
More thought on rehabilitation and less emphasis on punishment should be the aim of the authorities in all homes, whether they are homes for homeless and neglected boys or reform schools.

- 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—May

From 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 condolence letter from Sacio Kishida, Governor of the Hyogo Prefecture, to the new director of Boys Town upon hearing of the death of Father Flanagan:

...It is still fresh in the minds of us all when he told us of his conviction that he "was certain that there were many here determined to rise again out of the war ruins." With a renewed resolution and faith in our work, we are all trying to prove ourselves true to the prophetic words of the late Father.

In our country here, Japan, the Child's Welfare Law became effective on and after April 1, 1948, and we have made a first step toward operating all programs for providing better and happier lives for little ones and to achieve an epochal progress in the enterprise. We sincerely hope that we shall have our own "Father Flanagan" and our own "Boys' Town" in our country some day, and to that end we are resolved to make the best of the Child Welfare Law.

The monumental social work built up by Father Flanagan, motivated by his noble spirit, has made a great material contribution to the welfare of mankind. May his honor and deeds gain added luster as years go by, and may we look up to his ennobling memories with ever more respect...

*O God, you provided for the needy. Blessed
day by day be the Cord, who bears our burdens:
God, who is our salvation. Psalm 68*

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

Child Welfare Report (Japan and Korea) July 9, 1947
(Part II of II)

Recommendations:

A national survey of all children should be made in Japan to determine accurately how many homeless boys and girls there are, in order that a home can be provided for every child...The Japan of tomorrow will be determined by the manner in which its children are cared for today.

Foster home care is whole-heartedly recommended for as many homeless, neglected children as possible...the child should be protected by law to insure that he or she will be properly cared for, educated and accepted as a member of the family...

Institutions should be made more attractive, home-like, where love, care, and guidance predominate. Programs should be planned and organized to insure the well-rounded development of the mind, body and heart of the child, on the same level as if the child were residing in his own home.

I recommend the opportunity for religious training to be afforded to every child in Japan...The natural virtues of the Japanese children are most commendable. Their love for one another, their sense of honesty and their love for truth, are based on natural motives as taught by example and precept of parents...

Practice of using children in institutions for cheap child labor, under the guise of vocational training should be eliminated and adequate vocational training programs developed.

Institutions should provide an in-service training program in child care conducted by a qualified, trained welfare worker.

Less regimentation in child care and less institutionalizing of children is recommended. National welfare authorities should carefully check governmental institutions or homes and see that they are properly staffed, in accordance with the ratio of children for which they are caring. Adequate medical care should be available and required in every home in which children are placed.

In homes that are accomplishing good work, local prefectures or national authorities should cooperate with these homes or institutions and encourage them toward greater accomplishment.

Instructions should be drafted by the Child Welfare Bureau establishing standards for child-caring...All institutions should be given a grace period of 180 days to comply with this ordinance after it is officially announced, and upon compliance, they shall be licensed by the Bureau...

Further, I recommend that in each prefecture, local citizens of prominence be named on a youth welfare council, who would serve in a voluntary capacity to protect...and promote a more conscious local community with regard to child welfare problems...

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.