

SUMMARY OF ANNE LAFLAIVE: *ONE LIFE FOR THE REAWAKENING OF A
FORGOTTEN VOCATION*

by Jacqueline Roux

Anne Laflaive received the Consecration of a Virgin, solemnly and discreetly (without letting it be known except to immediate family members), in the chapel of Carmel at Paray-le-Monial, 6 January 1924, on her 25th birthday, through the hands of Bishop Chassagnon. Three years later, in 1927, Rome, wanting to encourage this privilege among religious congregations, forbade this type of Consecration (to women living in the world), and Anne vigorously worked until 1970 to obtain once again its official recognition (for secular women).¹

After serving for a time the young women of the League of French Women at the request of the Countess of St. Laurent, she became general secretary of the diocesan Federations with the support of Bishop Chollet, Archbishop of Cambrai and secretary of the Assembly of French cardinals and archbishops. He obtained the recognition of this secretariat through this organization in 1930. For eleven years, Anne directed the bulletin of the central Secretariat of the Federations, *Communications mensuelles* ("Monthly Communications").²

In 1941, the bishops of the southern zone, rather exclusive partisans of specialized Catholic action halfway through its life, influenced by the Jesuit, Father Lambert, relieved Anne of its bulletin responsibility and proceeded to decommission the secretariat of the Federations of which it was a part and applied more and more pressure on it.³

At the request of Bishop Chollet, supported by Bishop Feltin, then archbishop of Bordeaux, Anne founded in 1939 the secular Missionaries of Catholic Action, an institute of celibate women or widows living in the world. It was an organization desired by Popes Pius XI and Pius XII. After a long term under the French bishops, Anne set into place the statutes of the institute in 1943. However, because concurrence of the Belgian Auxiliaries of the Apostolate and the hostility of the influential chaplain of students in Paris, she had to withdraw from the leadership of the organization, which disappeared soon afterwards. After having served Catholic Action for 16 years, she distanced herself from it. Catholic Action, in a spirit of exclusiveness and monopolization, decidedly did not want her as a part of it.⁴

Anne then worked as a salaried document secretary in the service of the national Council of French (patronage) directed by a friend of her family, Georges Villiers. She worked at this position more than 20 years, until 1972. She continued in religious and social

¹ Yves-Marie Hilaire, Professor emeritus, Charles de Gaulle University, Lille III. *Preface*, p. 10.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

activities in France and in Rome, where she would visit for several days each year. She became a friend of successive popes, Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI.

During her trips to Rome, Anne searched for a way to advance the canonical recognition of the Consecration of Virgins for women living in the world. In 1956, she treated this subject in her book *Epouse du Christ*, a re-named edition of her 1934 work *Study of the Consecrations of Virgins in the Roman Pontifical*. After the Council, in 1968, she re-worked her book under the title of *La Femme et l'Eglise*. At the time in France when the first woman pastors were being ordained in the reformed churches, Anne was not in favor of ordination of women in the Catholic Church because "Christ and His Church offer to the woman a gift of great plentitude" which is notably represented by the Consecration of Virgins [already] inscribed in the Roman Pontifical. And, it was plainly allowed within the Catholic Church in 1970.⁵

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Anne suffered the bitterness of resentments and grave injustices. She drank from the chalice of mysterious suffering, the chalice of her Spouse, in the hidden Presence of His Love. It seemed to me that Anne was unable truly to express the richness of her interior life and that she was able to see another Light, hidden to the world.⁶

She prayed the Liturgy of the Hours as was permitted to her, seven times per day, in order to magnify the Lord, who was the Spouse of the Church, and of whom she became her personification at the moment of her liturgical Consecration, her sign and living image.⁷

She always remembered the mission entrusted to her, she believed, by the Lord: to work for the rebirth within the Church of the ancient Order of Virgins. This mission was hidden, but definitive, in all of her actions. . . . "Each consecrated virgin has a special mission to accomplish. What is mine?" she often and long asked herself. One day, the call made itself known exactly: "I know what my mission is: it is to live so intensely the Consecration of Virgins of the Roman Pontifical that by this fact itself the dignity of this Consecration will be restored honorably in the Church."⁸

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On November 21, 1916, Marie Reynes was consecrated by Cardinal Cabrieres according to the ancient rite in the ceremonial which had been attributed to Pope St. Leo the Great of the 5th century. [p. 32]

There was a manifestation at this time for the restoration of this feminine vocation among the Cardinals Cabrieres in France and Mercier in Malines, Belgium. They wanted to see the rebirth of this life of consecration lived in the world. Cardinal Cabrieres had asked Pope Benedict XV for the authorization to consecrate several women of his diocese. The Pope responded to him: "You have the Pontifical; it belongs to you." Therefore, Cardinal Cabrieres consecrated not only Marie Reynes but also others living in his diocese, among

⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶ Renee de Tryon-Montalembert, *Avant-Propos: D'une Ephanie a l'Autre*, p. 14.

⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

whom was Marie Boyer of Bouillane who was a cousin of Anne Laflaive. After Marie Reynes' Consecration, these consecrated virgins came together to pray, be instructed, and find the spirit of their apostolate. This group, without a structure, lived for some years around the Vieille Intendance of the archdiocesan seat of Montpellier. Later Anne looked for some rules of life of this common life from Marie, but none were ever found. From their first meetings, Marie did not speak of her Consecration to Anne, as the Cardinal had requested that she be silent on the matter to all in the future. However, between the two women a friendship was born, despite their difference in age. [31]

From the notebooks of Anne, written during her days in Rome, one can conclude that from Cardinal Cabrieres on May 15, 1920, she was informed of the existence of the Consecration of Virgins, conferrable on young women living in the world. Later she had received from Marie Reynes other confidences, details, and information on this state of life. [32]

Even though Anne felt sure that she was called to this form of consecrated life, she was only 22 years old. She knew that she needed more maturity; that was wise. The Pontifical foresaw that the virgins preparing to receive the Consecration ought to be presented to the bishop on the vigil of the ceremony. "They should be questioned if they are at least 25 years old and if they want to remain a virgin in perpetuity." [33]

In July 1921, the Cardinal was certain that Anne had always been called to this vocation. On July 16, 1921, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Anne promised definitively and explicitly through a private vow her total gift of self until her 25th year. After Holy Communion she made this private vow which the Cardinal had written for her. [34]

She had decided to live this consecration among the group in Montpellier, of which Marie was the animator. Marie at that time introduced her to about 5 others in addition to Marie de Bouilloane. Anne saw this group as a little seed [of consecrated virginity lived in the world] in the corner of France. This group came to be called the Schola Christi. They received spiritual and intellectual instruction, continued to live in the world according to their professions in civil life, and undertook no type of project as would be typical of a religious congregation. [35] Marie Reynes-Monlaur continued in this position as animator for some time.

On December 21 Cardinal Cabrieres passed into eternity.. Anne notes that she was now certain of the efficacy of his intercession in heaven. She remained faithful to the goal of his spiritual counsels.

After the death of Cardinal Cabrieres, the see was vacant for a long time. When the new bishop arrived, he looked favorably on the Schola Christi group, but wanted them to draw up statutes like those of a group evolving toward religious life. Some members of Schola Christi were disconcerted by what they saw were the evasions of Marie Reynes. Because of this, they withdrew from the group, among them was Anne. The last mention of Marie in the notes of Anne can be found those dated August 1922, when Anne's sister's funeral took place. [37]

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Anne put together the following horarium for herself in the early 1920s before her Consecration: early morning-- Lauds and meditation; Mass, thanksgiving following, Prime; Terce and translation of a Psalm from the Latin; study of philosophy, theology or history of the Church, Holy Scripture. Before dinner—Vespers and _ hour of spiritual reading; after dinner—Compline. This schedule she was able to maintain before she had to take a salaried position and thus had at her disposal much less free time. She probably always omitted the office of Sext and Matins. Very likely Bishop Chassagnon had counseled her to work toward the recitation of the entire office in view of her upcoming Consecration; it must be remembered that she had to read the Office all in Latin. [39-40]

It is clear that Pope Benedict XV had authorized Cardinal Cabrieres to consecrate Anne on January 6, 1924, but as the date approached, it must be remembered that both of these prelates were now deceased. [41]

However, Bishop Chaassagnon did write to Anne on December 6, 1923, that the Consecration could be granted. He indicated his choice of the chapel of Carmel at Paray-le-Monial and he insisted on her silence about this Consecration. Her parents could be informed; he omitted any mention of her brothers and sisters. It is assumed that he himself informed Marie Reynes-Monlaur about it and later, in a letter addressed to Anne from Beatrix de Vignet, it can be seen that she herself (Beatrix) had already received the Consecration through the hands of the now deceased Cardinal Cabrieres. [45]

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After Anne's Consecration, she continued to live in her family setting just as before, participating in the familial and societal activities. She dressed just as before, like all other women of her time and social class. [48]

After her Consecration, Anne's hope was so strong that other women in the world might be able to receive this Consecration that it surely motivated her writing, as can be seen in a chapter she wrote on "The Interior Life of a Consecrated Virgin." In that chapter she states that Holy Mass and the Divine Office should be the center of the consecrated virgin's life. [49-50]

In paragraphs within the chapter entitled "The Intellectual and Affective Life of a Consecrated Virgin" she exhorted study and prayer. She felt that the intellectual apostolate of the consecrated virgin was to bring Christian doctrine to society to continue the work of Christ. [50]

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After 1927, she worked during the summer at her family home of Cuirieu on the re-editing of her work on the study of the Consecration of Virgins in the Roman Pontifical, with the clear idea, according to her personal notes, that someday the Consecration might be

bestowed upon women living in the world, those without bonds to a religious community. Several bishops were apprised of her personal status and had asked her for a personal written perspective on the richness of the Consecration which she had received. Bishop Chassagnon approved her enterprise (this particular work). He had written to her since 1927: “Make known your ideas. . . . You have all the assistance necessary,” and he confirmed in 1928 this promise of his assistance. [59] She wanted to show a certain continuity of the bestowal of the Consecration of virgins among the laity over the course of time. [60]

As sort of a seedbed for future consecrated virgins, Bishop Feltin, while still archbishop of Sens, proposed a project called “Armature seculaire feminine.” Bishop Baudrillart suggested, rather, the name “Missionnaires seculieres d’action catholique” (Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action”). Anne without delay was ready to give herself entirely to the foundation of the Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action, and so she resigned from her service to the central secretariat of the diocesan Federations. [61]

The Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action (MSAC) were celibate women or widows who desired, while remaining in the world, to make a gift of their life to God through the hands of their bishop in order to be at the service of Catholic Action within their diocese, accepting all apostolic missions which their bishops would entrust to them. The foundation of MSAC was not the doing, or even the idea, of Anne Laflaive, as certain opponents to this institution were wont to say later, believing Ann desirous of “imposing her views on the bishops,” so as to become a “foundress and superior general,” as one reads in a letter of Bishop Feltin to Bishop Chollet (March 1, 1944). The initiative came from Bishop Chollet, strongly supported by Bishop Feltin. And it was Bishop Chollet himself who wanted this foundation, as Pope Pius XI had told him several times in the past of this wish, as a form of life as a “third type of vocation,” different from the life of a religious and from the life of a married woman. It was to be a consecrated life in the world, a donation of oneself entirely to Christ through His Church. [69]

This type of vocation of consecrated life had already been thought about by St. Angela Merici, Father de Cloriviere, and Adelaide de Cice. At the beginning of the 20th century we see the rise of the secular institutes, with official approval coming in 1947 with *Provida Mater Ecclesia*. [70]

Pope Pius XI wanted to see the realization of institutes whereby its members would be directly and individually dependent upon their bishops or his diocesan priest delegate. The Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ in Italy were such. Anne, however, cognizant of their statutes, found them too similar to the life of a religious institute. [70]

In Belgium, the institution closest to the wishes of Pope Pius XI was the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate, founded in 1922 by Cardinal Mercier, archbishop of Malines (d. 1926). These Auxiliaries started to establish themselves in France. [70]

Some now believe that Bishop Chollet more or less believed that this form of life, that of the Auxiliaries, was what Pope Pius XI had in mind, and thus Bishop Chollet abandoned

the Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action and other bishops joined him after receiving a letter, dated May 27, 1944, from him. He sent this letter to all bishops in France stating this understanding of his as a fact. It is to be noted, however, that several years earlier, on August 25, 1939, Bishop Chollet had officially charged Anne of starting this work of the MSAC “in collaboration with other young women.” [70-71]

According to the texts of 1938 and of 1943, Anne had proposed the intellectual formation of the Secular Missionaries in their own home dioceses or within schools of Catholic Action, which could also be inter-diocesan, or even they could be trained at a national center. [72] On February 11, 1939, at the Catholic Institute within a training session, Anne gave a presentation entitled “Is there a Catholic Action vocation?” The audience could perceive that Anne had in mind an eventual solemn consecration, obviously the Consecration of Virgins. [73]

During her second visit to Annecy on the 21-23 of June, 1942, Anne spoke with Bishop Cesbron at his residence for a long time. He seemed favorable to the project which she had proposed, and he asked her about the genesis of her vocation. Anne spoke to him then about the Consecration of Virgins in the Roman Pontifical. He then asked her to send him her essay on the Rite of the Consecration. [75]

At Montauban, Bishop Theas heard her with attention and sympathy. He spoke of the Consecration in the Pontifical, but he could not conceive of it without the vows of poverty and obedience. She then spoke of the consecrated virgin and of the Secular Missionaries of a diocese. She explained clearly to him that she had received the Consecration as an exceptional favor. She knew well that since 1927 no virgin had been consecrated who lived without religious community bonds, but that did not impede her hope, “in pectore,” that perhaps some members of the organization that was just beginning (MSAC) would be consecrated one day. [75]

Bishop Theas, independent of this question of the Consecration, thought that the formation proposed for the MSAC was not sufficient. He did not believe that the formation in independent sessions was enough. He felt that there should be two years of formation in a life separated from regular society, the first year in a national center and the second year in a regional center. His Vicar General, l’abbe Bourdeau, was not in favor of this idea of a life separated from the general milieu of society. [75] The latter believed that formation could be done in sessions and in conjunction with correspondence (like correspondence courses). [75-76]

In Lourdes, Bishop Choquet declared himself most favorable to the question (of secular women as diocesan missionaries). He had been waiting for them since 1937. He had looked to the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate, waiting for a French version of this Belgian formula which was started by Cardinal Mercier. [76] [N.B. today in Lourdes is the international headquarters and training center of the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate, who do not consider themselves as part of consecrated life—LM]

Anne prepared, along with Bishop Chollet, a series of fourteen conferences which would constitute the basis of instruction for the Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action. If they had been printed in a manual, they would surely have survived to this day, despite the fact that the MSAC would disappear so rapidly, once their survival was not assured nor supported. [79] It was finally decided that where the Auxiliaries were now instituted (in a diocese), they could remain. Second, it was decided that a national center for formation for the MSAC was not needed. The assembly of bishops then put Bishop Chollet in charge of the new institution under a national plan, and with the right to delegate Anne to handle the formation of the MSAC members, according to the disposition of the dioceses. [80-81] This plan, however, of delegating Anne caused problems in that some dioceses felt that the MSAC would turn into a religious institute and thus cause a disruption in the rapport between the national MSAC and the individual bishop. [81]

Two important differences exist between the Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action and the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate: the recitation of the Divine Office did not figure into the daily life of the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate, and among the Auxiliaries some put in place in a formal way the counsels of obedience and poverty through the hands of their diocesan center directress. [82]

By the spring of 1946, the MSAC was firmly implanted in various dioceses: Chartres, Rodez, Troyes, Moulins, Nevers. Bishop Gerlier was no longer reticent about them, and the bishops of Grenoble and Chambéry were very favorably disposed toward them. [84] Anne persevered in her hope that the MSAC would be a pool from which virgins would come for Consecration, in case Rome rescinded the 1927 ban on consecrating women living in the world. [85-6]

By November and December 1946, Anne was more or less forced out of the leadership of the MSAC; and right after her departure, they became oriented toward the form of the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate. By February 1, 1948, the MSAC officially asked their bishops to study the organization and methods of the Auxiliaries, and the bishops gave their consent. [89] By May the MSAC and Auxiliaries had merged into the form of the Auxiliaries as one organization. Several of the members of the MSAC went back to their former life as unencumbered laity and others chose to join other institutions. [90] After the dissolution of the MSAC, Anne felt her work with Catholic Action was now terminated. [93]

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*Program of Study for the Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action
Prepared by Anne Laflaive in the summer of 1939 [91]*

Spirit of MSAC

Basis of this life: in the Church

Prayer: recollection in the presence of God and spirit of prayer

Church: spirit of praise, liturgical cycle

To think as the Church: in service of the Truth (Credo)

To feel as the Church: practice of all virtues
 To act as the Church: the apostolate, in the service of souls
 Service of souls: co-redemption, the mandate

Practical issues

Difference between the donation of one's life in MSAC and religious vows
 The call of the bishop and dependence upon the bishop for his mandate
 The spirit of the counsels
 Regulating one's life
 The necessity of the association (MSAC): organization, roles of the animator and delegate
 Formation: spiritual, intellectual, practical
 Obligations of a Secular Missionary of Catholic Action

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From the late 40s to the early 60s, when Pope Paul VI was elected Pope, Anne had fruitful contacts, work, and conversations with the future Bl. John XXIII, when he was Nuncio in Paris, and with the future Pope Paul VI. [104-6] In the 1950s, Anne made use of the time she worked for the national Council for which she had to go to Rome each spring of the year—during such visits she could bring up the question of the restoration of the Consecration for secular women during conversations with high dignitaries in the Church. From 1951 onward, she was in close communication with the future Pope Paul VI and discussed this question of the Consecration for secular women. In May 1952, she spoke of the Consecration for more than 10 minutes, *tete-a-tete*, with Pope Pius XII. [110] When asked about the evangelical counsel of poverty by members of the Congregation for Religious in Rome, she answered simply, “I very much understand that I am only a salaried person.” [112-13] She also agreed with the bishops with whom she spoke while in Rome after 1965 that the Church looked favorably upon Consecration for women living individual lives in the early centuries of Church history, that it was for the service of the Lord Himself, but that this sacramental should be given with great prudence, and rarely. [113] In 1967, Anne had a private audience with Pope Paul VI, and several audiences in 1968 with R.P. Duroux, Mgr Philippe, Mgr Martin, Cardinal Garrone, and Cardinal Villot where the topic of the Consecration was examined. [115]

In April 1970, Anne was in Rome and again met Pope Paul VI during an audience. Mme de Noue, who accompanied Anne, was astounded at the warm reception the Holy Father gave personally to Anne. [116] It should be noted that the next month he promulgated the decree *Consecrationis Virginum*, 31 May 1970.

From April 21 through 27, 1980, Anne was in Rome and asked for an audience with Pope John Paul II. She received a reply that the Holy Father was extremely busy with his pastoral visits but that he surely sent his warmest personal greeting and blessing upon her life as a consecrated virgin because he was certainly interested and close to the subject of consecrated virginity lived in the world. [122] Anne was then 80 years old and was suffering from the handicaps of the elderly. [122]

We know from Anne’s personal notes that she had completed questionnaires regarding economic and social conditions for workers in France. In these questionnaires it is evident that she was able to communicate how a professional life could be lived in the secular world while living the life of a devout consecrated virgin. These questionnaires were part of the research requested by Rome before the publication of *Populorum progressio*. [106]

In 1986, we see a letter that Anne had sent to a friend in which she mentions that the notes, documents, and letters are still intact and it was therefore obvious that the Lord did not want these historical documents to disappear. [122-23] In her notes we find that she was a bit disappointed that the words “Receive the ring of faith and the seal of the Holy Spirit” from the former version of the Rite were now changed to read “Receive this ring, sign of your union with Christ.” The underlining was hers—she was disappointed to see these underlined words dropped in the revised Rite. [123]

Anne was adamant that the vocation be lived “isolee,” that is individually. She was wary of the provision in C. 604 which allowed for association among consecrated virgins because she feared they might eventually become a religious institute. She, however, did maintain friendly relations with other French-speaking consecrated virgins in Paris, who wished to meet the author of *Epouse du Christ*. [125] It is likely that she was so wary of association among consecrated virgins because of her unhappy experience with the Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action and their rapid dissolution. Hence her insistence on a consecrated virgin, right from the first, living the life individually. [125-26]

Not only was Anne persevering in her hope and ardent prayers for the restoration of the Consecration for secular women, but we see also that Mgr Paulot, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Reims, wrote *La virginite chretienne*, in which he strongly encouraged women to make a private vow of consecration to Christ while living in the world with a “rule of life.” [109]

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In 1963, Anne published a biography of Philippine Duchesne, who was a missionary to the United States in the 19th century, beatified in 1940, and canonized in 1988. [117]

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One day before the eve of the Assumption, August 13, 1987, at La Tour-du-Pin, very near to Cuirieu (her familial home), the dawn of immortality opened up for Anne. Her remains are now interred in the small cemetery of Saint-Jean-de-Soudain. [129]

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Apendices

Diocesan Missionaries of Christ—writings of Bishop Feltrin

The spirit a candidate should have: intense desire for perfection, ardent zeal for the extension of the reign of Christ, perfect docility to the orders and counsels of the Church through their bishop [134]

Formation: spiritual—poverty, humility, obedience
 Intellectual--dogma, morals, liturgy, sociology, psychology
 Apostolic—through books, magazines and journals, documents; participation in seminars and congresses
 A diocesan center for formation, direction, and coordination of these secular diocesan missionaries

Prayer life—1/2 hour of daily private prayer; all or part of the Divine Office, but at least Prime and Compline; visit to the Blessed Sacrament; recitation of the Angeles 3 times per day; daily examination of conscience; daily Mass and Communion if possible; Rosary; Confession every fortnight; monthly day of recollection; yearly retreat

Requirements for the candidate: 21-35 years of age or with exception allowed by the bishop; no bonds to a religious order or other congregation so as to be free to give oneself totally to the apostolate of the bishop; serious guarantee of morality, piety, judgment, and development; written request for admittance to the bishop; after 2 years of association with the diocesan center, she can then request to make an annual promise; she then can assume the mandate given her by the bishop for one year. [135]

In temporal affairs, she can administer the goods and affairs of her family with all proper prudence. She considers the secular missionaries her primary task, however. [136]

Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action—outline by Anne Laflaive

They may be entirely free to give of themselves to Catholic Action, or in other cases they could give of themselves partially (as family responsibilities, or illness might interfere with a totality of donation of self and time). [141]

Those who give of themselves partially or provisionally could be mothers in families, who might be able to give only one hour of their time per week. [142]

They retain their own spirituality, according to what is approved by the Church. [142]

Their prayer life should include at a minimum: recitation daily of the Angelus, weekly Rosary, attend Mass one day per week in addition to Sunday, annual retreat, day of recollection 3 times per year. [150]

They would make their donation of self at Mass, just before receiving Holy Communion; their ceremony would consist of just the call and response dialogue taken from the Rite of the Consecration of Virgins and then followed by a formula before Communion of their donation of self. [151]

Explanatory text by Bishop Chollet, 21 March 1944

MSAC would be women (designated at that time as “laity) living in their familial and professional lives, without any particular distinction of dress

They give themselves directly to the bishop through vows, under his authority or delegate, for the work of Catholic Action

Their donation of self would be themselves and what they have. This implies that without canonical vows they would still live in chastity and in detachment

Pope Pius XI, in 1937, showed a great interest in this form of life. They are a third way of life for a woman—not being in either the married state nor in the religious state (in a religious institute). [154-55] This means that they are living and working in their own milieu, among their own people and personal contacts, without any distinctive dress, but carrying the message of Christ to all around them. [155]

In Italy they already have this form of life in the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and in Belgium in the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate. [156]

Course of Study for Catholic Action

Dogma—divine life given to man through grace; nature and grace; divine life lost through Adam and regained by Christ; divine life with Christ in the hypostatic union and sanctifying grace; the Mystical Body; the sacraments; Baptism; Eucharist; life eternal

Morals—eternal beatitude; grace and liberty; theological virtues; progress in the virtues through charity; prudence; charity and justice; temperance; to have and to attack; patience and perseverance; magnanimity and magnificence

Holy Scripture—St. Paul, the individual charism and the official mission, soul and body of the Church, mankind

Theology—first conjugal union established by God, the Fall and the promise of Redemption, sacrament of marriage, children in the family, the conjugal union in the sacrament of Matrimony, the family and education

Spirituality—Dogmatic and moral theology; ascetical and mystical theology (sources and methods); imitation of Jesus Christ as author, model, and master of the spiritual life; action and contemplation; steps in the spiritual life; perfection and holiness; grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the virtues-charity; spiritual direction

Teachings of Jesus in Holy Scripture—The Master, parables for the crowds, parables of the Kingdom, evangelical virtues, teachings for the Scribes and Pharisees

Moral life—What is love? Love of the Holy Trinity, love of self, fraternal love, love and action

Psychology (the human will)—role of the will in the natural and supernatural life, automatic activity, instinctive activity, voluntary activity, training the will, defects of the will, the will and character

Social morality (the State)—nature of the State and its role, forms of the State, limits of the State, economic and political limits of the State, the Church and State

Social order (justice and charity)—the true order of human society, persons within society, the common good, justice, charity

Catholic Action—its fundamental doctrine, the Church, the hierarchy (Pope, bishop, priest and parish), collaboration of the laity, spiritual formation for Catholic Action, intellectual formation for Catholic Action, Catholic Action in France (its orientation, organization, works, and movements), Catholic Action and civic action

Practical lessons—Do I have a vocation for Catholic Action? Contemporary examples? How to understand “catholic”? The place and role of studies in Catholic Action [162-67]

A letter dated 15 January 1940 from the Director of the Normal School of Catholic Action, R.P. Eysele, S.M., to Archbishop Chollet states that it was a pity that after all the effort expended to compose a course of study for Catholic Action, so few were taking advantage of this course of study or even took it seriously. [196-70]

A letter from Bishop Feltin to Archbishop Chollet, dated 8 April 1946, speaks of the difficulty of having Anne Laflaive as the animator of Secular Missionaries of Catholic Action because, despite her great efforts of time and generosity as well as her incontestable religious spirit, she is seen as one who exercises a materialism that wants to direct not only Catholic Action but also the bishops themselves. [171-72]

Anne’s idea of the MSAC becoming a “pool” from which eventually virgins might come from in order to receive the Consecration of Virgins had flaws. Because of the organization itself and focus on apostolic activity, they were more suited to become a secular institute. Consecrated virginity lived in the world is distinct from the vocation of secular institutes. Also, her idea of a “seminary for women” to train for Catholic Action would be confusing in that it would be a sort of quasi-seminary for the non-ordained who would undertake various ministries in the Church. These two flaws in Anne’s early aspirations became apparent to her, and we can see that these courses of action and foci are not properly speaking that of the Order of Virgins. [178]

Summarized and translated by Loretta Matulich

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