

Catholic is asked to pray particularly for the conversion and salvation of one Communist soul.

Quite possibly you don't sleep very well. Never mind. Seize the opportunity to help the world along. Try saying an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for everyone you know, or have read about or heard about that day.

If after a while this becomes too much of an effort, just remember before God the various groups of people who are working through the night—those in hospitals, on the sea, in the bakeries and so on. And say the De Profundis for those who have died since darkness fell.

These are only some ideas for the on-her-own woman. Plenty more will occur to each individual concerned once the matter is seriously considered. But above everything else, let us try to remember that 'alone' means 'all one'. Christ and his Mystical Body the Church, in heaven, in purgatory and on earth, are one—all one, with each one of us, so none can ever be lonely.

MARY MARTIN



## EXTRACTS

EVANGELISER July-August 1958, the Belgian Review concerned with the spirit and techniques of the apostolate (*La Pensée Catholique*, Bruxelles 4, 40 Avenue de la Renaissance) has an interesting article *Pour une meilleure formation religieuse des enfants* which has a direct bearing on the theme of the present number of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*. We give here some excerpts in translation that are relevant not only to the teaching of religion to children, but also to the preaching of it to adults.

Mgr Charrue, Bishop of Namur, is quoted in this article as saying: In a de-christianized world the old methods of teaching are no longer effective. We are not dealing with children brought up in surroundings which are genuinely Christian. . . . Formerly, when the family and the village were Christian, learning by heart with a minimum of understanding could be sufficient to secure, from children in whose homes religious obligations were recognized, the unquestioning acceptance of revealed truths, confession of what must be sins because the Catechism says so, and a more or less genuine and regular reception of the sacraments.

For those who are baptized, but for whom the authority of the Church means nothing, this is not enough. Religious teaching in theological language appeals only to memory and intelligence and not at all to the feelings, the imagination and the hearts of children. It is powerless to secure their attention and adherence and so to guide their lives, in a world that is constantly drawing them in the opposite direction.

Mgr Himmer, Bishop of Tournai, writes:

We must never confine the aims of our catechesis to the memorization of an array of abstract formulas. On the contrary, it must draw out the faith of the child in such a way as to put it in real contact with the Christian mystery. After first Communion and Confirmation he will, from then on, have to live in a paganized world largely beyond the reach of school and parish.

What is needed is not so much the memorizing and explanation of abstract formulas as the formation of a living faith which will arouse a genuine love of God and a real horror of sin. It is less a matter of giving the child a code of obligations having little connection with Christ than of putting him into personal touch with Christ as a master, who makes big demands but is at the same time a Saviour, near him and very powerful to help.

In dealing with the revision of the content of our teaching Père Roguet gives the following principles which apply equally to the teaching of children and preaching to adults:

The *Credo* by which we live is not arranged like a big department store. On the ground floor food-stuffs of every kind in orderly array: pastries, meat, vegetables, preserves and so on; on the first floor ironmongery and household requirements; on the second, clothing and sports equipment. Everything set out in order, divisions and sub-divisions neatly labelled.

No, the Faith is much more like a tree: a solid trunk full of sap which supports and gives life to the whole tree: from it grow out the main branches, from these smaller ones, and from them the living sap flows into leaves and fruit.

'I preach Christ only', said St Paul, 'and him crucified.' He is the way, the truth and the life. We must give him the first place in our preaching whether to believers, to unbelievers or to those who half believe. He must be grasped at the outset, the rest will come by growth.

In dealing with teaching methods Mgr Garrone's book *L'Eglise notre Mère* is quoted:

The Church has three languages: the language of theology, biblical language and liturgical language.

The language of the Catechism is exclusively theological: it is made up of definitions, formulas, lists, explanations, arguments and scriptural and philosophical proofs. . . .

We must no longer separate what is learned in 'Catechism' from the living truth to be found in the Bible stories.

The Bible is not meant to be read systematically from cover to cover. The Church never treats it in this way when it presents the Word of God to us in the Liturgy. St Paul says that all these things happened in 'figure' for our enlightenment. Every truth, every actual need has its 'figure' or foreshadowing here or there in the history of the people of God. To explore the Bible in this way with children (and adults), following up the different themes to be met with there, is to educate them to tackle the sacred books in a way that is religious and liturgical. It is also the way to enable them to realize how constant is the connection between the Old and New Testaments and the convergence of both in Christ.

As to the Liturgy, which is the Church's catechesis, it holds, as a rule, a negligible place in our teaching. The future solution of our problem seems to be here. Everywhere in the Church, in connection with the biblical and liturgical revival there is emerging a catechetical revival in which the Liturgy will take the foremost place. It will not then be Doctrine + Bible + Liturgy, but a liturgical way, vital because shared by the praying community, of approaching the Bible and drawing from it in thought and still more in prayer doctrine which will become the actual expression of our response, within the Church, to the appeal of the Bible's words and actions.

A work of this kind, which centres the teaching of religion upon the great Christian truths: Creation, Revelation, Incarnation, Redemption, Church and Sacraments, vitally expressed in the celebration of the Liturgy, will perhaps prove to be the first stage of a religious revival in our time. For biblical teaching expressed in Liturgy is nothing less than the teaching of the Church.



## REVIEWS

THE SCROLLS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT. Edited by Krister Stendahl.  
(S.C.M. Press; 3 ss.)

The English publishers of this book claim for it that 'these fourteen authoritative papers by a distinguished international team of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish scholars provide a well-grounded interim verdict on the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the main departments of