
I firmly believe that we cannot lay enough emphasis on this one fact—true racial and religious prejudice is instilled in the mind of the child before he reaches his tenth year of age. If we, as men and women, mothers and fathers, wish to blot out this scar, we must begin in our home.

-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—August

From Fr. Flanagan's Prayer, August 24, 1946:

O God, Heavenly Father of the human race, in adoration and thanksgiving we lift our hearts to You, the Giver of every good and perfect gift...

You have made man like unto Yourself, with a soul that is precious in Your sight, a soul whose highest privilege is to love and serve You in this world and to be with You in the next. You have entrusted the soul of the child to parents whose duty it is to train, guide and protect the child from the pitfalls of youth...

We lift our hearts to You, O Lord, from Whom our help comes. We implore You to teach our young people the lessons of love. Teach them, we pray, to respect the authority vested by You in their parents and superiors who are Your divinely-constituted guardians over them. Give them the strength to become spiritual giants that, casting off the dead weights of sin and vanity, they may run the good race and attain the prize of Heaven.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

*The Cord works vindication
and justice for all
who are oppressed.*

Psalm 103.6

"Why we have racial and religious prejudice" – given before the religious symposium at Omaha, Nebraska, October 21, 1937, by Father Flanagan. (Conclusion, Part II of II)

Why must we live in a world of racial and unreasonable predilection. What right has any man to usurp the unexercised prerogative of God, and condemn and punish another for his racial inheritance.

If we would but seek the truth and facts there would be no more of this unreasonable preconceived judgment. But truth comes to us tinged and colored with our prejudices and preconceptions which are as old as ourselves. It comes to us from behind a curtain which we leave closed, accepting only that which we wish to accept—that which pleases us. If we would only open the curtain and get the real truth, not distorted and disfigured by a gaudy display, we would live in harmony with the world and our fellow man.

Just what is prejudice? It is a defect of character which creates one of the blackest spots on an individual or a nation's character. It is the result of preconceived judgment based on false information. It is an opinion formed beforehand without the examination of facts. It is ignorance.

When and where is prejudice born? It is born in the mind of a child, and usually before that child has reached his tenth year of age. It is the result of the thoughtlessness of that child's first teachers. His parents, his brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends, all of whom discussed in the presence of that child their feelings and sentiments regarding people who happened to be of a different race or religion from themselves. On occasions of this kind, as often happens, they occasionally use the most vulgar, most blasphemous language, all of which leaves its lasting imprint on that child's young mind. That child will grow to manhood and not knowing why will be prejudiced against a certain race, a certain creed, because of those early impressions which time could not erase.

The case of a certain young man comes to my mind. I will tell you briefly what he said: "I am the son of a good and noble family. I love my mother and father just as you love your mother

and father, and yet, were I not broadminded I would, by all the laws of my teaching, be most prejudiced.

The first thing I remember regarding my religious training was that I was a Lutheran and must never let Jews or Catholics influence my life. Neighboring children were held up to me as an example. Whenever they committed any acts which left them open for criticism, childish mistakes, which meant nothing, but which, nevertheless, gave cause for rebuke, it was because they were of a different race. If they harmed or hindered my brothers and sisters and I at play, it was because they were not of our faith and did not like us.

Is it any wonder if I should be prejudiced? Is it any wonder that these seeds were planted in my mind unknowingly by dear parents who merely gave an answer because I expected one? Perhaps they had been prejudiced in the same manner and were simply following the teachings of their parents."

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.