

Often it has been said that youth is the nation's greatest asset. But it is more than that—it is the world's greatest asset. More than that, it is, perhaps, the world's only hope. —Fr. Flanagan



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**Father Edward J. Flanagan**  
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

**Father Flanagan League:**  
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year One—November

*Excerpts from Father Flanagan's prayers*

O Heavenly Father, we acknowledge with grateful hearts Your numerous graces and blessings bestowed upon us, as individuals and as a nation that is especially favored by You.

We are quite conscious, Dear Lord, of our unworthiness and inability to accomplish any good of ourselves, and hence recognize that all good comes through You, Our Lord and Master.

Teach us, Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, a deep sense of our duties and responsibilities not only towards our own children but all children who come within our reach of influence... Teach us, Dear Lord, to be unselfish, with our time and our talent...to set a good example by that unselfishness, and by our way of life, that we may set forth a pattern to the young...

Dear Lord, our children are so precious, so needed to be trained and developed into a citizenry that will be wholesome and constructive that all their thoughts, words and actions may be directed towards You and mutual service to each other, which will insure a safe and sane citizenry strong enough to protect it against the powers of evil. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.  
Amen!

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*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has  
anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor...  
to proclaim liberty to captives...  
to let the oppressed go free"*

Luke 4.18

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## From Fr. Flanagan's writings

*(Part II (Conclusion) of excerpt from an address November 1, 1939, at the B'nai B'rith Forum of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania):*

The prelude to all adult crime, when we trace it to its source, is inevitably juvenile delinquency...by far the preponderant number of our adult criminals learned their unwholesome trades as children...

I have founded a life work on the premise that no boy really wants to be bad. Twenty two years have gone by since I first enunciated the principle, and opened my Home to prove it. I have never once had occasion to retract it, or to alter it in any way, and in that time I have dealt with thousands of boys.

Children are not born bad or anti-social. Our youth do not consciously want the bloody nightmares of Communism or Fascism, and still less do they want the pain and heartbreak which follow in the wake of a criminal career. But broken homes, disinterested parents, inefficient schools, and neglectful communities leave them little choice.

As a people, we are spiritually bankrupt...The experience of the race, from the dawn of antiquity down to the present day, has gone to show that the molding influence of religion has been the most decisive factor in motivating men to better and more genuinely social lives. The laws of men are but a reflection of the law of God. Where the latter is traduced and disregarded, we have no right to look for a uniform observance of the former. Without religious training, no boy or girl can grow into the best kind of citizenship... Monogamy and fidelity still stand as the impregnable defenses of individual mental health and social sanity.

The fundamental unit of society, divinely appointed, and justified by the experience of the centuries, is the home. It is the source from which all social behavior stems, and it is no less the focal point from which all juvenile delinquency arises...

Of all the vocations to which men and women aspire, there is none so pregnant with possibilities for both good and evil as parenthood. The continuity of the race is in their keeping. In a very

special sense, they share the prerogatives of God Himself, for they too, are creators. We train and are trained for the humblest of professions, and yet countless young people embark upon this most sacred calling with no training whatsoever, and do not even deem such training necessary...

We cannot, no matter how far we expand our youth services, escape the vital role that the home has to play in the training and education of our children...Parents are the first preceptors of the lessons of life and living...

The youth of today are living in a world far different from any which we ever knew...Yet this is the world which we have built...the world in which our boys and girls must try to grow into socially conscious and responsible maturity.

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### FATHER FLANAGAN PRAYER

**G**od of mercy, love and compassion, we are grateful that You gave Father Edward Joseph Flanagan special graces to love, protect and guide neglected, vulnerable and oppressed youth. Thank you that the work he began with the foundation of Boys Town, has continued to spread throughout the world. We pray that You inspire many to adopt his caring, loving ways as mentor and protector of youth.

Loving Father, we bring our own needs to you now, asking that through the intercession of Father Flanagan, in accordance with your Holy Will, you grant us these special favors: \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank You for Your Faithfulness and Providence, and for hearing these petitions which we ask in the Name of Your Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

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