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The world progresses through the  
imagination and ideas of its people.

-Fr. Flanagan



**FOR INFORMATION OR TO REPORT FAVORS  
GRANTED  
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**[www.fatherflanagan.org](http://www.fatherflanagan.org)**

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

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**Father Flanagan League:**  
*Society of Devotion*

Prayer Leaflet

Year Three —March

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*From Father Flanagan's prayer for parents*

O God, Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, look down with gracious eye on us fathers and mothers of this world. Teach us, Dear Lord, to know and understand the high position which we as parents hold in Your Divine Plan of Creation—the guardianship of Your precious little ones.

Give us Dear Lord, the strength and patience to teach by example and precept our precious children and lead them along the paths of virtues, onward and upward towards You, their loving and All Gracious God. All this we ask through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen

*From his writing of April 1, 1946*

Children are not born to be bad. They come unspoiled from the hand of God. It is our duty, as parents and members of society, to protect them from bad influences in the world where they grow to young womanhood and young manhood. We must not allow environmental influences to remove the look of hope which God has put in their eyes, nor the spark of enthusiasm which he has put in their hearts.

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*"This is my chosen Son; Listen to Him."*

Luke 9.35

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## From Fr. Flanagan's writings

*(Part I of V of Father Flanagan's reflections)*

Occasionally, a boy would drift into the hotel. He was just a beginner in this life. One evening my attention was particularly drawn to lad of about fourteen who sauntered leisurely into the lobby. The men and I were spending the evening much in the usual manner, but the coming of this boy changed almost everyone's manner. I know now that these men saw in that boy their own past.

He put on a most sophisticated manner, as if he were accustomed to this life. He acted as if he had little need of anything our hotel might have to offer him. He aroused the suspicion of the clerk and of other men wiser in the world's ways.

I called the boy over to me and he and I sat down at a little table away from the men. But he had little to say to me. I could see he wanted to leave the impression he was tough. I asked him where he was going, and if I might help him get there. He informed me it was none of my business where he came from or where he was going, and if I didn't want to give him a bed he could get one some other place.

"You're welcome to anything I have to give you," I told him. This disarmed him momentarily, and he talked about other things, but in his inexperience he dropped the name of a town in another state.

I made a mental note of this, and we talked on.

"You might tell me what your name is," I suggested. "I don't know what to call you, but of course, if you don't want to that's all right."

"Aw, well. You don't know where I came from so I'll tell you. It's Bob Harper."

"I want you to have a room by yourself, Bob. I don't want you mingling with these men any more than you have to. You can stay as long as you wish, and if I can help you, just let me know."

...I sent a wire to the chief of police of that city, asking if he knew of any boy by the name of Bob Harper who had run away from home.

Since I could not get to the hotel in the morning, I left word with the clerk to take any message which came for me. When I arrived at the hotel shortly after lunch, I learned that Bob had got up early and left without his breakfast. Evidently, he had become suspicious and took leave before anyone was up. But there was a message from the police in that city from which Bob had wandered. He was the son of a widow who had to work every day, and was unable to spend any time with the boy. She was heart broken when the boy left and would gladly pay his expenses if I would send him home.

I had an idea that Bob had not left the city. So I went down the street a block or two and found him eating breakfast at a counter with a

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rough group of men. I shall never forget the sight of that boy when he saw me walk in. He knew, of course, that something was wrong. At first he continued his arrogance, but gradually broke down when I told him how much suffering he had caused his mother.

That evening I placed him in the care of the conductor on a homeward-bound train. The toughness had left Bob and he was just a boy again, going home to his mother, who no doubt saw her mistake and made better provisions for her son.

For several years I heard from Bob, now and then. He was going to high school, and in boy fashion thanked me for sending him home.

I was becoming, by that time, definitely interested in boyhood. I began visiting the juvenile courts, and listening to the cases as they came up every day. I got another picture of the conditions which were sending little boys to reform school. I saw these boys come in, in the custody of an officer and before long they were sentenced to the industrial school. There was no friend or relative in that court room to plead their case or ask the privilege of helping them.

*(End of Part I; Part II in Year Three-, April)*

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## 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.

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