

In all homes a democratic spirit or principle should be the guiding light. Japan today is learning the lesson of democracy. In their boys' and girls' home and schools they can be taught a practical lesson in democracy if a self-government program is made available, which will uphold the dignity and self-respect of every boy and girl.

- *Father Flanagan*



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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year Four—April

From Father Flanagan's prayer

Bring about, Dear Lord, a spiritual union of all the nations of the world built on the understanding that we are all Your children and You are our Heavenly and Eternal Father. Teach us all the great dignity of our state in life as children of You, brothers of Your Divine Son, Jesus Christ, nurtured and strengthened by Your Holy Spirit....

All this we ask, and beg of You, in Jesus Christ Our Lord. **Amen!**

Upon invitation of the Secretary of War, at the request of General MacArthur, Father Flanagan made a two month trip to Japan and Korea to act as a consultant in child welfare and institutional care and training, and to advise the Japanese government, with specific emphasis on the care of abandoned and orphaned children. He left San Francisco on April 8, 1947, made stops in Honolulu, Guam and Manila, and arrived in Japan on April 23rd. He visited 14 provinces in Japan, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and in Korea he went to orphanages and refugee camps in Seoul, Kuesong, and Pusan. On June 12, 1947, the Minister of Public Health and Welfare, Sadayoshi Hitotsumatsu, wrote in his letter of appreciation to Father Flanagan:

Since your arrival here on April 23, last, you took the trouble of visiting many child welfare and protection institutions and establishments under a very heavy schedule, and you have thereby consoled the children and encouraged the front line workers in these centers, leaving a great stimulation and a strong assistance to the child welfare work in our country...We firmly believe that your valuable assistance along this line will be absorbed in our practices and will further develop to bear fruit...On behalf of our countrymen, let me thank you again most deeply for your great love and kind efforts on our behalf.

*I, the Lord, have called you for the victory
of justice...a light for the nations. Isaiah 42.7*

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

*Child Welfare Report (Japan and Korea) July 9, 1947
(Part I of II)*

...I addressed at least one large mass meeting...to promote a greater welfare consciousness on the part of the people at which was stressed certain weaknesses that were found in child welfare practices and recommendations how to improve those existing conditions...special press and radio conferences were arranged by the Military Government in order to disseminate this vital information to the general public.

I have observed that the Japanese people have suffered much as a result of war and preparation for war...this was most evident by the great number of homeless and abandoned children roaming the streets, the alleys, the depots and other places, seeking whereon to lay their little heads...

It must be understood that prior to the war there were few homeless and abandoned children in Japan because of the close family system which characterized the family life in Japan.

Due to the inexperience of the Japanese people in dealing with such problems, it was necessary for the Occupation Forces to orient the Japanese people on the need for these homes for Japanese children. The difficulty of securing extra rations for homeless children obviated the former family tradition for caring for them as a member of the family...

I have noticed a great lack of social consciousness on the part of the public...Of course the lack of interest is due primarily to a lack of training in sound social welfare theory and practice. I have noticed a lack of standardized welfare care for children in institutions, each one doing what he thought was adequate and best measured by the degree of the initiative and capability of the person in charge...

There is practically no recreational program in most of the institutions, and they are without play equipment and proper direction...

I observed a lack of a program from the standpoint of education,

embracing academic, vocational and physical training...In one institution I found as many as 50 boys working an eight-hour day, six days a week, manufacturing a farm implement. In another, a private institution, as many as 50 boys, ranging in age from 8 to 14, were making bicycle lamps. This is a deplorable situation, with the product of their labor being sold at a profit, such profits not being returned for the benefit of the children within the institution...

It was felt that the unsatisfactory conditions found in many institutions was not the fault of the personnel but rather the lack of public support and interest, properly trained government supervisors, inadequate child welfare laws and legislations, regulated institutional standards, unattractive homes, economic instability and lack of facilities.

(Part II, the Recommendations and Conclusion, in Prayer Leaflet Year Four, May)

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.