

## Catholic Women's League Hold Family Forum

Last Friday evening the first lecture and discussion in the FAMILY FORUM series organized by the Catholic Women's League took place in the Catholic Centre Library. It was well attended by a representative group of Catholic women of the Colony.

Reverend Father Michael Pelly, S.J. gave the points for discussion when he discoursed on THE DAILY ROUND. Introduced by Mrs. E. C. Dow, President of the Catholic Women's League, who was in the Chair, Father Pelly said in part:

Last New Year's Eve I was watching the rush-hour stampede at the Ferry and saw something rather unusual. Everybody in the immediate vicinity was hurrying to join a tightly-packed queue, when suddenly a tiny group appeared from inside the queue, and slowly but surely worked its way against and out of the jostling, pushing crowd. At the centre of the group was a man, rather tall, thrusting his shoulders forward, like the prow of a ship breasting successive waves of the crowd, so that the first thing I saw was his head. It was topped by a soft hat with pointed crown, worn Tyrolean fashion, which naturally drew my attention to a very fine face. Haggard and unkempt to an unusual degree, it was an artist's setting for two remarkably big eyes whose determination cowed and dominated the advancing crowd. He needed to be determined, for, strapped to his back was a small baby, blissfully asleep, and clutched closely to either side of him were two small children.

I think that this picture admirably points the problem I wish to put here — the problem of the Catholic who sincerely wishes to follow Christ whilst pursuing other things, who has to be in the world get not of it, who has to reconcile the hectic daily round with the inner compulsion of Grace urging to something higher and nobler. The Crowd in the picture might well typify the world of people with whom we live, and with which we too frequently identify ourselves. Anxious, restless, thoughtless, devoid of courtesy and restraint, blind to real values, the Crowd rushes around going places and doing things. Heirs to an armed peace, and the insecurity brought about by two world wars within a generation, men to-day live in a whirl of feverish activity pursuing the wrong things.

### Drift with the Crowd

We Catholics are children of our generation, and too easily drift with the Crowd. Almost as soon as we leave school we get caught in the Crowd, and with varying intensity become fervent votaries at the Shrine of Progress, ceaselessly offering homage to Property, Pleasure and Power — the trinity the Crowd worships. We live in an atmosphere of organisation, noise and bustle, always on the move, perpetually preparing for the next engagement. We have no esteem for serious reading or sober reflection. We have little interest in honest self-examination or true prayer. We have little time for God.

But drift is dangerous. It leads, through selfishness, to shallow waters and the shipwreck of the soul. It leads to the point of no return, where the soul, caught up in the amoral or immoral compulsion of the Crowd, founders helplessly in a whirlpool of sin, and can be saved only by a miracle of grace.

As a Catholic you must turn your back on the Crowd, like the man at the ferry. You have a goal that is different — not the gaudy shrine to Progress, but Perfection itself. "Be you therefore perfect" is an order! YOUR shrine is nothing outside yourself at all — nothing to call for a wild chase after an illusive and phantom progress in externals. It is a secret inner sanctum in which you possess the reality and the glory of Christ Our Lord enthroned by Grace, for "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

And like the man in my picture, you must, be determined to reach your goal, despite the pressure of the Crowd. For "the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and only the violent bear it away" — you just won't get carried comfortably to Heaven on "a street-car named Desire." You must yourself overcome the spiritual inertia which keeps you thinking and acting with the Crowd, and strike out on your Pilgrimage to Perfection. Knowing well that "you have here no lasting city" you must keep moving inwards and upwards to God, making war on the smugness, complacency and human respect which would fling you back into the Crowd.

### Force for Good

If you think clearly, you will recognise Power as the burden on your back — the latent force for good which is yours as an adopted Child of God, lit up on the inside by Prayer and the Sacraments, and meant to show your Light to the Crowd. In your right hand you will clasp Property as a fragile treasure committed to your care by God. Who will ask you for an account of your stewardship at the end of your Pilgrimage. And in the left hand, nearest the heart, cloving Pleasure clings, like a spoilt child, needing to be chastened by an ever-watchful spirit of mortification.

Thus, though outwardly you may seem to live as others do, inwardly you will live with a difference. For you cannot but be conscious always that "not on bread alone doth man live," that you have "other meat" to eat, other business to attend to, your "Father's business." More time for thoughtful reflection, and just a little more time to prayer and God will let you see how you can reconcile your external, busy, life with your internal aspirations — how you can so live that "whether you eat or whether you drink, or whatever else you do, you do all for the glory of God." You will learn that speed isn't everything in your pilgrimage, that normally Grace works gradually, that ordinarily you must "make haste slowly" content to follow where God leads you, by obedience, and that if you must be in a hurry, it can only be as a saint is in a hurry to get to God quickly.

But to get to God you must seek Him in everything, in the places you have to go to, in the people you have to meet, in the things you have to do. Therein lies the secret of a successful and satisfying Pilgrimage to Perfection — it becomes a wonderful tour of discovery! If you seek Him, you will certainly find Him, and finding, love Him, and with the days your love will grow.

So wherever the daily round brings you — to business, bar, ball or barbecue — go with a light heart, prepared for a surface disturbance which cannot destroy the unique joy of discovery, and the peace within. Suffering there must be, for you cannot love God or man in this life without it. But you will learn that even that yoke is sweet, and the burden light precisely because you carry Christ within you Who bears it with you. And the overwhelming sense of His presence, and the tremendous joy it gives, is something no man can take from you.

At the conclusion of the points Father M. Mansfield, S.J. opened the discussion.

The next Family Forum will be on March 27th at 5.30 p.m. sharp. The subject will be DAYS OF DEPRESSION. Bring your friends and BE SURE TO BRING YOUR QUESTIONS. Future topics of discussion on the Fourth Friday of each month will be, The Dissipated Recreation, The Dangerous Tongue, The Deserving Floor, The Dreadful Times, The Devoted Spouse, The Difficult Child, The Distracted Partner, The Disgruntled Relative. Any Suggestions?