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Boys Town, NE 68010

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DONATIONS

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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year Four—September

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.

*Blessed are those
who hear the word of God
and observe it.*

Father Flanagan wrote this letter to the Editor of The Meridian Star, Meridian, Mississippi on January 4, 1945, regarding two young sailors condemned to die.

Dear Mr. Phillips:

...I want to congratulate you on the fine philosophy you have manifested towards the approach of solving such a difficult problem as the one which these two sailors presented.

As I have stated in a letter to Mr. Cecil A. Rogers, a lawyer from there, it is sad to contemplate that we are living in an age that is, as far as our solution of these age-old problems are concerned, not far removed from the manner in which pagan and semi-barbarians handled these problems.

I am not worried so much over an isolated case like this one as I am over the mental attitude of the great majority of people I have talked to concerning this case in that section of the country. Trying to solve the problems of crime by punishment is futile. Of course, it is the simple solution for the individual, but society suffers from such a stupid and archaic manner. At this time, after twenty centuries of Christian dispensation, we, the people of the United States of America, should approach the solution of these matters from a rehabilitating point of view.

We must look upon these young boys who commit such tragic crimes from a point of view as sick boys, boys who lack the necessary vitamins of character development, of boys who have temporarily gone insane, because of some inability of our part to direct their paths along the road that leads to constructive citizenship. If these boys are sick—they are not sick by volition but by compulsion, and have not been free agents in the matter of becoming so.

We do not kill or electrocute young boys who are physically ill, say from pneumonia, cancer, or any other malady fatal to their well-being in life. We rather nurse them back to health with the aid of the greatest medical science available and we rejoice and are happy when they are able to return to normal life as strong, healthy citizens again, but we don't deal with our mental and spiritually sick in the same manner.

Why?—Mr. Phillips, you answer that question, or let those who oppose this Christian attitude of rehabilitation answer it to their God!

...May God bless you, dear Mr. Phillips, for your fine and noble mind and heart!

Sincerely,
Rt. Rev. Msgr. E. J. Flanagan

Excerpt from Father Flanagan's letter to Msgr. Frederic M. Dunne, OCSO, Abbot of Our Lady of Gethsemani, Trappist, Kentucky, about the same situa-

“...You would be surprised to know that outside of the Priests in Jackson, I was the only one who believed that these boys should be given a chance. Everybody else believed that they should die, and my coming there caused not a little animosity that I should dare play the role of the *Alter Christus*, pleading for these young inexperienced youth, each of whom came from Protestant homes, were good kids prior to entering the Navy, and both of these boys were constantly in touch with their respective Ministers since they volunteered for service of their country....

(The people) have a peculiar type of religion. They carry, in one hand, the Bible—and practically all of them are church-going people—and in the other hand, they carry a rope to hang.”

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.