

"But Why The Candles, Holy Water And Beads?"

"It looks like hokus-pocus to me," Dave Smith said to Father Crane.

Dave was expressing a quite common view held by many non-Catholics... that the Catholic use of such articles as beads, crucifixes, medals and holy water is unnecessary in religion and even smacks of pagan superstition.

"What good does it do," Dave asked, "to light a candle or burn incense? And how can a little medal around my neck protect me from accidents?"

Unfortunately, too many people outside the Catholic Faith have a complete misunderstanding of these religious articles and the use to which they are put. There is nothing pagan or superstitious about them, and they do have a very real religious meaning and value.

"Actually," Father Crane told Dave, "religious articles used by Catholics are meant to be helps to their religious life—nothing more. The value of such articles is not in the metal, wood or wax of which they are made, nor in the form they may have... but in the prayer of the Church and of Christ, in whose name the Church prays in blessing them... as well as the fervor of the user's own prayer and his good disposition."

But Dave was still not convinced. He argued that religion is a spiritual thing... that it requires no external manifestations. "Yes," the priest agreed, "it is spiritual. But isn't it the natural thing for a human being to give outward expression to the things within his heart? How, for example, could you be sure that your mother loved you if she gave no signs that she did?"

Our Lord, Father Crane added, could have cured the blind man

(John 9:6) merely by willing it. Instead, he first made a salve of clay and anointed the man's eyes. In blessing little children, He did not have to lay His hands on them—but he did. Many people, Father Crane added, think the Catholic practice of kneeling to pray is unnecessary... yet Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, "kneeling down... began to pray" (Luke 22:41).

Many Catholic practices which seem strange to you now, would make a deep and convincing impression upon your mind and heart if you understood them. And this is your invitation to investigate.

We will gladly send you without cost or obligation, in a plain wrapper, a highly interesting pamphlet explaining such things as the Catholic use of crucifixes, medals, incense, holy water, candles, and special Catholic prayers and practices such as the Rosary, Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and Lent. It costs you nothing to learn the truth, and the truth will be most interesting. Nobody will call on you. Write today for Pamphlet FM-38.

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As You Were Saying...

The Reading Hour. Recently, when friends of mine were visiting their grandfather's home, I was invited to stay a night with them. They came from a well-educated, well-read family, but even this didn't prepare me.

When we were all gathered in the living room just before retiring, their grandfather took a book of Dickens from the shelf and asked if I'd like to read. Startled, I said, "Very much." So I read aloud to the rest of the family.

I started off in a trembling way, but it didn't matter. Whenever I came to a passage that they wished to discuss, or one they didn't understand, I was stopped. After an hour of this, with everyone from the youngest to the oldest participating, I had completed only one chapter.

At the end of the hour, the grandfather stood up and said, "Children, the reading hour is over. Time for bed." That evening was one of the most pleasant in my memory, and I've often thought that if more families had a "reading hour," they'd be better educated and closer knit.—*Carolyn Gilman, Madison, N. H.*

Trapper's Code. My brother worked his way through school by running a line of traps in the Nevada desert country.

One bitter cold morning when I went up the line to help him, I saw him pry open the jaws of one of his larger traps and let a small badger scamper off free.

Puzzled, I asked him why: "That badger's fur was worth money."

He watched the animal disappear, then said quietly, "But that was a mother badger."—*Lafe Sharar, Ogden, Utah.*

Looks Are Deceiving. One day I walked to the sidewalk with a guest. After we made our "good-byes," she left and I turned to a friend nearby and said, "Isn't she pretty?"

My friend looked after her, then said, "Trouble is, she doesn't have a look on her face."

She was right. As beautiful as it was, it was an empty face. Since then I've made a habit of noticing how many people, who aren't beautiful, have something more important: a look on their face.—*Bernice McCullar, Atlanta, Ga.*



One Good Turn Deserves an Audience. Recently I saw a middle-aged woman driver trying unsuccessfully to persuade a farmer to accept some money. Apparently he had pushed her disabled car with his pickup truck from some distance out in the country and left her safely near a service station.

As he declined her offer, nervously rolling the brim of his hat, he said, "Look, M'am, if I accepted your money it would take all the joy out of doing a good deed. Besides,"

he added, pointing to a young boy in the truck, "I want my son there to learn to do folks a good turn whenever he can."—*J. Marshall Porter, Cumberland, Md.*

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