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These children are twigs of the same great tree of humanity, which will eventually grow to be healthy branches to bear good fruit, or they may be allowed to wither and produce thorns, in that ideal society toward which we are striving.

-Father Flanagan



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**DONATIONS**

**We are a federally recognized  
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**Father Steven E. Boes, Executive Director**



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

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

Prayer Leaflet

Year Five-March

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*Excerpts from Father Flanagan's Prayer for Boys Town*

Dear Lord, You have built Boys Town on the spirit of Faith— Faith in You our God, and Faith in our fellow man as represented by the homeless and helpless, unloved and unwanted boys. This Faith has brought hope and the sunshine of love into the charred hearts and minds of these dear little ones, for they have basked within the sunshine of that love whose rays have penetrated the hidden and secret departments of their starved little hearts, revived and restored their functions.

Through Your tender kindness and great love for these children, You have, Dear Lord, developed them into noble and Christian souls. You have enriched them to the extent that they have become useful and good citizens in a world that has grown very sick through neglect of You. With their fine, sterling and Christian characters, they have set a splendid example before this sick world, an example that will accomplish much good for society and for You.

Continue to bless, Dear Lord, this Home, that Boys Town may continue to carry on its sacred mission of bringing hope and love to the neglected and unloved little ones of the nation...

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

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*I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,  
Who even at night directs my heart.  
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:  
Since he is at my right hand,  
I shall stand firm.*

Psalm 16. 7-8

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## From Fr. Flanagan's writings

*Excerpt from talk given by Rev. E.J. Flanagan at Milwaukee, October 4th.*

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When we took possession at Overlook Farm, as our Home was then known, there were only ordinary farm buildings on it. There were some beautiful trees which had been there for some time. This farm was to have been the country home of a wealthy man who had spent several years landscaping it. So my boys were fortunate to come to Overlook Farm and find something of beauty already established.

Before we moved out to the farm we built a quadrangle of temporary buildings on the order of the army cantonment huts of the war era. We were anxious to get into our Home and out of the city before the hot summer weather set in.

The boys were straining at the leash to be out on the farm, so we rushed the construction of these buildings and had them completed by the time school was out.

I shall never forget the day we moved—actually moved. We secured a few big trucks which first moved our earthly possessions. Several of the older and larger boys came out to the Home to receive the furniture, and be on hand as overseers. The trucks then returned to town to get the boys.

There were 150 in our family then and all of them crowded into these trucks, a living, wiggling, singing caravan of homeless boys moved out of the city to Overlook Farm, the first real home many of them ever had. They piled out of the trucks and were like young deer turned loose in a forest. Everything was new and exciting. Many of the boys had never been on a farm before; others felt it was homecoming to be back near nature.

In a few hours every foot of the farm was explored, and re-explored. I can still see those liberated little boys running here and there, wondering, no doubt if all this were really true, or if it would suddenly vanish from under them...

The inadequacy of many state laws is only part of the great juvenile problem in the United States. In addition, there is the lack of the human element in which the law and not the child is upheld. In my 20 years with homeless boys, I have had occasion to know practically every type of juvenile delinquent. I have had boys who had stolen, who had become discipline problems, who had robbed and who had killed. Back of each of

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these delinquencies lay years of neglect and bad environment. Society had done nothing for them until they had committed wrong. It is regrettable in this day and age of enlightenment that apparently intelligent Christian men and women will not make greater effort to protect the less privileged and save them from delinquency.

These children are twigs of the same great tree of humanity, which will eventually grow to be healthy branches to bear good fruit, or they may be allowed to wither and produce thorns, in that ideal society toward which we are striving.

God knows, most of our juvenile judges are striving hard to bring this lesson home to the public week and after week as they sit on the bench, trying to teach this lesson through actual cases which come before them every day. Real social welfare is taught and evidenced in these court rooms. But the judge and his workers cannot do this alone. They need an enlightened public to assist in bringing to the neglected child the necessary treatment to enable him to forget his unhappy past and plan a useful future.

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## FATHER FLANAGAN PRAYER

**G**od 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.**