



# SOLIDARITY

The Associate Members' Bulletin

*of*

The Catholic Workers' College

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

**E**ASTER, as usual, marked the end of the academic year for Post-Diploma Trade Union students (men), for Post-Diploma Trade Union students (women), for Management students and for Supervisors. Lectures for other Trade Union students, both men and women, continue for a third, shorter term and will be followed by the Oral Examinations.

Concerning the groups whose year has ended, it is encouraging to note that of the numbers who enrolled for the Trade Union Courses 91% (men) and 75% (women) finished the year; that over 200 Management students were on the roll for 1963-'64; and that the number of Supervisors attending this year leapt by 99 to an enrolment of 233. The Easter Written Examination for all Supervisors was held on 23 March; the complementary Oral Examinations for Third Year Supervisors are still in progress.

### Seminars

A group from The Dublin Master Stevedores Association organized and attended a Seminar on "Industrial Relations" at the College on April 18. Frs Hamilton and McKenna were two of the panel of lecturers. Two other groups will be coming here for Seminars in June. Such one-day Seminars held at the College have proved attractive and fruitful: the work is concentrated but interesting and rewarding for all concerned.

### 1 May

The Annual Address in celebration of the Feast of St Joseph the Worker will be given this year by Mr Andrew Ryan. His subject is: "The Right of Association and Trade Unions in Ireland." Mr Ryan lectures in Social and Industrial Legislation at the College here, and is at present engaged in study and research on these subjects.

## CARDINALS AND WORK

Two Extracts; from Two Major Writings on Work; by Two Cardinals.

They are fitting offerings for this May issue of *Solidarity*, when we celebrate the Feast of St Joseph the Worker.

The source-books are: *What is My Labour Worth?* by Cardinal Lercaro, Archbishop of Bologna (published by Catholic Social Guild, Oxford); and *Work Today* by Cardinal Wyszyński, Primate of Poland (published by Scepter Publishers Ltd). We recommend both to all students and Associate Members.

### (1) Cardinal Lercaro

**W**ORK PARTAKES of the essential nature of sacrifice in that it is an offering. We have the example of Christ, the unique victim worthy of God, from Whom every other offering takes meaning and value. In work we fulfil the divine will when we accept the obligations imposed on men and do not merely suffer them as unpleasant and inescapable necessities.

#### Reconquest of Harmony

“For Christians,” said Pius XII, “to work is to serve God. For others work might appear to be an imposition from which they should seek to be free as quickly as possible; for you it is different.” Work, which is an oblation of self-will to God’s will through tiredness and sweat, is efficacious for our redemption like every other sacrifice that unites us with the Cross of Jesus. Work is like suffering: it applies the merit of Christ’s passion.

“We are able to say, and this seems to me to be a point which merits meditation, that human labour contributes, though in a limited degree, to the reconquest of the harmony and order man had at his beginning. By labour we eliminate in some measure wants and privations, we facilitate the conquest of nature, we reduce the extent of suffering and sorrow. Work will never remake a paradise on earth, but it does help to diminish the disorder and revolt which sin has imposed. However, because of the Fall, none of this can be done without sacrifice. Just as Christ has redeemed us on the Cross by the offering of His blood, so also must the world share in the Redemption through suffering.

#### Joy and Hardship

“In the actual order of Providence work is and must always be burdensome. Work which is pure joy can hardly exist, and will never be either common or normal.” (C. Colombo: *The Social Teaching of Pius XII*). So in one of its aspects work appears to us as a joyful reaching out of men and a happy conquest of the riches and treasures of nature; while in another it seems to be a hard and painful sacrifice by means of which the non-human creation might be again brought into the service of man.

“Work has, indeed, got these two aspects. The first, the joyful aspect, flows from nature, the work of the Creator; the second, the painful aspect, from sin. If either viewpoint is used exclusively, the truth is lost to sight.

“The classical world saw labour only as a burden and thought it unworthy of the free man. The ancient philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, bent their efforts to making the wise rather than the strong the rulers, so that the knowledgeable would be the beneficiaries of labour. The rest used force to subject the labourer. It was Jesus the Worker, ‘the Son of the carpenter,’ Who established the principle of the dignity of work. The Christian knows that work is joyful, but he knows it also to be a painful reconquest; a collaboration in creation, and also an expiation and a sacrifice; but a sacrifice that bears fruit if it is inspired by the sacrifice of Christ and is united to Him.”

### (2) Cardinal Wyszyński

**F**ROM TIME TO TIME people are stabbed by a longing for those future happy times when work will show itself to be superfluous. Man’s liberation from work is a tempting thought. People triumphantly emphasize the fact that work can be shorter and free time longer. They proclaim that human life should be arranged in such a way that work would cease to be a phenomenon inseparable from it.

#### Personal Development

“Is there not some misunderstanding here? There is inevitably a lowering of the value of work, which is respected not because of its lofty meaning for man but for the sake of the material profits to be derived from it. Christianity preaches a more complete understanding of work: if it exalts and elevates it, this is not merely because man finds in work the means of his own elevation, but also because work is the duty of the rational being—man; because it is for him the way of revealing and developing all his spiritual gifts.

“For work is strongly bound up with the human will. Actually, there is no work in the strict meaning of the word which it would be possible to separate from man. The work of the most elaborate machine depends on the supervision and help of a rational being. The contemporary ideals of technicians, tending to organize factory work in such a way that it would need the smallest number of people, are in fact achieving amazing results. But, in the end, even in the most technically perfect factory, it is human vigilance, human thought, human actions, insignificant perhaps at times but irreplaceable nonetheless, that determine the worth of these ‘automatons.’ So it remains true that almost every kind of work is bound up with a human being.

#### Upsetting the Balance

“Our mind, will, feeling, physical strength share in it. We have really got the ideal picture of the working man when none of these gifts is barred from participation in the course of work. The upsetting of this balance will always be detrimental to a man and even to his work. Of course, the kind of work it is will determine the degree of participation our mind,

will, feeling or physical powers will have in it. But there is no work from which they can be fully separated.

“Unfortunately, such attempts have sometimes been made. Under the influence of technical development in the organization of the workshop, man is being increasingly relegated to the role of an additional instrument, coming last in importance. It is very often forgotten when following the so-called rules of the scientific organization of work that this is not the organization of some abstract force but is actually the organization of human work. Man has been subject to technical laws, and mechanized in his acts and movements, to such an extent that his work has almost lost its rational character.

“It has even been considered that the mind of man is sometimes an impediment to the smooth running of work. Work has become so simplified, so thoughtlessly monotonous, that the mind has nothing to hold on to in it. In the factory—they say—man’s mind is unnecessary, only his strength is needed. The acts performed are so mechanical that the human mind with its thoughts and interests rather interrupts the process. ‘Man—a rational being—is now superfluous.’ Technique, which is the new god, wins. From being the triumph of the human brain it becomes its enemy. Maybe this is because it has freed itself from the natural laws that bound it. Human work should be organized in such a way that the whole man could express himself in it. For this is the interior need of the rational being.

#### Impoverishment

“There must be a place for human thought in every kind of work. When we deprive ourselves of thought, we impoverish both ourselves and society, in which for this very reason the number of people unaccustomed to using their mind in everyday affairs is increasing. The world is changing into a society of automatons. People are losing their sense of belonging to a community.

“In all well-organized work, there must also be room for a full understanding of it. The human mind, man’s will, ought to derive something from work.

The command that has been received must be subjected to the judgment of the reason. For reason points out to us the best ways of doing our work: it shows us how to perfect its performance. So-called 'blind obedience' in work, freeing man from the need to think for himself, only in very exceptional circumstances fails to be detrimental. Likewise, the use of physical strength has to be subjected to human reflection, for only under the influence of feeling and will is the use of strength rational and fitting. Only, then, when all our faculties are joined together in our work, does it have a human character.

### Who Benefits ?

"It is the working man himself who most benefits from work thus understood. Not because he gets his wages for his work, but because the work, that is bound inseparably with his person, shapes and develops his mind, will, feelings, various moral powers and characteristics, his physical and spiritual skills. This is what St Paul means when he reminds us: 'The first share in the harvest goes to the labourer who has toiled for it.' We gather the first fruits ourselves.

"Work, understood in this sense, immediately indicates to us two aims which every man ought to achieve in his personal work: the perfecting of things and the perfecting of the working man. This is the starting-point for social-economic progress, for human civilization, for moral-religious progress and for the culture of the world.

"In work we bring things to perfection and goods to completion. We wish to bestow a new usefulness, a new value and perfection on things. For only then does work achieve its aim, and herein lies all its meaning. By conferring a new worth on matter, work becomes the sole author of wealth, well-being, national abundance. All that exists around us has to acquire new values by the will of God: ' . . . fill the earth and subdue it.'

### Progress

"Man's worth, in fact, is reflected in human acts. From economic progress, and from the direction this progress is taking, we can make out how a man is developing and what his worth is. Every man betrays himself in the value he gives to things. For the perfection of matter and of things is not the only aim of human work. Its second aim is the perfecting of the man who is doing the work. Work is one of the means of our spiritual progress. It has to be performed in such a way that man becomes better not only in the sense of physical efficiency but in the moral sense, also.

"This truth is almost completely forgotten today. The myth of payment for work has conquered in us all: payment by the hour, piece-work, salaries, fees. Man is lost in the pursuit of profit, driven 'by duty,' which he often understands rather as a sense of external need than as a moral value. Moreover, we are becoming the slaves of things. We are so absorbed in and engrossed by the perfecting of what we do that we completely forget about ourselves. We even consider that excess of work frees us from the duty of moulding our own souls . . . it is not strange that man neither becomes happy nor feels well as a result of the work of his hands.

### Breakaway

"There is only one solution: to break with the notion that assigns only one aim to work, i.e., the satisfaction of the needs of our existence; to return to the one real judgment by which work is not so much a sad necessity and a mere safeguard against hunger and thirst, as a need of the rational nature of man, who gets to know himself fully through work and learns to express himself completely. And it is only then that he can influence matter in a really fitting and useful manner. The fruits of work that is thus understood will not be wasted or badly used but will become a blessing for the world."

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