

Youth is a time of dreams, of high aspirations and enthusiasm. Criticism, neglect, and indifference have a withering effect on the spirit of the growing Boy or girl. They take out of them the zest of life which God has put under their ribs. — 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—September*

*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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*At the sight of the crowd, his heart was moved  
with pity for them because they were troubled  
and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.*

*Matthew 9.36*

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## From Fr. Flanagan's writings

*Part II (Conclusion) of Father Flanagan's August 20, 1946 letter of response to Sister M. Immaculate, Sisters of Charity, Ballaghadernon, Co. Roscommon, Ireland.*

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Children are not given to silence, even on the most sacred of occasions they talk. I speak of the chapel...one must try to keep the child interested...give a little instructions during the Mass, keeping up the spiritual morale of the child. I am not speaking of the Dialogue Mass, I'm speaking only of a reference to the principal parts of the Mass—perhaps say in English the lovely orations in the Mass—the prayers before Communion, a little devotional exhortation prior to Holy Communion, a little thanksgiving after Holy Communion. Just a few words to keep the child's mind on the great privilege which is theirs in receiving our dear Lord...

All of these will help the child to be cognizant that the House of God is a place to pray and not to play—a place to meditate, to keep one's eyes on the altar or on the prayer book, but it is not necessary to read too much in the prayer book, but enough to keep one's thought on the principal parts of the Mass.

Now silence in other parts of the house is of secondary importance. Some Superiors would like to have perfect silence in certain parts of the convent, which is proper, but it seems to me that the laughter of little children even in those sacred places, is not too offensive to Almighty God, and it should not be used as a cause for severe punishment if a child does forget and make mistakes.

You see the important thing is always to remember that love dominates the whole situation, and when a child realizes that a Superior or Nun or Priest loves that child, then the child does not resist the preceptor, and with such a mental and spiritual attitude, all that child needs is just a little kindly reminder...

Sometimes I think that we become so efficient in our administration that we brook no violation of even the smallest rule. People think that makes for good discipline—in my mind that's all poppy-cock. I always try to analyze in my own mind how Christ would deal with the situation. With love pouring out of His Sacred

Heart, I would imagine that He would look upon the violation as just a little human trait from a little innocent child.

Think of the tremendous contrast between that kind of an attitude and that of the bully (of course I'm not referring here to Nuns) who would scowl at the child and maybe strike at the child. What would such an attitude of discipline mean? It means fear, and because there is no love, hatred, hatred of that particular individual. It doesn't make any particular difference how holy or saintly that individual is, that child still hates. That's destruction in the highest sense of the word because it destroys the very essentials of the soul and the mind and the heart, which should be emanating love. So much for silence.

### 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.**