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Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

Francis Thompson

The Role of the Laity

By F. Mackenzie Shattock

Mgr. van Bekkum, Vicar-Apostolic of Ruteng (Indonesia), a missionary Bishop speaking in the name of the many Missionary Bishops assembled at Assisi for the first Congress of Pastoral Liturgy, in September 1956, drew a sombre picture of the difficulties the Church was facing in many mission fields and nearer home. In overcrowded churches one or two priests would at times administer Holy Communion to several thousand parishioners, the Mass would be unduly prolonged and the Eucharistic celebration seemed to lose its sacred character. One priest would often be in charge of twenty outlying centres and might be unable to reach them. In both cases he said deacons could assist the priests and could assemble the people for dominical services when no priest was available. Many other duties would fall to them. The principle should be established that a personal mandate be given by the Church to those who serve the community in a permanent capacity; and they should receive a special consecration for their task.

Fr. Winninger, a professor in the seminary of Strasburg uses Monsignor van Bekkum's plea for the missions as an introduction to his study of the diaconate.* The Church's needs are as pressing in countries lying nearer home, the situation can only be described as catastrophic, aggravated as it is by the displacement of whole populations, the scattering of Catholics and the scarcity of vocations to the priesthood. In the thirteenth century a somewhat similar need was met by St. Francis and his companions; could it be met now by a revival of the diaconate? New remedies often differ from what was hoped for and expected, and they are at the outset distrusted, even resented. The question of the diaconate has, since the 1956 Congress of Pastoral Liturgy, been openly discussed, mainly in Germany, and Fr. Winninger draws material from these studies.

He reminds us that both layfolk and seminarists worked heroically in concentration camps and prisons in recent persecutions; they did all

they could to supply some of the services a priest would have given. This magnificent dedication of youth was recognised by the foundation in Bonn in 1952, of a seminary, in which laymen are trained; they are coming forward in good numbers to take up their duties. At the end of this chapter of Father Winninger's book in which due praise is given to the joyful and generous dedication of these young men, we find a foot-note (p. 32): "To complete the picture . . . we must note also the female auxiliaries." In an institution similar to the seminary for laymen they prepare themselves for various duties, particularly for religious instruction and follow the courses in theology of the University. As *Pfarrerhelferinnen* (an older institution), as catechists, in youth centres, caring for churches, sacristies and Mass centres, women render multiple services to the Church, and under present conditions in Germany "*Pfarrerhelferinnen* are irreplaceable." A generous tribute, which only its inconspicuous insertion deprives of the attention it fully deserves.

The chief advocates of a renewed diaconate are Fr. W. Schamoni, whose work, "Married Men as Ordained Deacons", has been translated into English and Dr. Jos. Hornef, a layman, whose numerous publications are extensively quoted. Among the reasons in support of an extended diaconate is the appeal it would make to men's liturgical interests, which the author considers to be at present sadly lacking, the offices of the Church, particularly on weekdays, becoming increasingly "the concern of women and children" (p. 80). The reader may wonder whether specialised service would appeal to those who now fail to avail themselves of opportunities open to all.

Fr. W. Schamoni, who advocates the extension of the diaconate to married men concedes that the functions of teachers and catechists in the mission-field are similar to those exercised by deacons of the early Church. There are about a hundred thousand catechists and an approximately equal number of teachers of religion; we are not told whether these numbers include the

**Vers un Renouveau du Diaconat*. Desclée de Brouwer 1958.

many nuns who are now devoting their lives to this apostolate. Fr. Hofinger, S.J., a specialist in liturgical and missionary questions believes that a diaconate "détaché de la prêtrise" would present advantages and might render great service to the Church, particularly where priests are few and innumerable believers face death without the Sacraments.

A theologian, Fr. K. Brockmöller, S.J. deplors the division which separates the priest from an untrained laity, often tens of thousands under the care of a single priest with no intermediaries to assist him. The early Church used deacons as intermediaries between the faithful and the priest. Fr. Brockmöller adds in parenthesis: "There were also deaconesses." (p. 126).*

Discussing the vow of celibacy, with reference to the diaconate, Fr. Winninger notes that celibacy is no rarer today, for man or woman, rather is it more common in a diversified society as there is greater security for single persons in the possibilities of earning their living. Quite apart from the question of celibacy, there are now fewer vocations for the priesthood and more for the lay apostolate, as shown by the truly remarkable development of Secular Institutes.

The author believes that these developments may account for the decreasing number of vocations to the female religious orders as a greater number of those women who would previously have entered a Convent now dedicate their lives to the service of God in work which resembles that of the deaconesses of the primitive Church.

When discussing the hierarchical constitution of the Church, Fr. Winninger draws attention to the fallacy of considering the diaconate as a mode of life which is usually transitory culminating in ordination to the priesthood. He believes that a body of deacons would reinforce "la milice masculine de l'église" to whose more virile aspect he believes Catholic action to have already contributed. "In Germany, the shortage of priests is in part compensated by female parish auxiliaries . . . *Seelsorgerinnen*; they perform in a way, diaconal functions and their devotion cannot be sufficiently praised."

Nevertheless, says Fr. Winninger, it was noted by Fr. Brockmöller* that this is a sign, among others, "of a more and more general feminization of the Church;" pastoral experience had shown that the men were often brought back to the practice of their religion by the women. In conclusion, Dr. Winninger quotes Dr. Brockmöller as saying the question is: "Is this the natural order, is it God's plan?" (p. 148). The drawbacks of the suggested feminization of the Church are then shown in the author's opinion to extend to

*Christentum am Morgen Des Atomzeitalters—Josef Knecht.

education, particularly primary education. These words are spoken in charity, but their sting can only be experienced by those who have endeavoured to serve and who, as is indicated, have been successful. Whether discouraged or not, an answer comes readily to mind: God's plan of feminization (an unpleasant word) is revealed, if not by the creation of Eve in His image, then, —triumphantly—at the Annunciation.

In the May 1959 number of *Etudes*, Fr. Robert Rouquette (p. 238-42) reviews Fr. Winninger's study of the diaconate. He says that ordination to the diaconate consecrates functions now performed by men and women who dedicate their lives to God's service. There were certainly deaconesses in the Eastern Church in antiquity; they received a consecration which resembled that of Minor Orders and may have assisted in the administration of some of the Sacraments. The deacons only were ordained "*au sacerdoce de l'évêque*". Fr. Rouquette remarks that one could conceive of the creation of a special liturgical consecration for the laity, both men and women, not the sacrament of diaconal ordination but a source of grace, a definite engagement in a lay body charged with sacramental functions.

It is not for the laity to anticipate the wishes or dispositions of Holy Church, but laywomen rejoice to find their work in the service of the Church has been so generously acknowledged. They will continue to serve in the ways now available to them, and they will identify themselves ever more closely with the mind of the Church—in what the contributors to this study of the diaconate have called the Church's hour of need.

POLICEWOMEN IN IRELAND

A correspondent writes: "At last we have our Women Police on duty in Dublin. They passed out from training in the first week of December and went on patrol duty immediately. The police in Ireland are called *Gardai* and the women's branch will be called *Ban Gardai* (Women Guards). The initial intake was twelve and they were trained by a woman sergeant of the Liverpool Police Force, in addition to the normal training for the *Gardai* in Ireland. In spite of all the advance jokes in humorous (?) magazines, the newcomers on the streets have been accepted as a perfectly ordinary occurrence. It seems amazing that there was so much opposition to their formation and that women's societies here had to press continually for a number of years before the authorities finally agreed to the incorporation of women as part of the police force."

Our correspondent probably knows that England had an equally long struggle.

Notes and Comments

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

We are happy to announce that on December 8th, Madame Magdeleine Leroy-Boy was elected president of St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance by the National Sections. The Alliance is indeed fortunate in having obtained the services of so distinguished a Catholic feminist who has won the affection of many members. Madame Leroy has been a valued member for many years and she did valiant work for the Alliance at the United Nations when living in Geneva. She writes from Israel to say that she remembered St. Joan's at the Christmas Mass in Bethlehem.

In another column, some particulars are given of Madame Leroy's career and of her international work.

As previously announced, the Seventeenth Council Meeting of St. Joan's International Alliance will be held in Treves by kind invitation of the German Section of the Alliance. The date is now definitely fixed for Saturday and Sunday, June 11th and 12th. A delightful programme has been arranged by our hosts and we trust members will arrange their holidays so as to be able to come to Treves for the Council Meeting.

A Commemorative Lecture for the first instalment of women's suffrage under the auspices of The Fawcett Society, The Women's Freedom League and St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance will be held on Monday, 8th February, at 7 p.m. at The Alliance Hall, Westminster (off Caxton Street). Miss Joan Vickers, M.P., will speak on "Women and The Vote" with Mrs. Mary Stocks in the chair. Members are asked to bring their friends to the lecture, admission to which will be free.

A private members' Bill entitled the National Insurance (Widowed Mothers) Bill has been introduced by Mr. W. Griffiths (Manchester Exchange) and is down for Second Reading on February 5th. The Bill provides for the abolition of the earnings rule for widows with dependent children thus enabling them to earn without any deductions from pension. The Bill was initiated by the National Council of Women and has the support of St. Joan's Alliance and many other organisations.

We thank all those who have been so kind as to send us Christmas greetings. Beautiful cards have been received from many parts of the world, a gesture we much appreciate. We wish all our members a happy and fruitful 1960.

Ghana. Provisions for ten women to become Members of Parliament through electoral colleges, without having to contest elections in the normal way, were contained in a new measure approved by the National Assembly.

The Minister of Local Government, Mr. A. E. A. Ofori Atta, said that with the rapid advancement of Ghana it was necessary that women should play an increasingly active role in the Government of the country.

Women voters in each electoral district would vote for the election of one woman to be a member of an electoral college in each region. All the women thus elected would form the colleges, and they would elect Members for the National Assembly.

"The Government believe," said Mr. Ofori Atta, "that by the election of special women representatives this House will more fully embody the collective wisdom of the nation as a whole."—*Ghana Today*.

The Congo. The Legislative Council meeting in Brussels in September last, decided to grant votes to women. It was not possible to revise the register of electors in time for the December elections but women were however eligible to stand as candidates.

The same situation prevails in Ruanda-Urundi where in October, the Urundi Council voted that women should be granted the franchise and eligibility.

Israel. In the new Ben-Gurion Cabinet, appointed by the Knesset, Mrs. Golda Meir (Mapai) retains her post as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Italy. It is pleasing to record that the City Council of Rome has agreed to name a Square after Don Luigi Sturzo, founder of the *Partito Popolare*. He was a valued member of St. Joan's Alliance.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Forty-ninth Annual Meeting of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance will be held on Saturday, March 19th, at 2.30 p.m. Nominations for committee and resolutions for the agenda must reach the secretary not later than February 16th. Nominations must be duly proposed and seconded and the consent of the candidate obtained.

Subscriptions to the Alliance (£1 which includes "The Catholic Citizen") are now due. Prompt payment will be appreciated.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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Women Non-Manual Workers

The International Labour Organisation Advisory Committee on Salaried Employees and Professional Workers held its Fifth Session last November in Cologne. Representatives of Employers, Workers and Governments met to discuss Recent Developments Affecting Salaried Employees and Professional Workers; The Effect of Mechanisation and Automation in Offices; Problems of Women Non-Manual Workers.

Among the delegates and advisers to the Conference were some twenty women. Several international non-governmental organisations attended as Observers but it was regrettable that so few of the Women's Organisations were represented. Dr. Luise Bardenhewer, president of the German Section of the Alliance, represented St. Joan's International Alliance and did valuable work during the Conference.

A sub-committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Miss M. Berden (Government member, Netherlands) to consider the problems of women non-manual workers, the item on the agenda in which the Alliance is particularly interested. The committee had for consideration the Report prepared by the I.L.O. and the Report of the Meeting of the Panel of Consultants.

The resolution drafted by the sub-committee, which was adopted by the Conference, has many points which are welcome to the Alliance. It stresses the importance of girls and boys enjoying equal opportunities with regard to education and vocational training and recommends that training for new techniques be available to all non-manual workers without discrimination on the grounds of sex; that procedures for the re-adaptation of women non-manual workers who require it be established; that there should be no obstacles on the basis of sex to the advancement of women non-manual workers to better paid employment and promotion to higher posts; that marriage should not be a cause of dismissal for women; and that women non-manual workers should be covered by social security under the same con-

ditions as are applicable to men in the same category. Conditions of work for part-time women non-manual workers should not be less favourable than conditions of work for part-time men non-manual workers in similar employment.

The resolution also recommends that studies relating to man-power needs should cover not only occupations traditionally reserved to women workers but deal also with new careers; and that the school-leaving age be raised to sixteen years to provide a solid basic education for future workers.

On equal pay, the resolution draws attention to the Convention on that subject and asks the I.L.O. when compiling statistical information concerning wages, to pay special attention to the remuneration of women non-manual workers.

As regards night work, the resolution asks for consideration of the advisability of adopting an international instrument concerning night work of women non-manual workers. (The present Convention deals solely with women in industry.)

The resolution deprecates the employment of girls under sixteen for prolonged periods of work involving the use of office machinery; recommends that suitable rest rooms be provided for women workers; and draws attention to the need of giving effect to the provision of the Maternity Protection Convention (revised 1952).

The question of the retirement age for women is omitted from the resolution. From the discussion in the sub-committee it appears that the Workers' members were in favour of pensions being given to women five years sooner than to men, while several of the Employers and Government members pointed out the inconsistency between the desire for equal treatment in all respects with regard to social security, and the wish that a discrimination in favour of women workers should be prescribed in one of the essential branches of social security.

In the discussion on the extension of the Night Work Convention to women non-manual workers, the Workers' members wished to main-

tain exceptions "in case of need and special circumstances." One wonders to whom such a Convention will apply, for doctors, nurses, midwives, telephonists, women M.P.s and others, are called upon at all hours, not to speak of those employed during the innumerable national and international conferences which are modern commonplace.

Also during the discussion, the Workers' members asked that weekly hours of work should not exceed forty over a five-day week and that overtime and work on public holidays should be reduced, all this for women only, though the same claims are increasingly being made by the Trade Unions for all their members.

Indeed, we see no reason why most of the provisions of the resolution should not apply to all workers, boys and men as well as girls and women. One-sided protection of women workers is bound to turn eventually to their detriment as workers. As regards maternity welfare, of which of course no woman should be deprived, this is the concern of the social services.

To conclude, it may be of value to quote from the preamble to the resolution which notes: "The principle of the protection of women in general and the assertion of their rights as workers is enshrined in the Constitution of the International Labour Office and the Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944 lists among the objectives which must constitute the central aim of national and international policy the principle that all human beings irrespective of sex have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity, including the assurance of the equality of education and vocational training."

It also notes that "the standards set by the overwhelming majority of the International Labour Standards of the I.L.O. apply to women as well as to men, and that certain Conventions and Recommendations of a general character include special provisions covering women's work while others relate exclusively to that subject, including in particular the Conventions concerning maternity protection, the night work of women, underground work for women and equal remuneration."

C. A. B.

We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the soul of Gertrude Gaffney, a former vice-president of St. Joan's International Alliance who died recently in Dublin. Miss Gaffney, a journalist, was for many years a regular columnist in *The Irish Independent*. She sent dispatches to her paper from Palestine during the Arab-Jewish disturbances and from Spain during the Civil War. R.I.P.

MAGDELEINE LEROY-BOY

Présidente Alliance Internationale Sociale et Politique Sainte Jeanne d'Arc

C'est en 1935 que Magdeleine Leroy-Boy, qui menait à Paris une enquête sur les grandes organisations féminines, eut l'occasion de connaître l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc, au cours d'une longue conversation avec Marie Lenôel; la documentation qu'elle recueillait devait illustrer la thèse de Doctorat en Droit qu'elle soutint en 1936 devant l'Université de Lyon.

Devenue belge la même année par son mariage avec un jeune juriste bruxellois, Magdeleine Leroy continua à montrer en Belgique son intérêt pour les oeuvres sociales et tout spécialement pour les questions féminines.

En 1941, elle parvient à rejoindre son mari, officier dans les Forces Belges en Grande Bretagne, et elle demeure à Londres en travaillant dans les services français et belges. Peu après son arrivée elle avait cherché à renouer le contact avec l'Alliance, car notre conception du féminisme chrétien lui était apparue dès le début comme la seule vraiment satisfaisante, et pendant près de quatre ans elle suivit les travaux de la section britannique et elle fut souvent déléguée de l'Alliance aux séances du Comité de Liaison des grandes organisations féminines.

Après les années de guerre, Magdeleine Leroy porte également son intérêt aux activités du Conseil National des Femmes Belges, puis du Conseil International des Femmes ainsi qu'aux activités de la Fédération Abolitionniste Internationale. Son attachement à l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc n'en est pas pour autant diminué, et, dans la mesure où ses charges familiales—Magdeleine Leroy a quatre fils—et où les déplacements de son mari, entré en 1943 dans la carrière diplomatique, le lui permettent, elle suit les réunions du Comité International de St. Joan's Alliance, dont elle est une des vice-présidentes. Pendant quatre ans et demi, à Genève, elle représente l'Alliance à diverses sessions de l'Ecosoc ainsi qu'à d'autres Commissions des Nations Unies et des Institutions Spécialisées.

A présent qu'elle se trouve à Tel Aviv avec son mari, ambassadeur de Belgique en Israël, elle espère recevoir ses amies de l'Alliance que tenterait un pèlerinage en Terre Sainte.

On behalf of the Merseyside Branch of the Alliance, a Requiem Mass was offered for Dame Vera Laughton Mathews at the church of St. Philip Neri in Liverpool on December 14th. After the Mass, a meeting was held at Atlantic House when Miss Ruby Williamson spoke on the "Congress of Our Lady's Sodality, U.S.A., August 1959." Mrs. Ruddy reported on topics discussed by the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations and how we can help in the Refugee year.

THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

Parliament adjourned on December 17th until January 26th, an unusually long Recess. During December, among other things, the Commons discussed Local Employment, Traffic Congestion, European Free Trade, and Telephone Tapping. The private Bill on control of office premises had its Second Reading on December 11th and Chris Chataway, the runner and T.V. star made a lively and humane Maiden Speech.

There were, from our point of view, no debates of major importance but a number of points of interest were raised. On December 7th, Mr. Callaghan raised the question of Racial Intolerance and Discrimination on the Adjournment, with special reference to the manner in which the U.K. delegation has voted at the United Nations in the matter of United Nations criticism of the policy of Apartheid. Many people, including the mover of this motion, feel that it would be better for the U.K. to abstain when other countries wish to criticise South African policy—as did Canada and Australia—instead of adopting a strictly legalistic attitude and opposing any criticism on the grounds that it refers only to internal policy. Miss Herbison seconded the motion. In his reply Mr. Ormsby-Gore argued that a solution to the problems of South Africa and South West Africa could only be obtained by "negotiations between the United Nations and the Union of South Africa. It is essential therefore to strive to find a mutually acceptable basis for negotiation and to preserve an atmosphere favourable for that purpose." During the debate, although the Government remained firm on its United Nations policy, widespread dislike of racial intolerance in any form was expressed on both sides of the House.

During the Committee stage of the Commonwealth Scholarships Bill the Minister of State for Commonwealth Affairs said: "Let me make it clear to the Committee that my noble Friend the Secretary of State intends to include a woman in the membership of the Commission when it is appointed."

On December 1st, Dr. A. Thompson asked the Foreign Secretary, "What is the proportion of women at present employed in the senior branch of the Foreign Office?" Mr. Allan replied: "On 1st November 1959 there were 705 established members of Branch A of the Foreign Service. Of these 14, or approximately two per cent. were women."

On December 10th, Mr. G. Thomas asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies "What was the number of African children in Kenya who proceeded to the University in each of the years from 1950 to 1958 respectively." The reply was tabled and showed a rise from 45 in 1950 to 151

in 1958. No indication was given of how many (if any) of these students were women.

Dame Irene Ward was at it again. On December 3rd she asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer "What overall plan he has to help those living on small fixed incomes." Mr. Barber replied: "As my hon. Friend knows, we are very conscious of the difficulties with which many such people are faced. By far the best way to help them is to safeguard the stability of the economy and this is what we are doing." Dame Irene pursued: "Will my hon. Friend bear in mind that there was an election pledge? Will he ask his right hon. Friend to give consideration to this during the Recess, possibly setting up a Committee or something like that? Will he also convey to his right hon. Friend that I shall be in hot pursuit when the House resumes after the Recess?" Mr. Barber replied, cautiously: "I will certainly convey these observations to my right hon. Friend—and perhaps at the same time I may warn him." With some reason, one would imagine.

Mr. McKay asked the Minister of Pensions: "whether he will pay Family Allowances to the first child; and how much it would cost to do so." Miss Hornsby-Smith replied: "The Government have no proposals for such legislation. It is estimated that the cost of the proposal would be nearly £140 million a year."

The make-up and terms of reference of the Monckton Commission continued to arouse considerable mistrust on the part of the Opposition. One interesting constitutional point was raised by Mrs. Castle on December 17th. She had tabled two questions on the personal safety of African witnesses wishing to give evidence before the Commission in Nyasaland and addressed them to the Prime Minister. The questions were transferred to the Commonwealth Relations Office and thereby put back from No. 20 on the list to No. 90. Mrs. Castle accused the Government (a) of wrongly transferring the questions to a ministry which had, in fact no jurisdiction over the point at issue, (b) of doing so with intent to postpone the necessity of answering until after the recess when the matter would no longer be so topical, and (c) of prejudging the whole question of the Commission by allotting all responsibility to the Commonwealth Relations Office. As Mrs. Castle said: "Surely it would be intolerable to the House if the Government were acting on the assumption that responsibility for the conduct of the Monckton Commission is a matter for the Commonwealth Relations Office, and thus by inference, for the Federal Government and not for this Parliament." Mr. Butler, while naturally ignoring her second point immediately undertook to discuss both the other two points with

his colleagues. One less than perfectly serious member commented: "When dealing with this matter will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether it should not be referred to the Board of Trade on the basis that the Monckton Commission was launched on a fraudulent prospectus?"

On December 14th, Dr. Johnson asked the Minister of Health: "If he has yet completed the follow-up of cases of leucotomy which was instituted by his predecessor?" Mr. Walker-Smith replied: "I regret that the analysis of the results of the follow-up has not yet been completed, but I hope a report will be ready shortly . . . we expect the work to be completed early next year, and I am sure that it will serve a useful purpose."

B. M. Halpern

REVIEWS

Children and Priest at Mass. By Hubert McEvoy, S.J. (Oliver & Boyd, 5s.)

Until such time as dialogue Mass is the usual practice, this book should be very valuable to children attending Mass either alone or with the family. The book is well produced with many photographs. It must be clearly understood that it is designed for the over-sevens. C. S.

Guide for Living. Selected Addresses and Letters of His Holiness Pope Pius XII. (Pan Books, 2s. 6d.)

In this selection of addresses arranged by Maurice Quinlan, the late Holy Father is shown as deeply conscious of the needs and problems that are peculiar to our times as well as an understanding of the difficulties of living the Catholic life at all times.

The titles show the breadth of his interest and his concern for every aspect of human endeavour and for all causes of human suffering. Much is said on the family, on morals in medicine and on the latest developments in science and their effects, good and bad, on the human race. He speaks on Space, Astronomy, Television, World Government and the Technical Age as well as on Peace and Nuclear Warfare, on Persecution and Materialism—and to the sick and suffering. The book is an attempt to indicate how His Holiness, 'the living Peter' accomplished his mission as the supreme teacher of the peoples. P. C. C.

These Women Walked with God. By the Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O. (Clonmore and Reynolds, 18s.)

The fifteen women whose lives in the Cistercian Order span the thirteenth century prove that the way of the mystic is the same in all ages, however the externals of life may differ from century to century.

Many of these saints are almost unknown, ex-

cept to their own clientèle; they were in many ways ahead of their times. The eldest of the three princesses, daughters of King Sancho I, of Portugal, who devoted their wealth to the founding of convents, and themselves to the religious life, said: "Royalty is much better off in this ravine of mine with God alone, than in the courts of Europe making mockery of God's great Sacrament of Matrimony by using princesses as political pawns."

The lives of the saints speak for themselves and it seems a pity that the author should analyse women's natural characteristics in general in order perhaps to show up the supernatural achievements of the particular women he has chosen to portray.

One of the biographers of St. Gertrude the Great is, however, quoted as saying: "God speaks to whom, and through whom He pleases, and makes no distinction of sex," but he must needs add "unless it be to give more abundantly to the weaker when they are humble and devoted," which is surely true of all human beings, men and women alike. P. C. C.

THRILLS AND SPECTACLE

Ben Hur, "a tale of the Christ", is now running at the Empire and will no doubt be seen by many thousands. It is grand, spectacular and well acted and, for once, accents and dialogue have been stream-lined so as to cause no mental bumps. The panoramic back-grounds are magnificent, the costumes full of veracity and the thrills stupendous. In fact long before the famous chariot race, the sight of Ben Hur in the galleys, a sea battle, and the imprisonment of Miriam and Tirzah have proved sufficiently enthralling. The chariot race itself is not for the sensitive child (if there are any such left) for the bloody denouement of Ben Hur's enemy Messala is a long drawn-out and sickening spectacle. In fact one criticism of the film is just this—too much lingering over cruelty and horror. The other criticism is of the lengthy dialogues of the first thirty minutes which are thought necessary for the unfolding of the plot. They could surely have been cut by a simple reading of the narrative. The religious motive is not really as outstanding as the sub-heading would have us believe, but where "the dear Christ enters in", He is indeed shown as the dear and Beloved which makes the scenes of the Via Dolorosa and Crucifixion all the more agonising. Charlton Heston is a convincing Ben Hur and acts sincerely throughout and I should like to single out especially Hugh Griffith's performance as the endearing Sheikh who trains scene-stealing white horses for the chariot race and persuades Ben Hur to run them.

This is an M.G.M. production directed by William Wyler. C. S.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From the Catholic Citizen, 15th January, 1935.

We wish the Archbishop of Liverpool's fine sermon preached at the Women's Mass at the Regional Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne could have been delivered in a country where women have not yet won their emancipation. . . . We quote the following passages :

"It is well for women to remember that it is only in comparatively recent times that she has won her emancipation, and been free to mould her own life and, as it were, set her own pace. She has had to pass through many stages before attaining to her rightful position in human society. In the earliest phases her degradation was absolute, her status that of a slave. Even in the civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome she was kept in subjection. Aristotle, the father and founder of the science of biology, regarded woman as a kind of imperfect man, whilst many psychologists contended that she was devoid of soul, her function being merely to contribute to the well-being of her lord and master—man. But with the advent of Christianity she acquires a new dignity, and attained to a position of honour, reflecting the glory of Mary, the Mother of God.

"Later, in the ages of chivalry, woman was placed on a pedestal of sorts, idolised and flattered, but was kept to her pedestal by the very honours which circumscribed her. Liberty of speech and action were still a long way off; but from the beginning of the nineteenth century she has fought her own battle bravely, and won for herself the citizen rights which have so long been withheld from her.

" . . . It is for you Catholic women to insist on the application of the Christian ethic to the common estimate of moral values. It is surely high time, for instance, that the dual standard of morality which condones in the man what is unpardonable in the woman were abolished once and for all, and that the laws of self-respect and self-restraint be observed in accordance with the Gospel teaching. . . ."—*Notes and Comments.*

A COMMEMORATIVE LECTURE

FOR THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 6th FEBRUARY, 1918

under the auspices of

THE FAWCETT SOCIETY
WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE
ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL & POLITICAL ALLIANCE

WOMEN AND THE VOTE

Speaker:

MISS JOAN VICKERS, M.B.E., M.P.

Chairman:

MRS. MARY STOCKS

THE ALLIANCE HALL, Palmer Street, Westminster
(off Caxton Street)

MONDAY, 8th FEBRUARY, 1960, at 7 p.m.

Admission Free.

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OBJECT

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

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