchristian in the milieu. The action is carried out for the love of God and is an overflowing of charity into a real care for the students and the student world.

Action to answer these problems is carried on by a

small group (these used to be called cells), made up of those students who see these problems and feel responsible for solving them. They work together to carefully observe all the facts of the problem, to completely know the situation as it is; then to judge it with the mind of Christ, to see what factors prevent it from being Christian and what a completely Christian situation would be here (the scriptures, writings of the Pope, etc., and the advice of the Chaplain are used as guides in judging); and then concrete action is taken to remedy the situation. These three steps, the observe, judge and act are the three steps in the Inquiry Method, the natural means whereby the YCS group seeks to Christianize the milieu by solving each individual problem. The YCS on campus operates inconspicuously (though not secretly) and does not try to attract attention to itself. When an action is necessary the YCS group will see first if there is an organization existing on the campus in whose realm this action would fall or who's responsible for the existing situation. If so the members of the YCS group will then attempt to get this organization to take the necessary steps to carry out the action or remedy the situation. If there is no existing group that can work on the problem or no other channel to go through the YCS group can if it wishes initiate action. The important thing is to see that the situation is remedied.

YCS will have no official position on the campus on the student council or other coordination body, however it will exist with the approval of the administration and with the assistance of a chaplain. An important distinction is the YCS is not an organization, but rather it is a movement, always growing, always moving, always deepening. It is much more than one meeting a week; it becomes a way of life to its members, a life of love and service based on the love of Christ. It brings about a necessary deepening in spirituality, without which no truly effective action can be carried on.

The organizational aspects of YCS have been added as the movement has grown and needed them. I will explain the usual coordination of YCS groups on a campus. The usual number of students in a group is from five to ten, separate groups for fellows and girls. If there is more than one group the leaders of each will meet together once in a while to discuss problems, get advice, etc. All the groups in a school are called a section. Sometimes there are YCS groups in each class (Senior, Junior, etc.) of the college while at others, e.g. Notre Dame, the groups are divided according to the department or college. Notre Dame has groups in each college such as law or medicine and the leaders of each of these groups meet together once a month. The average number

of groups in a school is probably about two or three.

The general program for this year is student social responsibility. It is based on the fact that students who have had greater opportunities for higher education have a greater responsibility to the community because of this education. The original source of this responsibility is as Christians and members of the Mystical Body and sharers of the Redemptive work of Christ; and this responsibility is increased because of the greater advantages that students have received. This social responsibility must be learned in school and must be put in practice as much as possible. The student must realize that the knowledge he is gaining is not merely a means of achieving his own security, but rather it must be shared and used for the good of the community. The program is divided into the three fields of politics, economics and labor and takes up problems such as racial discrimination, student attitude toward money, students and labor, student economic problems, student government and others. It is designed to increase the awareness on the part of the student of the part he must play in the community. The YCS team takes the responsibility for this awareness in the whole student body. You can read more about this program in the handbook on Student Social Responsibility which can be obtained from Fides Publishing Co. in South Bend.

As to whether YCS is achieving its purpose or reaching its goal, that is a hard thing to say. The ultimate aim of specialized Catholic Action is a perfect society, an ideal world community, and though we can strive for it we know that perfection is not possible in this life. However, many things have definitely been accomplished on the individual campuses yet sometimes in a way that you are not aware it is YCS working. So of course an itemized list of accomplishments cannot be presented. But there are many cases of student governments being started or revived, assistance given to students in need, Church History or philosophy courses being inaugurated on secular campuses, seminars, discussions, sharing of material possessions, and a new acceptance of responsibility by many students, plus other actions taken in schools to remedy all kinds of disorders, small or large. An accomplishment of YCS in this country is the magazine Concord (325 Lincoln Way West, South Bend, Indiana) put out by YCS for the whole student community and designed to help in the spread of student social responsibility and Christian ideals. And most important there has been a great deepening of spirituality in YCS and through them in others.

I am very sorry I do not have figures and percentages as to the number of schools with YCS groups or the number of

groups in the country - you could get these from 3 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago 11. The Midwest is the heart of the Movement, there are a few groups in the South and some in the East. The west Coast is practically limited to California, both the San Francisco and Los Angeles regions having several schools with YCS.

Please forgive my rather horrible typing but I do hope this will be of assistance to you on your thesis. Best of success and I will remember you in my prayers.

Sincerely in Christ,

Jean Pew

4823 W. Gunnisen
Chicago 30, Ill.
Feb. 27, 1949

Dear Ruth:

I'm so sorry to be this late, but -- well, you know.

We don't have any cells at De Paul any more. We had one until the start of this school year.

I have led a cell, Ruth, and have watched YCS fairly closely. An observation that may be of use to you is that it seems true that often YCS people and YCS results show up in quite un-planned for ways and places. For example I am chairman of the Chicago Desk, JCSA, at the present. If I hadn't been in YCS first, I never would have been in JCSA. It was YCS training and inspiration. We in the De Paul cell dropped the cell to attack specific needs like JCSA, although this was not always a conscious process.

I suggest you define your terms and your area. By C.A. do you mean YCS? Or? Note that the popes have not defined C.A. organizationally. YCS is C.A., but so is other action C.A.

Best of luck, Ruth.

In Him,

Les Rietz

March 11

Dear Miss Sallwasser,

I must apologize for my rather ill-mannered silence. I left your first letter on my desk for a week or so, and that next weekend my roommate in a fit of industry, cleaned and dusted everything in sight, including the carefully ordered chaos of my desk. The letter disappeared and with it the address. It's really nothing more than a timely excuse, however, because in any case the delay would have been roughly the same. As a letter writer I am an excellent thumbscrew salesman.

The fact is I have very little positive information to give you. There is no YCS cell at Fordham. My best will only be few remarks on a cell's quiet demise.

The primary cause was generated by those excellent people from the mid-west. They were the first one to suggest to the members the possibility of a conflict between the intellectual and the cell life. Since the cell was small its five whole-members, made up of students who had the unusual idea that students should study, and since in a Jesuit college the person who studies only what is given to him in his courses will wind up an intellectual cipher, an antimony was immediately set up between becoming an intelligent person and being a good cell member. The boys tended to brood about it, it seems, and the first two that dropped out said explicitly that they thought they were here to study and study they would, come spiritual-student responsibility or what have you.

The second less primary but still major reason was the attitude of the authorities toward the cell and vice versa. In Fordham the relation between student and administration is that of mutual contempt, and on the part of the more emotional like myself, a rather amused hatred. I'm afraid we tended to feel a bit frustrated and to vent our frustration in the meetings, too much, so our chaplain put it 'agin the administration'. The latter, however, were only too clearly agin us. The student counsellor suspected YCS of some sort of subversive activities perhaps of usurping a milligram or two of Jesuit power. Anyway any possibility of cooperation with sodalities etc. was cut off.

The lack of a clear cut policy of action, a basis of selection of possible projects was another mortally wounding influence. We tended to diffuse our energies, when we should have concentrated on some one segment in the welter

of injustice, inadequacy, and incompetence that constitutes Fordham U. In the last few weeks we did grapple with the problem, and had decided on restricting ourselves to specific projects, discussion groups primarily.

There were also some factors in the area of actual cell work. Primarily failure to make contacts. The cell was and remained much too static. We had, however, evoked a good spiritual program, daily meditation and daily Mass.

But, to return to the primary, the cell died primarily for intellectual reasons. I would like to impress on you this fact: it was not discouragement or spiritual inertia or anemia, but a questioning over a three month period, of the very method and principle at the basis of a student cell. The very idea, in other words.

We reached the conclusion that the cell has no necessary existence in Catholic schools. As a spiritual factor it has no rights. The sodality possesses with the faculty and administration, the task of spiritualizing the school. The rest is up to the free will of the student body. As an intellectual factor, it could do much. But apparently, aside from holding mock conventions, activity on this level is usually too quiet for the mid west. In non-Catholic schools I can see many things for a cell to do. But in a Catholic school such as this, where there is much to be done, or at least so much wanting, a cell could not be composed of serious students and still attempt any of the more serious projects like a student union (credit) for instance. This last, if you'll notice, is my personal opinion too. There is an intellectual life, there is a cell life. You can't do both. Yet both are valid Catholic actions, and each must respect the other. Our cell was unfortunately composed of people who considered the intellectual their wiser personal choice.

Sincerely,

Tom Fleming.

March 13, 1949

Dear Ruth,

I received your second request for information and I will be glad to do what I can. First a very brief history of YCS at Immaculate Heart College which has, by the way, a student body of about four hundred and fifty. YCS was started in my school in about the year 1942 by a secular priest of the city, Father Birch. He acted as its chaplain for a while, but then the main help and advice to the group was given by a sister on the faculty of the college who was very interested in CA. Contact with other groups in the city and with the national office began in 1947 and this greatly assisted the proper development of the Movement on our campus, for it gave us the advantage of the experience and the help of others. Especially helpful were the contacts with the midwest and with Father Putz, G.S.C., who was the priest who brought YCS to this country.

And so we reached this year. We have had five YCS groups on campus, one each in the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes and one among the resident students. The groups average about six or seven students in each. As to accomplishments, the boarders' groups worked to make the dorm a "family unit, living together, working together, praying together". They helped inaugurate a big sister program with proper attention and help given to the freshmen and "little sisters", and they started the community rosary. The sophomore group worked on the problem of increasing the social responsibility of the two sororities on campus. They tried to help the spirit of the sororities and to give them more of an attitude of service to the school and the community. Through their efforts a party was given by one sorority for the Mexican children on the east side of town, and the spirit of the other sorority has notably improved. This group sponsored a class party to increase the friendliness in the class. The senior group at the beginning of the year at the time of national elections worked on the problem of making those students who were of age aware of their responsibility in voting. In this case we worked through the NSA and IRC and persuaded them to set up bulletin boards presenting the platforms and issues and to have discussions and bring speakers to the campus on the various controversial issues of the election on a national and local level.

Besides the accomplishments as a result of action by the group, there have been changes brought about in individual students and through them because of their official position on the whole campus. Thus the editor of the school

paper has been contacted and has recently become a member of a group, and she has attempted to put over the ideas of the apostolate and of social responsibility in the pages of our school paper. The student body president, also a member of YCS, has brought these ideas into the student council and they are seen in the type of programs and lectures planned. There has been a notable deepening of spirituality among those YCS members who have been actively working on problems. Through working on this program of social responsibility we awaken to the need for an increase of our own responsibility, and thus we ourselves are formed. We find soon enough that we can't give what we haven't got and so we start fighting to "get it". There has been a great increase in initiative on the part of the YCS members. Also the dean of the college remarked to me the other day that she had noticed an increase in the attitude among the students of "what can I do for the other girl", and she attributed this to YCS.

Well, I guess this fairly well sums up the situation. Again best of luck on your thesis, it should be very interesting work.

In Him,

Jean Pew

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De Paul University, Chicago, Illinois.

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