

The tragedy of the unfortunate boy is that he has been given no great idealism to help him rise above the influences of his material environment. To blame his failure upon economic conditions is to ignore the most important factors in personality development. He needs someone to help him to help himself.

- Fr. Flanagan

Boys Town Times, February 14, 1947



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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year Two —November

Excerpts from Father Flanagan's postwar prayer—1946

O Heavenly Father, Our God and Creator, we thank You for all the graces and blessings You have bestowed upon us as individuals and as a nation.

We are conscious of Your great beneficence to our nation and we realize all that is good has come from You. You have given us rich lands, vast forestries, expansive mines, importantness, and a magnificent climate which have brought to our people reasonable prosperity. This prosperity enables us to live in accordance with the standards of Christian dignity and morality and we can more adequately practice Christ's Gospel of love, kindness, and helpfulness of one another as members of the great family of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Christ...

Dear Lord, send down Your spiritual and temporal blessings upon our people and our nation that we may be able to continue our Christian leadership of helpless and downtrodden peoples of the world, inspire them with our deep religious faith and assist them with our earnest Christian charity. All this we ask in Jesus Christ, Our Lord. **Amen!**

*God is our refuge and our strength,
An ever-present help in distress.*

Psalm 46

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

"Father Flanagan Says" — Boys Town Times, September 27, 1946.

There are in the nation some forty million young people under voting age. Some day these young people will vote. They will take part in community life. Upon their shoulders will fall the burden of home and business responsibilities. In the meantime, however, they are faced with the task of preparing for citizenship....There are many lessons to be learned, many problems to be solved, many adjustments to be made, before they will be ready to start life on their own.

The most important factor in any school program, of course, is the student. It is for him that the school is built and the teacher hired. His training in the classroom is designed to bring out the best that is in him so that when the time comes he will be able to fulfill the obligations and enjoy the privileges of citizenship.

The boy who goes out from school should be able to stand on his own feet. He should have a strong body and a trained mind. He should have enthusiasm for life, enthusiasm reflected in the way he does his particular job. He should have some appreciation of his country's history, and should take with him faith and confidence in its democratic institutions.

The boy who has had the advantage of good classroom training has greater self-confidence. He knows how to analyze a problem. He is equipped to grasp the significance of things and events which crowd the world about him. He knows how to help himself. He may not retain all the learning he got from his books, but the habits of work, thought, appreciation and tolerance learned in the course of his training will stay with him and increase his chances for success and happiness.

No boy's education is complete until he has been taught to accept nothing from life except what he can win with his own hands. The good citizen is the citizen who is good for something. We all must work. We all have some job to do.

In addition to making a living, however, we also have to face the problem of making a life. This is the primary aim of all education worthy of the name. Education, properly speaking, is

the organization of knowledge into human excellence. It not only increases our skill and knowledge but teaches us to apply these in harmony with that end for which life is lived.

It can be seen from this that the job of the teacher is a big job. The certificate he must have to be able to teach is but a part of the qualifications he needs. He has to have a genuine knowledge of human nature. He has to understand young people. He has to be an example to them outside of the classroom as well as an instructor inside the classroom.

The teacher, among other things, must be a good salesman. He is a dealer in horizons. He should have zest for living. He should be able to inspire confidence and ambition. He should be able to create in the student appreciation for all that is wholesome and good and helpful. And last of all, he should be interesting; there are no uninterested students in a class taught by an interesting teacher.

The poor salaries which many teachers today are being paid is a national shame. The work they are doing is so very important. It is important to our children's happiness and our nation's welfare. This is the responsibility of parents and taxpayers. They, too, must do their job if the ideals and achievements of democratic education are to be retained.

FATHER FLANAGAN PRAYER

God 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.
