
...I was always interested in people and how they lived, and was always interested in trying to help people live better if they were not living well.

— Fr. Flanagan



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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

*Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion*

Prayer Leaflet

Year Six—October

Father Flanagan's Prayer for Parents:

O God, Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, look down with gracious eye on the 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!

*Now this is the message
that we have heard from him
and proclaim to you:
God is light,
And in him
there is no darkness at all...*

1John 1.5

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

From a letter to Miss Betty Ann Weis, January 21, 1947

Thank you for your letter...Now as to your questions...

I suppose answering your first question I would say the greatest thing that I have learned in school was to get along with people, built on the religious motive of love of God and love of my fellowman. I would think that is very important for every student, and he or she who learns the science of life to that extent cannot help but become a success. The home, the school and the religious teachers are responsible for the teaching of that great science of life.

Now in answer to your second question, I would say that the most outstanding event in my school days was my desire to become a Priest. This I had when I was a very young child and my whole objective was directed towards that end.

In answer to your third question, it is not easy to say what interested a person to become a Priest, anymore than one would say why would anyone become a doctor or a lawyer or some other kind of a professional man. I presume that what caused me to become a Priest was because I wanted to help people—spiritually—I wanted to teach people, and it was that desire that took hold of me and I never had any other desire at any time in my life.

...I might add that it was this same desire after I had become a priest, to do something definitely for people that caused me to go into Social Welfare work and all of my priestly life has been engaged in it. Even when I was on the Mission I was interested in that particular line of work—not that I had intended going into it in any specific manner, but I was always interested in people and how they lived, and was always interested in trying to help people live better if they were not living well.

Then, when the opportunity presented itself due to a great calamity in our city way back in 1913, I immediately entered the field of social service by establishing a home for unfortunate men. This seemed to be the greatest need at the time and for five years I conducted this work, while at the same time I was an Assistant Pastor in the slums of the city of Omaha. From that work I gradually went into boy work, because I realized the neglected boys was what caused man to go bad and become neglected.

ABOUT FATHER FLANAGAN

With an idea, a dream, and rare and magnificent courage, Father Flanagan built his city and caused a revolution. There were those who called him a crackpot and a dreamer, but the fruits of his work are there today for all to see. Co-workers and associates who knew him well and loved him have memories of him that will never die. Thousands of his boys are scattered all over the world.

Even as a young priest, Father Flanagan was deep and different and very bold. In the cold of winter in 1913, he saw dozens of jobless men walking the streets of Omaha. He went to a friend and together they found an old, deserted garage on one of the back streets of the city. He bought bales of straw and spread it on the floor of the garage. "You can sleep here," he told the men... He did more than just listen; he acted. Those who called him impractical were those who were not interested, those who did nothing. He never saw the obstacles, only the deed to be done. Then he did it in the simplest and most direct manner. At first it was the jobless, the derelicts, and the alcoholics. He would find a place for them to sleep, get them jobs, give them food tickets.

-Fr. Clifford Stevens, article in "The Liguorian" magazine, October, 1985

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.**