



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem ©
* *Knights of Malta* *

July
2011

Chancellor's Update

Holy Name Society and its Deserved Respect

We have often heard how anti-Catholic the press and the world have been over the last century. In order to put in perspective the change from 1924 to present we quote in part the President of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, in his address to the Holy Name Society on September 21, 1924. Was this an example of anti-Catholicism?

“Something in all human beings makes them want to do the right thing. Not that this desire always prevails; oftentimes it is overcome and they turn towards evil. But some power is constantly calling them back. Ever there comes a resistance to wrongdoing. When bad conditions began to accumulate, when the forces of darkness become prevalent, always they are ultimately doomed to fail, as the better angels of human nature are roused to resistance.

“Your great demonstration which marks this day in the City of Washington is only representative of many like observances extending over our own country and into other lands, so that it makes a truly world-wide appeal. It is a manifestation of the good in human nature which is of tremendous significance. More than six centuries ago, when in spite of much learning and much piety there was much ignorance, much wickedness and much warfare, when there seemed to be too little light in the world, when the condition of the common people appeared to be sunk in hopelessness, when most of life was rude, harsh and cruel, when the speech of men was too often profane and vulgar, until the earth rang with the tumult of those who took the name of the Lord in vain, the foundation of this day was laid in the formation of the Holy Name Society. It had an inspired purpose. It sought to rededicate the minds of the people to a true conception of the sacredness of the name of the Supreme Being. It was an effort to save all reference to the Deity from curses and blasphemy, and restore the lips of men to reverence and praise. Out of weakness there began to be strength; out of frenzy there began to be self-control; out of confusion there began to be order. This demonstration is a manifestation of the wide extent to which an effort to do the right thing will reach when it is once begun. It is a purpose which makes a universal appeal, an effort in which all may unite.

“The importance of the lesson which this Society was formed to teach would be hard to overestimate. Its main purpose is to impress upon the people the necessity for reverence. This is the beginning of a proper conception of ourselves, of our relationship to each other, and our relationship to our Creator. Human nature cannot develop very far without it. The mind does not unfold, the creative faculty does not mature, the spirit does not expand, save under the influence of reverence. It is the chief motive of an obedience. It is only by a correct attitude of mind begun early in youth and carried through maturity that these desired results are likely to be secured. It is along the path of reverence and obedience that the race has reached the goal of freedom, of self-government, of a higher morality, and a more abundant spiritual life.

“Out of a desire that there may be a progress in these directions, with all that such progress means, this great Society continues its efforts. It recognizes that whoever has an evil tongue cannot have a pure mind. We read that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

Jerusalem 1048-1291, Cyprus 1291-1310, Rhodes 1311-1523, Malta 1530-1798, Russia 1798-1907, U.S.A. 1908-

<http://sovereignorderofsaintjohnofjerusalemknightsofmalta.org/>

This is a truth which is worthy of much thought. He who gives license to his tongue only discloses the contents of his own mind. By the excess of his words he proclaims his lack of discipline. By his very violence he shows his weakness. The youth or man who by disregarding this principle thinks he is displaying his determination and resolution and emphasizing his statements is in reality only revealing an intellectual poverty, a deficiency in self-control and self-respect, a want of accurate thinking and of spiritual insight, which cannot come save from a reverence for the truth. There are no human actions which are unimportant, none to which we can be indifferent. All of them lead either towards destruction and death, or towards construction and life.

“To my mind, the great strength of your Society lies in its recognition of the necessity of discipline. We live in an impatient age. We demand results, and demand them at once. We find a long and laborious process very irksome, and are constantly seeking for a short cut. But there is no easy method of securing discipline. It is axiomatic that there is no royal road to learning. The effort for discipline must be intensive, and to a considerable degree it must be lifelong. But it is absolutely necessary, if there is to be any self-direction or any self-control. The worst evil that could be inflicted upon the youth of the land would be to leave them without restraint and completely at the mercy of their own uncontrolled inclinations. Under such conditions education would be impossible, and all orderly development intellectually or morally would be hopeless. I do not need to picture the result. We know too well what weakness and depravity follow when the ordinary processes of discipline are neglected.

“Yet the world has never thoroughly learned this lesson. It has never been willing entirely to acknowledge this principle. One of the greatest needs of the present day is the establishment and recognition of standards, and holding ourselves up to their proper observance. This cannot be done without constant effort and it will meet constant opposition. Always there have been those who fail to recognize this necessity. Their opposition to it and their philosophy of life were well expressed by Robert Burns in that poem which describes the carousing of a collection of vagabonds, where one of them gave his views:

“A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.”

“That character clearly saw no use for discipline, and just as clearly found his reward in the life of an outcast. The principles which he proclaimed could not lead in any other direction. Vice and misery were their natural and inevitable consequences. He refused to recognize or obey any authority, save his own material inclinations. He never rose above his appetites. Your Society stands as a protest against this attitude of mind.”

This small sampling of President Coolidge's praise of the work of the Holy Name Society and advice to our generation should be seriously considered by our Hierarchy for its re-vitalization in this country and around the world.

Copyright 2011 by the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Inc. All rights reserved. The O.S.J. Messenger and the Chancellor's Update are among the authorized publications of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Inc. and the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem-Knights of Malta. World Headquarters and Convent of the Order are located in Reading, Pennsylvania in the United States of America.



Jerusalem 1048-1291, Cyprus 1291-1310, Rhodes 1311-1523, Malta 1530-1798, Russia 1798-1907, U.S.A. 1908-

<http://sovereignorderofsaintjohnofjerusalemknightsofmalta.org/>