

Hospices Needed

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Summary: Praises the liturgical work of Monsignor Hellriegel of St. Louis calling his parish "a fountain of living waters." Calls for more hospices (houses of hospitality) run by the laity. Says the Mass is the foundation for knowing, loving and serving God in the poor. (DDLW #472).

What with the Liturgical conference being held in St. Louis this year beginning August 22, there is certainly need there for a hospice for pilgrims and the poor. I was thinking of this when I visited Monsignor Hellriegel some months ago. He has so many visitors, coming from all the United States, at all times of the year, that he could do with a hospice at all times. Baden, which is a rural parish just a street car ride out of St. Louis, would be just the place for one if there were only houses available. These last months word comes of the need for Houses in the far west to take care of the migrant families who wander up and down the coast. St. Louis is a good half way place for a House of Hospitality, a stopping off place from east to west and from north to south.

This Holy Cross parish is a fountain of living waters for visitors as well as for the families living around it. For instance Monsignor Hellriegel has a group of men, not more than a dozen, who meet together with him to learn more about what life means and their part in it, as sons of God. He talks to them about the tremendous graces God has for them, what riches there are at their disposal, through the Mass; how attendance at the mysteries makes them God-centered, helps them to put on Christ, to be other Christs. And after all, that is what we are here for, to become other Christs, to grow in Christ. The way to do it is to receive Him daily.

It certainly is a joy to assist at Mass in this parish. There are Masses at six, seven and eight, and it is the eight o'clock Mass that Monsignor offers up with the children of the parish every morning. The voices of the children are sublime, clear, beautiful, full-offering praise to God, thanksgiving, adoration, honor, petition. There are two albums of the Kyriale records of his choristers, published by the Gregorian Institute of America, 2132 Jefferson Avenue, Toledo, Ohio, records for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Lent. If you can't make a pilgrimage to hear the children, one should certainly get the two books of records.

Monsignor Hellriegel is the soul of hospitality, but his room is limited. Right now he is having four more rooms made in his attic, but that will never be

enough even at ordinary times. There should be a hospice. People could sleep in double-deckers as they do at Maryfarm, Newburgh, they could help with the gardening, if one had a big garden to help grow the food, they could exchange ideas and enrich each other, they could give of their services to the poor who would of course be with them. Visitors could learn what a House could be like in such a parish as Monsignor Hellriegel's and perhaps they could go back home and do likewise.

It is of course the work of the laity. They should be the housekeeper, the house holders, those to wash the feet of the pilgrim, to bind up that which is broken, to find that which is lost, to help restore all things in Christ.

You cannot be there in Holy Cross Church, participating in the life of the Church, singing with the children, hearing the homily of the day, partaking of the bread of life, the Word made flesh, hearing the Gospel, the Word of God, and then sitting down to break bread with the Monsignor, without wanting to let what you have received overflow in loving service for your fellows.

There is so little one can do in this life—most men die with a great sense of unfulfilment, Fr. Faber says; and Newman says, the great tragedy is never to have begun. Begun what? Our work here after all, is to know God, to love Him and serve Him, and we learn to know Him in the Mass, and we serve Him by receiving what He has given us, His son, and then that is the only way we can give to the world. We have something to give, and the longing of every human heart is to give, to share, to love. If we have not Christ to give we have nothing. And here is the only way to do it.

There is always a goodly group of friends in St. Louis who could help in this work. There are young students at the University who could live in the house as Cy Echele and Don Gallagher, and Herb Welch once lived in the St. Louis House of Hospitality. Now they are all married and the fathers of little communities. There are other young men to take their places, and the presence of the university means that from year to year others will come to take their place. There are also the couples like the Bolan Carters, the Johnsons, the Echeles, and others, who would take turns helping and who from the abundance (there is always an overflow no matter how poor you are) could stock the house, furnish it, feed it, contribute to it from their knowledge and experience.

In Baden *The Living Parish* is published, so it is a center of thought, of art. There is cult and culture, and the cultivation end of the synthesis can be taken care of at Holy Family Farm, Rhineland, Mo., which is only seventy miles away—no further than Newburgh is from New York, though the transportation is more difficult.

The farm at Newburgh has been a hospice this last year—and a house like a pilgrim's house such as I propose, could take care of some of the sick, the released prisoner, the homeless migrant—all the odds and ends sent to us by agencies and parishes in any city where we have a House of Hospitality. Those who come for help stay to give it very often, and we have on the one hand the opportunity to

worship in the parish, and in turn to serve Christ in the way He wishes to be served, in the poor. He said that salvation is through the poor, when he told us, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Here is a good place to call attention to Msgr. Hellriegel’s book, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, most beautifully printed and illustrated, published by the Pio Decimo Press, Box 53 Baden Station, St. Louis, Mo. It is 66 pages long, costs \$1.25 and would make a most beautiful present. His latest book is *The Vine and the Branches*, which is made up of homilies he preaches to the children and congregation every day. *The Living Parish* treats of the liturgical life in the family as well as in the parish, those two basic units of society, the strengthening of which combat what the bishops have called the “all encroaching State.”