

Converts - How To Win Them

A Conversion Story

By Rev. John A. O'Brien, Ph.D.
Catholic Truth Society of Oregon No.conv053 (1956)

VARIED and numerous indeed are the duties that crowd in upon the pastor of souls in America. He is the builder of churches and schools, the teacher of his flock, the spiritual physician ministering to the sick, the dispenser of the mysteries of God, the administrator of the temporalities of the parish. Yet it is doubtful if there is any form of his ministry which articulates the dominant note of the priestly calling more accurately than the quest for sheep who have strayed outside the fold.

When Jesus sounded His call to the first apostles who were laboring along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, He said: "Come all of you after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men." In that divine invitation the Master placed His finger upon the salient feature of the priestly calling, the seeking for souls, the "fishing for men." His whole ministry was the manifestation of a quenchless thirst for souls, a ceaseless, driving hunger for the sheep who had strayed away — a hunger that was rendered vocal in those pleading words to His apostles: "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16.) It was this same yearning which found its reverberation in the Master's prayer immediately preceding His passion, when He said: "I pray for them also who through their word shall believe in me: that they all may be one, as You, Father, in Me and I in You." (John 17:20-21.)

This truth the Catholics of England not only realized but put into practice. The Catholic Evidence Guild continued its street preaching in spite of the blackouts. It was indeed a unique experience for the writer to walk one night during the first year of the war into a blacked-out Hyde Park in the midst of London's teeming millions. Not a light was visible. As one came near the gate, however, where the various soap-boxes for the speakers are arranged, he heard the usual sound of voices. On one such soap-box was a young Catholic layman, a member of the Catholic Evidence Guild, who was presenting the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the forgiveness of sin. A crowd of probably several hundred was standing roundabout.

The fact that no lights were burning, instead of hindering members of the crowd from asking their usual questions, probably encouraged them. For there was the usual pouring in of questions and the raising of difficulties. Indeed, a listener had the feeling that certain questioners rather enjoyed the blackout because of the cloak of anonymity it wrapped around them. It was a memorable sight for the writer, and it brought one back in mind and in spirit to the early disciples who spoke in the darkness of the Roman caves to little bands of catechumens.

In the fall of 1940, around September, we were privileged to lend a little hand to the priests at St. Patrick's Church, South Bend, Indiana, in their efforts to win converts for Christ. With the thought that a brief statement, of the method of procedure and the type of organization that was formed to

recruit prospective converts, might prove stimulating and helpful to all zealous Catholics, we shall outline these briefly.

A Recruiting Club.

The announcement of our intention to institute a course of public lectures on the credentials and doctrines of the Catholic Faith was announced to the congregation at all the Sunday Masses. Volunteers to assist in recruiting people to attend the course of lectures were requested. About 35 or 40 responded. We met with this group two nights a week for the first couple of weeks, and used the meetings to pool suggestions as to likely persons to contact. Then suggestions were made as to a likely member of the parish to call upon such a prospect. It was a matter of surprise and encouragement to most of the lay members present to discover names of people they had known for many years, but whose interest in the Catholic religion they had never previously suspected.

At these meetings, we stressed the fact that, just as salesmen for great commercial organizations must press into service all the psychology of approach and use all the consummate tact of which they are capable, so likewise in the quest for souls we must exercise the greatest zeal and the greatest resourcefulness to obtain the far greater goal for which we are seeking.

One interesting case is worth citing. A day student at a girl's college, a young woman of about 19, pointed out that for the life of her she could not think of a non-Catholic prospect to call upon.

"Don't you know any non-Catholics?" we asked.

"Yes, I know a few," she responded, "but I never heard a single one of them express the least interest in learning about the Catholic Church."

"Why don't you invite one or two of them to Mass?" we asked. "See if that may not be the beginning of such an interest."

This she promised to do.

Shortly afterward, in conducting a retreat for the students at that college, we gave a conference on convert work by lay people. Hearing that the students were interested in helping non-Catholics find their way into the Catholic Church, a non-Catholic student at that very college approached us and said that she lived in the nearby city and that, while she had many Catholic friends, she had never been invited by any of them to investigate the Catholic religion. The chum with whom she travelled out every day on the bus to the college was the young lady who had stated that she could not, to save her life, think of a non-Catholic who was interested in making the investigation into the Catholic Church. This goes to show how frequently we pass up opportunities which, with a little exploration, could be turned to a divine usefulness and would yield many and many a convert to the Church of Christ.

Pulpit Announcement.

On the three Sundays preceding the beginning of the class, an announcement of the course of instruction for converts was made. The following is the announcement: "A class of instruction will be held for all who are interested in learning the real teachings of the Catholic faith. Not only non-Catholics but also Catholics who feel themselves rusty in the practical knowledge of their faith are invited to attend. If each of you will run over the list of your non-Catholic friends, you will be able to find at least one who has at some time expressed an interest in the Church, or who could easily be interested in it if he were properly approached.

"The duty of spreading the Catholic faith rests not only on the clergy but on every layman and woman as well. Surely, none of you would want to face Almighty God on judgment day and tell Him that in all your life you did not win one single soul for Him Who shed His blood for every human being. Remember the promise of St. James: "He who causes a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:20) The greatest blessing you can confer upon any non-Catholic whom you love, is to guide him to a knowledge of the faith of Christ.

"The Catholic faith is so frequently misrepresented by its enemies that it will be profitable for every fair-minded non-Catholic fellow citizen to learn the actual truth. Besides, it is a matter of great human interest and cultural value to know the religious belief of more than four hundred million men and women who are members of every nation under the sun. [In 2011, there were 1.2 Billion Catholics in the world.] They constitute the largest religious body in the world today. You are invited to bring your non-Catholic friend, simply to come and listen, without obligating himself to become a Catholic or to accept a single tenet of the faith. In fact, we shall never solicit any outsider who attends to embrace the faith. We shall leave that entirely to his own conscience, after learning the Catholic faith and its credentials. If he wishes to become a Catholic, we shall be only too happy to welcome him to the Church of Christ. But if, on the other hand, it should not prove acceptable to him, we shall be just as good friends as ever. In any event, the non-Catholic party must take the initiative. We want every one who comes to feel perfectly at ease, and to realize that we have no other purpose than to present clearly and honestly the teachings of the Catholic faith, and the reasons on which they rest."

Arousing Interest.

On the third Sunday, we not only made the announcement but we preached a brief sermon on the duty of all Catholics to assist in carrying out the injunction of the Divine Master to preach His doctrines to all mankind. We pointed out that a Catholic layman who enjoys the benefits of religion, who hears Mass regularly and is nourished by the sacraments, should out of gratitude for such divine blessings make an earnest effort to share such treasures with those who are outside the household of the faith. This, we believe, should be a point to be stressed frequently to our Catholic people.

In almost every congregation there are many who need just such an announcement as the preceding to arouse their zeal and interest. Most of the laity seem, strangely enough, to be oblivious of any duty on their part of winning converts to the faith. The announcement reveals their obligation and at the same time offers them an easy and practical way of fulfilling it. The priest stands ready to do the actual instructing, if they will simply bring their non-Catholic friends to him.

It will be a source of surprise to the pastor of even an average-sized congregation in almost any town or city to discover the response to such an announcement. There are probably a number of young men and women in the parish who are keeping company with non-Catholics who will recognize the excellent opportunity which such a class would offer to their non-Catholic friends to acquire a correct insight into the Catholic faith under circumstances pleasant and free from the slightest embarrassment. Then, too, there will be parishioners who will recall friends and neighbors who attend no church whatsoever, and who begin to realize for the first time what an easy and pleasant task it would be to invite them to such a course of instruction in the fundamental truths of religion.

Parishioners are apt to recall business associates or employees whose lives could be immeasurably enriched by the quickening influence of Catholic truth and her sacramental channels of divine grace. Many priests who have made such an announcement have testified that persons turned up on the opening night whom they never suspected of having any interest in the Catholic religion, and many whom they had never even seen before. It is advisable to make the announcement on three Sundays to keep the matter before the congregation so that it will not easily escape their minds, and to allow them sufficient time to advise their non-Catholic friends and to follow up any prospective clue.

The Class Meeting.

At the first meeting, about 75 people turned out. The meeting was held in the school auditorium instead of in the Church with the thought that some non-Catholics might feel more inclined to enter the school auditorium than they would to enter the church proper. Of the total attendance, about half were non-Catholics, and some were Catholics who had been lax in the practice of their faith. The first lecture was devoted largely to the importance of making a fair, honest, and thorough investigation of the Catholic religion. We pointed out the numerous misconceptions which non-Catholics frequently entertain about the Catholic faith, and then showed how inaccurate and unfounded were many of those conceptions.

We made it a point to get the names and addresses of all the people present, and stressed the importance of attending the entire course of instruction with great regularity and punctuality. We distributed copies of *The Faith of Millions* to each non-Catholic person.

We followed in our exposition the general sequence of topics as presented in that volume. We lectured for about forty minutes, and then invited questions from the audience. This procedure was continued for about three months, when the priests at St. Patrick's took each non-Catholic prospect for individual conferences and instruction. This combination of the class method and private conference seemed to us to be the ideal method. It is effective. It is pleasant and easy for the prospective convert. It places him or her under no positive obligation to embrace the faith, such as one might feel who had taken many hours of a busy pastor's time in private instruction. Then the fact that individual conferences are offered, removes the objection that the priest will not know individual cases and individual needs. We recommend it as efficient, practical, and proven by experience to be successful.

After three months of systematic instruction, we had gathered a group of 28 people who were anxious to be admitted into the faith of Jesus Christ. As a result of their investigation, they were completely convinced that the Catholic Church is the Church founded by Jesus Christ, and is the one which offers to them the supreme help in achieving their eternal salvation.

As many of these people had little or no previous Catholic association, we arranged to have a Big Brother and a Big Sister to act as sponsors for each convert. They not only acted as the sponsors at Baptism, but they came with the convert to kneel at his side at his First Holy Communion, and of course to receive Holy Communion likewise themselves. These sponsors were instructed to "follow through" with the convert. They were asked to keep in close touch with their younger brother, in the faith, and to offer him all the assistance and guidance which a convert to the faith almost inevitably needs.

Public Reception Of Converts.

The profession of faith and the baptism of the group occurred on Saturday. In order to awaken in the congregation a genuine zeal for convert-making, we arranged to have the converts repeat the public profession of their faith at the Mass on the following Sunday. The sight of this large group approaching the altar railing and repeating aloud the moving words of the profession of faith stirred the audience probably more than any sermon they had ever heard.

"It was the first time in my life I ever witnessed such a sight," said a man to the pastor after the Mass. "I recognized one of the group as a business man, and when I realized how many obstacles he had to climb over to get into the fold of Christ, it made me realize how grateful I should be for the favor and the blessing which I received at birth in being baptized in the Catholic faith."

We believe that the public reception of converts is eminently worth-while. It is not done by way of glorification of the work of the pastor. For everyone realizes, and no one more than the priest instructing converts, that the work of conversion is due primarily to the grace of God. Our people are, however, deeply impressed by the spectacle of non-Catholics coming and bowing their heads and making their formal profession of faith in the teachings and practices of the Holy Catholic Faith. There is no reason why this should not be used as an example, no reason why it should not be used as a stimulus for the enhancement of lay missionary work in the parish. For more than a quarter of a century, the writer has used this method of public reception of converts, and it has usually afforded him a half dozen prospects for the next class of instruction.

The Mass was celebrated by the President of the University of Notre Dame, who spoke a few words at a brief meeting after the Mass. A sermon featuring the conversion of Cardinal Newman, with its implications for the scene in America today, was preached by the writer. [Cardinal Newman is now numbered among the Blessed.]

200 Converts.

Since the inauguration of the first class, the pastor of St. Patrick's, the Rev. Patrick H. Dolan, C.S.C., and his assistant, the Rev. Walter J. Higgins, C.S.C., have followed with ten more classes, and have recently received their 200th convert into the Catholic faith. This they have accomplished in the period of about five years. Their people have become infected with their contagious zeal for rounding up converts and bringing them for instruction to the rectory. A house-to-house canvas had been made throughout the city, and this afforded a large list of names for potential convert work.

Looking for the lost sheep has become for priests and people not an exceptional activity but part of the daily routine. The result has been a continuous stream of converts to the Communion railing at St. Patrick's and the bowing of 200 heads before the Cross of Christ in solemn profession of the Catholic faith.

The Catholic Directory shows that we are winning about three converts per priest each year. While it is to be acknowledged that a considerable number of these priests are not engaged in the pastoral ministry, nevertheless the figures indicate that still further progress should be possible along these lines. The experience of the two priests at St. Patrick's who have, with the assistance of their people, won 200 souls for Christ is evidence that all of us can, with zeal, industry and determination, accomplish much more in answering the age-old cry of the Divine Master for the souls of the sheep who have become lost, strayed or stolen.

In *You Too Can Win Souls* we detail various methods by which Catholics can help lead their churchless friends and neighbors into the Church.

Chief among these methods are:

setting a good example,

bringing a churchless friend to Mass or the other devotions,

answering questions about your faith,

using suitable occasions to tell about the peace and happiness your religion gives you,

doing some act of kindness,

bringing a person to an Inquiry Class

and sharing Catholic literature.

We shall cite examples of persons who won converts through the last two methods respectively.

Recruits Two Prospects.

Mrs. Edgar Olson of St. Augustine's parish, Kalamazoo Michigan, was attending the nine o'clock Mass one Sunday in September, 1952, when she heard the following announcement from the pulpit:

"An Inquiry Class will be held on Monday and Thursday evenings at eight o'clock in the school auditorium. St. Augustine's parish has received as many as ninety converts in a year but has never reached the hundred mark. You will enable us to reach that coveted goal if each of you will do your best to bring one churchless friend or neighbor to this class, and God will reward you abundantly."

"I immediately thought," said Mrs. Olson, "of my two daughters-in-law, Velma and Betty. Here's an excellent chance to give them an insight into the Catholic faith. Perhaps through God's grace they may be moved to embrace it and thus unify their family life and bring up their children fervent Catholics.

"That very afternoon," Mrs. Olson added, "I called on Velma and told her about it — there's no obligation to join — you can find out all about the Catholic religion from an expert and see if it doesn't offer you something that will enrich your life here and help you achieve eternal life. There's nothing to lose and a lot to gain."

"Sounds attractive," remarked Velma. "I've often felt that it would be nice to join my husband Willis in prayer and thus set the example for our two youngsters. They'll be asking questions pretty soon if they see only one of their parents reciting the Rosary. I'll go with you."

Leaving Velma, Mrs. Olson drove over to Betty's and extended the same gracious invitation. Betty has five youngsters. She too was feeling the need of unifying her family life and setting an example of a common religious faith and practice for her children.

"This is good news, indeed," was Betty's comment. 'It's nice to know that Catholics are interested in sharing their faith with others. Most of us have thought of Catholics as rather a smug lot, so wrapped up in their own religion that they aren't concerned about outsiders. If Irving will "baby sit" that evening, I'll go with you and Velma."

When Betty and Velma came with Mrs. Olson that Monday evening, they were surprised to see the large crowd that turned out. We had "talked it up" at all the Sunday Masses and had urged each adult to bring one inquirer and, if he couldn't do that, to come himself.

Rarely have our laity been invited to take an active part in the apostolate of saving souls. The hundreds that turned out that night gave a convincing demonstration of the willingness of the laity to respond to an appeal for spiritual help. It's such a pleasant change from the financial appeals with which they must usually be inundated, much to the pastor's regret. Their response showed that when

we once harness the good will and latent zeal of our laity — as loyal and devoted as in any country in the world — to the task of sharing their faith with churchless friends, we shall win not merely 120,000 but a million converts each year. The enlistment of our 30,000,000 laity in recruiting attendance at Inquiry Classes is the next important step in the convert movement in America.

"Betty and Velma," said Mrs. Olson "were delighted with that first session. Through the generous kindness of the pastor, Monsignor John R. Hackett, they were given their choice of a copy of The Faith of Millions or What's the Truth About Catholics? The lecturer was kind and friendly; not a single critical word was spoken of members of other faiths. The talk was constructive, and the emphasis was upon prayer and the love of God. It was just the sort of 'eye opener' both of them needed. There was no difficulty after that. They came to every meeting and found the teachings of the Church reasonable and the evidence of her divine origin unmistakable. They learned their prayers and recited them devoutly."

On Sunday, December 6, 1952, Betty and Velma, with their husbands at their sides, along with twenty-five other members of the class, received their First Holy Communion. It was the happiest day in their lives and in the lives of their families. Each evening they now recite the Family Rosary, and God has deepened and strengthened the unity of their respective homes with the pervasive influence of a common religious faith.

That Sunday was a red-letter day in the history of St. Augustine's parish. It was the first time in its long history that it had witnessed the reception of a hundred converts in one year. Monsignor Hackett and his zealous assistants, Fathers R. P. Taffee and J. J. O'Meara, were jubilant. We had driven up each evening from Notre Dame to give the lectures, and we too were thrilled. But it is to lay recruiters, like Mrs. Edgar Olson, to whom, under God, we give much of the credit for the record-breaking achievement. They and the Inquiry Class and God's grace are an unbeatable combination in any parish.

Here again we see the important role that alertness plays in winning souls for Christ. As soon as Mrs. Olson heard the announcement, she recognized it as a splendid opportunity to interest her two daughters-in-law in the faith. Allowing no grass to grow under her feet, she drove over that very day to their homes and "sold" them on the idea of following the lectures. Not only that, but she came with them to every lecture. Here is alertness, implemented by zeal and resourcefulness: a combination which will make the work of every salesman of Christ abundantly fruitful.

Mr. Gilmore Wins 25.

Mr. Gilmore of St. Louis has shown that every Catholic can help lead churchless friends into the fold by loaning them Catholic pamphlets and books. That is the technique which has enabled him to win some twenty-five converts.

He and his wife called upon us one evening when we were conducting a weekend Retreat in St. Louis, and it was then we learned about his method.

"About twenty-five years ago," said Mr. Gilmore, "Rose and I came up to Illinois University for a football game. We went to Mass at the student church the next morning and met you at the door. I know of your interest in convert making and I want to tell you of a method which I've found to be quite effective."

"We would be glad to hear it," we assured him.

"It's the method of using books as missionaries. I buy many Catholic books and read each one. Then I think of some friend, especially a non-Catholic who, I think, would enjoy reading the book and would be helped by it. I lend it to him, and when he returns it, I discuss it with him. The book usually whets his interest in some aspect of Catholic belief and thus leads to additional inquiries."

"Do you tell him then to see a priest?"

"No, not yet. I studied philosophy at St. Louis University, and I can answer most of the questions. I supplement my answers with a pamphlet or book on the subject. Indeed, I often get a person started by lending him a pamphlet. It's so easy to read that even the busiest person can scarcely plead lack of time. My object is to have the person come face to face with the evidence showing the Catholic Church to be the one true Church. That's usually the beginning of the end."

"What books do you lend them?"

"If the person has a high school or college education, I lend him *The Faith of Millions*. That tells the whole story in a convincing manner and never 'rubs the fur' the wrong way. No open-minded inquirer can read that book without seeing that Christ founded the Catholic Church and authorized it to teach all mankind. If the person has doubts concerning any of the philosophical truths underlying religion, I lend him *Truths Men Live By*." {Both these books are by Father John O'Brien.}

"What books," we inquired, "do you lend persons who haven't finished high school?"

"*What's the Truth About Catholics?* [by Father John O'Brien] and *Father Smith Instructs Jackson* [by Father John Noll] are most helpful for them. They put it across in a simple, popular style and explain all the matter in the catechism in a manner suitable for adults. It would be splendid if our Catholic organizations could put copies of both these books into the hands of all non-Catholics. They would dispel the many false notions so common among outsiders."

"Tell us about one of your conversions," we said.

"Well, there's Rose." He smiled as he glanced at his wife. "She's my first. When I fell in love with her, naturally I wanted with all my heart to share the precious treasure of my faith with her. And, thank God, I did."

"Then there's Dr. William H. Vogt, professor of obstetrics at St. Louis University and a noted specialist. I started him off with some books, discussed them with him, and then took him to Father Hugo E. Harkins, S.J., at St. Francis Xavier Church. He helps direct the Sacred Heart Radio Program and conducts an Inquiry Forum.

"I went with 'Doc' for the first six lectures. Then I saw my presence was no longer needed. Father Harkins explained every point clearly and used charts to bring out doctrines graphically. He did a superb job. At the end of the instructions, he received the doctor along with many others into the Church.

"That was six years ago. Every day since then Dr. Vogt has attended Mass and received Holy Communion! Now he scolds me when I miss. Of the twenty-five converts God has privileged me to lead into the Church, I'm proudest of 'Doc' — next, of course" — smiling at his wife — "to Rose."

Yes, books explaining the Catholic religion are powerful allies for every convert maker: placing such books in the homes of truth seekers is like putting so many missionaries into their midst. Books are meant to be read by many. After reading a good book on your holy faith, why not share it

with others? Its value to you is not decreased, and its power for good is multiplied with every additional reader. Because Mr. Gilmore had the resourcefulness to put the right books in the hands of truth seekers, he was able to lead many into the fold. What he did, you too can do if you will but try.

In an article in Our Sunday Visitor, Dale Francis relates how his interest in the faith was first kindled through reading a Catholic magazine in the library of his home town of Troy, Ohio. Some thoughtful and zealous Catholic had paid to have the magazine sent for a year to the library. That person never knew that he parlayed a three-dollar investment into a \$20,000 enterprise. That spark of interest continued to grow until Dale entered the Church and then established on borrowed funds a \$20,000 Catholic Information Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dale's story is a challenge to every Catholic to place pamphlets and magazines where they are likely to strike the spark of interest in churchless people. To aid Catholics in accepting Dale's challenge, Our Sunday Visitor promptly offered a package of sixteen appropriate ten-cent pamphlets for a dollar.

This offer still holds. It affords everyone a splendid opportunity of embarking this very day in the pamphlet apostolate. It is called the "Dollar Pamphlet Bargain: 16 for \$1.00." As soon as you finish this pamphlet, send for this fine package of pamphlets, enclosing your dollar with your order. [Check out their website <http://www.osv.com/> for lots of goodies and freebies. They have a wealth of good pamphlets and books with an evangelizing emphasis.]

Winning America For Christ.

The winning of America for Christ! What an ideal! Is it not as glorious as that which throbbed in the hearts of the Crusaders of old, steeling them to brave alike the snow-clad heights of the Alps and the burning sands of the Arabian Desert? Yet who would be so rash as to declare that with the succor of that divine grace which never fails a worthy cause, it is an unrealizable idea? Not by grandiose gestures or spectacular feats which provoke the plaudits of the multitude, can that ideal be translated into a glorious reality, but by the patient persevering toil of many laborers and by methods which embody the ripe experience and careful thought of the most successful workers in the field.

To quicken the pulse of every priest and layman to undertake this great task of winning America for Christ, there comes across the sea of centuries the thrilling challenge uttered by the Master in ancient Samaria. Standing by Jacob's well in Sichar almost in the shadow of Mt. Garizim, the Master pointed to the fields through which were coming the throngs of Samaritans and said to His disciples: "Do not you say, there are yet four months, and then the harvest comes? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries: for they are white already to harvest. And he that reaps, receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life everlasting." (John, 4:35.) With its sixty millions of citizens untouched by the saving ministrations of the Christian religion, America now presents the most alluring harvest, with its fields "white already to harvest." Who is there who can doubt that in the prophetic vision of the Master there were not included those vast fields that were to rise up out of the Western seas with their teeming millions of inhabitants — fields now whitening with their human harvest, waiting for reapers to come and gather it into the eternal granary? America represents, therefore the mission field par excellence for the Church in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Throughout this pamphlet, we have referred frequently to our "laity." We would like to make it clear that in all these references we were speaking to you, Mr. Catholic Layman, and to you, Mrs.

Catholic Laywoman. Indeed, we often found ourselves wishing that we knew your name, dear reader, that we might address you personally. This is written primarily for you, Mr. Individual Layman and Mrs. Individual Laywoman; and it will be fruitful only in so far as you respond to the appeal that your pastor, bishop, pontiff, and Christ Himself are making to you through our humble words.

Please do not follow the policy of "letting George do it," or it won't be done at all. Please do not think that others are able to follow the examples of the lay winners of souls mentioned in this pamphlet but that you are not. With God's help, you too can win souls. If you ask Him for that help, He will not fail to give it to you. You will find the work of winning souls for God the most rewarding, exciting, and satisfying work of your life. It will transform you and make you a saint. Indeed, the souls you win for God will be your safest and best bridge to Heaven. It is well, then, dear friend, to end the reading of this pamphlet with a definite resolution, a clear commitment, a specific promise to try this very day to win a churchless person for Christ. Otherwise, your good intention some day to do something about this matter is apt to evaporate into thin air. What is needed is action, not tomorrow, but today — right now. Accordingly, it is suggested that, kneeling before a crucifix — the crucifix on your rosary will do — you promise, not under pain of sin but simply on your word of honor, the following:

"Dear Jesus, my crucified Lord and Savior, I promise that I shall heed Your invitation to seek and to win for You the precious souls for whom You died on Calvary's Cross. I shall try earnestly and zealously to win souls for You by prayer, by the example of an upright life, by kindness and love toward all men, by explaining my holy faith, by lending Catholic literature, by bringing them to Mass and other devotions and especially to a priest for systematic instruction. I shall do my utmost to win at least one soul for You, dear Jesus, every year of my life. So help me, God."

Then kiss the crucifix and seal your promise with the Sign of the Cross, saying, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."

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