
Human beings of all ages need recognition, security, affection, approval and the thrill of achievement. The quest for the fulfillment of these natural urges is the motivating factor in all human endeavor.

- Father Flanagan



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DONATIONS

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For religious purposes.
Donations may be made out
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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year Four—February

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!**

A testimony about Father Flanagan from an interview with Jim Takahashi, an American born Japanese, who was hired by Father Flanagan after World War II:

It was a rough trip from Los Angeles to Boys Town. My wife and three children had taken the train, and I drove for three nights and two days. I remember stopping in Winslow, Arizona, and men there asked me what nationality I was. I told them I was Korean, but instead of staying at the hotel, I told them I needed a toothbrush and toothpaste, went out and never returned and drove straight through to Boys Town...My wife, Margaret, was very popular with the boys...Many of the boys acted so tough, like they didn't care at all, but they all cared. They all wanted to be near Father Flanagan. Father Flanagan called everyone "dear," and he was really a father to each boy. I never heard anyone call men "dear" like Father. Father Flanagan made you feel like you were his favorite, everyone was his favorite. He was radiant, you would look at him and just love him.

*The Lord is my strength and my shield.
In whom my heart trusted and found help.*

~ Psalm 28

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

"Institutional Care of Behavior Problem Boys," A paper given at the National Conference of Catholic Charities, Richmond, Virginia, October 8, 1938

From the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, we learn that some 200,000 children are hauled into juvenile courts each year throughout the United States. We note there are six classifications mentioned—to which I feel justified from experience in adding a seventh. The most frequently noted charge is theft, followed by truancy from school, running away from home, acts of carelessness of mischief (property damage) sex offenses and ungovernability. This latter I take to include all manners of anti-social types, and here I add a seventh classification of my own, in putting juvenile homicides into the behavior problem class. Regardless of the enormity of the crime of taking human life, we must not lose sight of the fact that the home, the school, and the Church, and every other influence which bears or should bear on the youth's character, must in some degree share responsibility for his acts until he reaches his majority.

There are behavior problem boys because the home as the chief agency, the Church and school as complimentary, have evaded their responsibilities to them. Such boys have been robbed of the ordinary character developing factors that would insure healthy, normal citizens... Before the Catholic Church and the Catholic School there lies the golden opportunity to materially reduce crime and delinquency...

There are certain fundamental needs beyond those of food, growth, and shelter, which are vital to mental and moral health at all ages. The denial of any of them leads to an unbalanced organization of the individual, and results in a twisted character. Human beings of all ages need recognition, security, affection, approval and the thrill of achievement. The quest for the fulfillment of these natural urges is the motivating factor in all human endeavor. The sane and normal fulfillment of them is the secret of a well-managed life, and the result—a sane and normal character. Left unfulfilled or permitted to develop and find expression along anti-social lines, they become behavior trends and furnish our behavior problem boys. Such boys are precisely what their parents, leaders and environment have made them. These boys base their mental estimates, standards of values, selections of opportunities, and the management of their wishes and impulses on the examples of those about them.

In a mentally and morally healthful home, a boy's needs would be automatically met; he would be trained to manage or fulfill them in a socially acceptable manner, and along lines compatible with his own best interests, and the interests of society. In a mentally and morally healthful community, though the home might conceivably fail in certain

matters, the Church and school which I have characterized as socially conscious, would reach out and make up for the home's deficiency.

As a social being, the boy must fulfill these needs in a way which will not interfere with the welfare of the group. When guidance, affection, sympathy, and adequate examples are lacking, he fulfills them in his own way. What society fails to do for him, or fails to help him do, he does for himself, and too often his immature judgment leads him along the paths of error.

If you were to ask me what I consider the most outstanding qualities necessary to insure success, I should say kindness and sympathy. I do not mean of course a maudlin type of sympathy, but that supported upon a truly religious faith. Perseverance must be another great virtue. So much discouragement enters into the work that one must ever be prepared against it. A sense of humor is another saving grace, never taking too seriously the occasional outbreaks one must expect from these much abused boys. We must always rely on Almighty God—the great Healer of all human ills. Prayer unending will supply the necessary help under all circumstances to touch the hardest heart... We must never become so totally absorbed in our work to think we are doing it alone. Without the aid of Almighty God, all our efforts and activities, desires and hopes, would be a "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal". The Heart of our Loving Savior is ever beating in unison with the heart of every true zealous worker... kindness and love will open the heart of any problem boy.

I have really never found a boy who wants to be bad.

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.