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THE PATRICIANS

**To increase knowledge,
To teach the people to explain themselves,
To encourage them to apostleship
And thereby to help to build the Body of
Christ.**



Nihil Obstat :

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THE PATRICIANS

TO TEACH THE PEOPLE TO EXPLAIN THEMSELVES

AND

TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO APOSTLESHIP

By

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THE PATRICIANS

I

Catholics do not speak about religion to those outside the Church and seldom to those inside it. A term has been devised in France to describe this Christian disorientation : Mutisme. In his book on the Church, Mgr. Suenens expresses this poignant thought : " It is said that those outside the Church will not listen. But the real truth is that the Catholics will not speak." Our two Envoys, journeying out to Brazil were the only people on the great liner who talked to others on religion. Two Catholic members of the crew told them that on their voyages a constant barrage of questions and objections poured in on them which they were not equipped to answer. This is grimly tragic. We must charitably suppose that the bulk of those questions proceeded from people who were seeking truth. They were not going to learn it from those Catholics !

Recently some of us stayed in a little town with a population one-third Catholic. We were informed that in the one and only public-house the Protestants had of late been asking questions about Catholicism. We inquired if they got the answers. No. Grim again !

There is the case of the very distinguished old lady who had mixed all her life with " good Catholics," and who declared in her 96th year that not one of them had ever tried to convert her. She regarded this as odd from people who appeared to believe. But can the word " odd " be appropriately applied to what is universal.

A Priest in the U.S.A. going around his new district knocked at the door of 100-year old Sophie McDonald : " No, I am not a Catholic but I would like to be one." " Why have you not made a move earlier ? " " No one has ever asked me " !

MUTISM IS THE PREVALENT EVIL

It seems to be the startling fact that the average Catholic will not help another in the domain of religious knowledge ! Mutism is the prevalent evil.

Is it that we have not got the Faith ? No, we have it, and have it abundantly. Is it that we are indifferent about the soul of our neighbour ? No, because we do feel for him and pray for him. Is it that we repudiate the idea of conversion ? No, for our hearts glow in us at the very mention of someone entering the Church.

Then what is the explanation of the anomaly ? Here it is in the words of one who had just attended his first Patrician meeting ; who was stirred by what he had seen, and was pouring out his mind to Father Aedan McGrath on the subject : " Why have they not got this everywhere ? I have been through all my schooling and have learned my catechism as well as the next. But I could not have answered one of those questions which I have heard discussed. And yet I realise that they are all simple questions. I feel I don't know how to say anything."

It would seem that the majority of our people are unaccustomed to argue, or even to think coherently, about religion, or to explain any less simple point in connection with it. Many could repeat those words : " I don't know how to say anything." Obviously such persons will hide their ignorance by an unapostolic silence, and will wither under assault.

THE REMEDY IS THE PATRICIANS

The remedy ? Here again I quote Father Aedan McGrath : " The Priests here are thrilled at the possibilities offered by the Patricians." So I discuss with you the Patricians.

It is a society controlled by the Legion of Mary. Each branch must be run by a Praesidium, and the Chairman must be an active Legionary. A Praesidium could have charge of more than one branch of the Patricians. The name is in the tradition of Legionary Latinity. It is derived from the Patricians of ancient Rome, who were the upper of the three grades of society, i.e. the Patricians, the Plebs, the Slaves. Our Patricians would hope to combine all social grades into one spiritual nobility. But let us carry the idea of the name a little further. Each old-time Patrician had as his clients some families of the Plebs to whom he was to be guide, pro-

tector, counsellor. Our Patricians are bidden to aspire to a like relation to the general body of the people.

Moreover, the Patricians were supposed to be specially full of love of their country and of responsibility for its welfare. And so, our Patricians must be supporters of their spiritual fatherland, the Church, The Rule does not insist that they be devout Catholics or practising ones, but only that their alignment be broadly Catholic. Rooted anti-Catholic Catholics do not fall into this category.

Non-Catholics are not eligible. There is a Canonical difficulty. Furthermore it is to be expected that they would be there in the general attitude of opposition. The Patrician aim is building. Building and destructiveness are opposites.

TO GIVE THEM THE ANSWERS

The immediate object is the equipping of those like the two seamen on that liner, or like the shrinking Catholics in that village pub, or like the thousands who never attempted to convert that 95-year-old lady or the 100-year-old one ! It will seek to give the answers : to teach the people to explain themselves : to cure mutism : to solve the doubts of the multitude : to supply a reasonable basis to the faith that is in us.

But the cautious school may wonder : " Is it right to raise doubts in people's minds ? " The doubts are already in minds, but without the answers. Every objection to religion is there, spontaneously generated or suggested from outside. And even if the objections were not there, it might be necessary to inject them on the principle of inoculation. These are no days for Catholic Babes in the Wood !

THE PATRICIAN MEETING

The rules of the Patricians prescribe a monthly meeting. Each meeting begins with the Patrician prayer, said standing, which is set out on page 24 of this booklet. Then a talk or paper by a lay person, not to last longer than 15 minutes. Actually talks of much less than this duration are proving adequate. It is far from essential that this talk be given by an expert. It might be better if it were not. The purpose is to provide the rough material for all to work on—not to dumbfound

them. It may be difficult to hold within the specified time the person who knows his subject really well, but by fair means or foul it must be done. In every case where the talk has been too long, it has spoiled the meeting.

If the active Legionaries and the Patricians are appointed to give the talks, it will be a means of developing them.

The talk is followed by a general discussion. This discussion is the main element of the Patricians. All the other parts of the meeting are to be directed towards the full functioning of that part.

One hour after the opening time, the discussion is suspended for 15 minutes during which a cup of tea or other light refreshment is served. This interval is an essential feature of the meeting and must not be omitted.

Then follows a talk by a priest, of duration 15 minutes. It is most desirable that this should have a bearing on the first talk. In fact the latter should serve as an introduction to the priest's talk.

Then follows further discussion lasting nearly half-an-hour, that is till 5 minutes before the end. Then announcements and final prayer, which is the Creed, recited in unison, all standing. The meeting then concludes with the blessing of the priest. This should be received standing so as to obviate the disorder of trying to kneel down among chairs in a crowded room.

The total length of the meeting is to be two hours. Proper time-keeping is essential. It has been found that those giving the principal talks tend to go beyond their allotted time. This is serious in view of the fact that the discussion time is correspondingly lessened.

It is not obligatory that a member shall attend every meeting. As the meetings are only monthly a system of reminding members will be necessary. The meetings should possess the elements of attractiveness, including those of light, temperature, etc. Smoking is permitted.

Expenses are to be met by a Secret Bag collection. A statement of accounts should be read out to the meeting, immediately before the tea interval with a reminder that the Bag will circulate after the priest's talk.

At the end of each meeting the subject for the next meeting should be arranged. If this is not practicable, ample notice of the subject must be given before the next meeting.

Preferably a branch should not number more than 50 or 60. A large number becomes difficult to handle, especially in regard to the tea or refreshment session which is important. The idea here is not at all that of coming to the rescue of exhausted persons. It is a striking of the social note—important for a gathering of the Patrician type. Incidentally it loosens tongues. It has been suggested that the cup of tea be omitted but the "free and-easy" interlude retained. In practice it would be found difficult to justify that break without specific reason. The tea supplies an adequate reason, but it should be ultra-simple, just a cup of tea with biscuits or bread. The tea interval is one of the features that give "personality" to the Patricians.

SETTING

The theatre effect, i.e. players and audience, is to be avoided. In a hall, face sideways, not lengthways. Behind the table have two rows of seats. Among those seated in the front row are the principals, e.g. the Priest and the Chairman. In front of the table arrange the remainder of the seats in semi-circular rows. This means that those in them are not looking at a mere platform group but at a family circle; one addresses the family.

On the table is the Legion altar of which the Vexillum is an essential part.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

The role of the Chairman is similar to that of the "Speaker" in a Parliament, that is of minimum intervention. Patrician psychology requires that when a speaker has concluded, the meeting shall be left mentally face to face with that contribution, so that it will spark off another contribution. This process will not be helped by comment from the Chair. Even words of thanks form a distraction.

The fact that contributions are slow in coming does not justify the Chairman's rushing in to talk. What is wrong with

a little silence? Families do not feel the need for non-stop talking. Legionaries are familiar with the idea of the salutary silence which loudly tells all that they have their chance to speak and jogs them on to it.

If it is desirable that a person should play a fairly prominent part in the actual discussions, he should not occupy the Chair. There are two different roles in question. The talking Chairman will paralyse the Patricians.

It is not the intention that the Priest, Chairman, and Lay Speaker should only speak at their own special times. But it is to be remembered that their excessive intervention would necessarily suppress other elements and destroy balance. Those pivotal personalities may intervene naturally but with restraint.

ESPECIALLY THE PRIEST

The key rôle should exert itself to open up the other rôles, not to shut them in. Father P. J. Brophy, who has been so constructive in regard to the Patricians, directs our vision to the ultimate objective: "The battle for the Faith will not be won at the theologian's rostrum or at the foot of the eloquent pulpit. Victory lies with the alert layman who blends zeal and conviction with a practical grasp of what he believes and why. He has the entry to every class and profession. If he does not speak to the bewildered and the questing, he has sold the pass and failed the Church. The Patrician circle is a training-ground for the enlightened apostolic layman, the most-wanted man in the twentieth century."*

THE OPEN FORUM

The discussion follows the method of a Parliament, that is by successive comments from different persons. It is not an exchange of questions and answers between the members and the platform. It is not to be a classroom. Lecturing people teaches them little. In one description of the Patricians, I have seen the phrase "controlled discussion." This sounds a false note, as suggesting that people are being dexterously

* "The Patrician Movement"—*The Furrow* Sept. 1957.

steered along a pre-arranged path. It would be hurtful to the Patrician idea if that impression were conveyed. So let naturalness and freedom be the atmosphere, though of course some regulation is necessary. The Chairman should not be officious in regard to irrelevancy, provided it does not harden into a wrong road. Beware of descending on persons with rebukes, corrections or calls to order, which would only have the effect of shutting up those whose participation is the most desired. Individuals should not be grilled for "heresy."

RISING TO SPEAK

Members should rise to speak. Probably their contributions would flow more freely if they remained seated. But this would risk reducing the discussion to a disorderly exchange of sentences, amounting to mere conversation.

Members are not limited to one intervention, but contributions are to be brief. Father Aedan McGrath recommends a rigid maximum of three minutes. Another leading figure would grant a little more: "As many as possible should talk. The Chairman should not normally allow anybody to exceed five minutes. Otherwise the simple, free atmosphere is threatened. Everyone must be made to feel that his views are interesting and helpful to others. The first ten words in public are a psychological triumph, a crack in the old conservative core of inarticulation." (Father P. J. Brophy).

There are to be no Votes of Thanks.

Throughout the series of meetings there should be a quiet insistence on the Catholic duty of apostleship, but there should be no pressing of people into the Catholic Societies. The opposite extreme is likewise to be avoided, that is of refraining from judicious attempts to recruit in incidental conversations.

NO WORK OBLIGATION

There is no work obligation. There must be no assignment of tasks from the meeting, not even to those willing to receive them.

Ordinary Patrician groups should not disband during the Summer.

REAL PROBLEMS NOT ACADEMIC TOPICS

Real religious problems with a practical application to life should be dealt with, keeping away as much as possible from merely academic, cultural, literary or economic topics.

The true purpose should be kept in view. One programme recently submitted showed how the latter can be lost sight of. The whole series concerned itself with the family. At succeeding sessions, a doctor, nurse, solicitor, policeman, etc., treated the subject from his own professional aspect. That and the resulting discussion would be useful, but it would not be the Patricians as will be seen from a reading of this booklet.

The purpose of the Patricians is not that of duplicating the ordinary methods of religious instruction, that is the sermon, the lecture, the catechism class. These provide for one expert person doing most of the work. They furnish a ready-made and admirable solution which is received with varying degrees of inertness and of assimilation.

Definitely there is not in the mind of the ordinary Catholic a competent understanding of religion. He has a lot of knowledge but it is not sufficiently built together. It is a little like the case of a builder's yard in which lie in separate heaps all the materials for a house, but which are not the house and have no proportion to a house. It is not knowledge which the owner is comfortable about. Still less is he convinced about it to the extent of going out to proclaim it, to do battle for it. That is the problem. The Patricians must try to adapt itself to it. It must not be the lecture system or an approximation to it. In a sense the two ideas are at opposite poles.

The Patrician method postpones authoritative solution, and throws the problem on to the shoulders of the average man. How does this work out ?

THE BUILDING-UP PROCESS

Suppose the first contributor to the discussion is the comparatively unfitted person who would never have thought of defending his faith except with his fists. And let us further suppose that his remarks are typical of him, that is to say, inadequate from every point of view—subject-matter and

presentation. Let us assign it as low a value as 5 per cent. But that 5 per cent stirs up a ferment in minds. Each one present feels correctly that he could do as well—or rather better. Because that first 5 per cent has taught the others something. Raised to that 5 per cent level, they see things a little more clearly, and at once a second speaker enters the lists with another 5 per cent. Therein he accepts as his own the first contribution and builds on it. A third speaker interposes in the same spirit, and a fourth and so on. Each, so to speak, stands on the shoulders of his predecessors but gives them little credit; his own has been the significant contribution. Note that things have become quite complicated psychologically. Not only is there idea-building, but each step is done in such slow-motion, and indeed painfully by simple mental processes, that all keep in line with it, including those who have not actually spoken. If the building goes too fast, or is too compressed, many will be left behind.

Secondly, by virtue of the fact that each speaker is inclined to minimise the part played by others and to exaggerate the worth of his own share, he will have an "ownership interest" in the final result. As a consequence he would be enthusiastic and propagandist about it.

Thirdly, there has been the ideal preparation for the propagating of what has been learned. There has been a battle, blow and counter-blow, suggestion, criticism, contradiction, one idea working on another, item added to item, until the total knowledge of the body has been pooled and that is necessarily considerable. Then, by reason of having been through that battle, everyone has the confidence to go outside the meeting and reproduce it at the corner, in the pub, and elsewhere. That is the Patrician way.

Fourthly, the mode of expression of most of those who speak is attuned to the comprehension of those who listen. This is a vital factor. It is odd how penetration into each higher stratum of education puts us mentally out of touch with those below it. Even when one is trying to talk most simply, it is possible to be out of reach of some. Recently I was given a list of words which would not be understood by a whole section of the population, and yet I think that

most of us would be found using those words in the delusion that they were conveying our ideas. This points to the need for a "milling" or interpreting process which will make sure that the "loftier" ideas and words will be ground down and made intelligible to all. In the Patricians we are already able to see this digestive process at work. Difficult ideas are proposed, and then "milled" by successive speakers into the simplicity that all necessary religious ideas are supposed to possess.

THE PATRICIANS AN EVANGELISING MEDIUM ?

The previous paragraph carries itself on into an intriguing thought : which is that the Patrician method seems to be ideally conformed to the special needs of the pure missionfield. There the difficulties on which we have been dwelling are magnified by reason of the greater differences in mentality and education. The vital message is being delivered but not received in its fullness. If we understand only with an effort, or if we miss part of what is being said, it means that both the mind and the memory tend to reject the whole.

It is asserted that the Mission Catechumenates turn out too many baptized pagans—which reminds us that the same is said of the school systems of the older countries. Can a solution lie in the Patrician mechanism, which would bridge those psychological gaps somewhat in the way that gears bring the engine of a car into right relation with the power which the wheels require. Then the most learned and the least simple can talk away after their own advanced fashion. Their ideas and forms of expression are understood by a section which approximates to them. Then operates the process of reduction into that ultimate simplicity. In the end everything will be absorbed and probably remembered, a process aided by the fact that the theme has been handled from many angles and repeated in various forms.

No doubt the task of training in a branch of which many would be undeveloped in education, and some illiterate, would not be light. But the gain would be simply enormous if the Patricians supplied a missing link, if Mission technique were thereby benefited.

NOT THE CELLOPHANED SOLUTION

From all that has been said, it will be seen that it is vital that there should not be any "short-circuiting" from the "Platform." If what I may call a "cellophaned" solution is provided right away by authority, the roots of further discussion are struck at ; that elaborate psychological process is eliminated ; the Patrician system has been perverted. Gone also is the attractiveness of the whole procedure ; nobody will want to attend a penny-in-the-slot performance.

Even when something very incorrect is stated, it should not at once be challenged by the Platform. It should be left sailing on the sea of discussion. It is certain that before the end it will have met its due fate at the hands of the audience. If it should survive as real error, the Priest can deal with it in his remarks, but as gently as possible, avoiding a personal pointing. No one will talk if he has the consciousness that someone in authority is lying in wait to denounce him.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The special characteristic must be freedom of speech—compatible of course with our definition of the word "Patricians," i.e. supporters of the Church, not hostile elements. If awkward things are being thought and said in ordinary life, it is essential that they be brought up and dealt with. Otherwise they will only fester and destroy.

There is no need for worry if some important issue remained in unsatisfactory unsettlement at a meeting ; or if many points arose which were not dealt with. Remember that the "Patricians" is a series ; there will be a next meeting. In fact it is a good thing that each meeting should not be self-contained, complete in itself. Thereby interest will be enhanced. It may be desirable to continue a discussion to the next meeting.

A NEW AND POWERFUL PROCESS

It is already evident that in the Patricians a dynamic piece of machinery exists, one of the best that has been encountered. I would say that after the Praesidium itself we have our best instrument in the Patricians if it be pro-

perly worked. There is no doubt as to its capacity to work, to waken up people and mobilise them. Through the determined use of this medium we can reach out to every person in the community. We need an immediate agency between the active Legion and the people. We thought we had that in Auxiliary membership, but it would seem that the Patricians is a better method. In fact every Auxiliary should be a Patrician.

If the object is to affect general life profoundly, it is obvious that a single branch in a parish will not suffice ; neither will two or three be enough. In addition to the ordinary parochial branches, there would be need for branches in the different professions, industries, societies, confraternities, clubs, and other subdivisions of the community.

THE PATRICIANS SPIRITUALISES

It is now proved that the Patricians spiritualises while it instructs. It has been said that a grace of light is greater than devotion. Definitely the Patricians hours are a time of seeking light—and in a devotional way. It would promote this process if those about to speak, and those hesitating to do so, would turn their hearts to the Holy Ghost and ask for words. He will give these words and make them influential.

The meetings of the Patricians which I have attended were impressive. So much was got home, so much interest created, that each single meeting would have justified itself. I could sense its beneficial impulses going out and circulating in the community. It seems to me that the force of a series of such meetings would be irresistible—like the battering ram against the wall. If the Catholic people could be turned into such a battering ram, the energy would be prodigious, even to the converting of the world. For it is not the grace of God which is lacking but our co-operation.

NO REAL INTEREST WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY

It is essential that the Praesidium take a special interest in the running of the Patricians, but this does not mean that they should treat the Patricians as if these were a lot of school children. It would not do for the Patricians to present the

aspect of two groups working together, i.e. the Legionaries and the non-Legionaries. The Legionaries should be there as Patricians and the burden of running the branch should as far as possible be thrown on the branch itself. Similarly the Legionaries should beware of doing all the talking. Their role should be that of helping the branch onward in point of responsibility and in every other way. If the non-Legionaries are not intervening in the discussion, neither will they be recruiting or otherwise healthily assertive. A certain amount will have been gained but not the full objective. One of the aims of the Patricians is the energising of the Catholic community.

What we may here call a "positive" note should characterise the discussions. Positive is the opposite of negative, and the latter obviously includes anything which is purely destructive. But we must not draw this line too narrowly. Many persons come to the Patricians under a sense of repression. They feel themselves to be "denied" in some way. They have a grievance against the Church. They feel the Church to be somehow inadequate. It is imperative that they be permitted to explain themselves in an atmosphere which can help them. Many of their objections are based on insufficient knowledge, and a little argument and explanation clear up things. People who make their debut in the Patricians in an explosive fashion, commonly finish up by being a driving power in the movement. So do not let us demand a uniformly acquiescent, pious sort of behaviour there.

THE GREATEST DANGER

Persons should not content themselves with asking a question and leaving things that way. This is so important that the fate of the Patricians probably hangs on it. It is easy to interject a question. In fact some people have no other notion of debate, so that a meeting can witness a devastating hailstorm of bare questions, frequently irrelevant ones. If those in charge attempt to answer that mass of questions, the meeting is turned into a question and answer session, which it is not supposed to be. The Patrician method of keeping that tendency within bounds and turning it into the tide

of the discussion is to insist that he who interposes a question must add his own ideas as to the answer. He should have some ideas if his question really had any roots in his mind. Even if a question is of a helpful character, it should not be presented unadorned. Let this be a golden rule for the Patrician circle and surely for every other sort of parliament. Do not ask a question without taking one step towards the answer. Do not propose a difficulty without sounding a note of solution. Never be merely negative.

We have been talking of each one making his own "contribution." That is the primary note in the Patricians. It is not necessary that the contributions be learned or polished, but that they be forthcoming. Presumably it will be impossible to get everyone to speak, but at least that must be the ideal. The meeting to which everyone has contributed is a successful one.

GIVING GOD SOMETHING TO WORK ON

In this matter there is more at stake than the bringing together of a number of bricks and the moulding of them into a structure. There is the principle of grace which, surpassing nature, enables us to construct an edifice far larger than we had the materials for.

We must realise that in the department of revealed religion nobody has the full answers. For faith and grace have always to enter in. Even the wisest arguments may not avail to bridge the gap, but it would be wrong to infer that less wise utterances are thereby useless. The fact is that God takes even the weakest contribution into His hands and does something with it. When all have done their best, the gap that seemed unbridgeable may have been covered. Whether it is that the gap was less than it was thought to be, or that the human contribution was bigger than it seemed to be, or that God just filled in what was lacking—one cannot tell. But the whole work has been done.

The foregoing must always be our philosophy—and on a wider scale than for the Patricians. We must make our contribution even though we know it to be inadequate. A feeble effort is better than none. The converting of the world is the

question of bringing Catholic effort to bear. There will be insufficient effort so long as every Catholic is whispering to himself : " I do not know enough and therefore I must keep my mouth shut. I am inadequate and therefore I had better lie low." But this latter is the prevailing situation in which the Patricians seek to play a helpful part.

LIKE A CHEMICAL FORMULA

The Patrician meeting might be compared to a heated cauldron into which go layer after layer of ingredients according to a carefully prepared chemical formula. If the intended result is to be achieved, it is necessary that the rules be fulfilled ; that the prescribed temperature be maintained ; that special quantities be adhered to ; that exact time be allowed so that the elements are enabled to mix and affect each other. This interaction is not merely in the sense that two and three and five add up to ten, but in the higher sense that they combine to form a final distinctive product. Every item is intended to fulfil a precise purpose ; otherwise it would not be part of the formula.

Similarly in the Patricians. Every layer has its due purpose. The cauldron is represented by the setting of the meeting, and the altar of Our Lady which stands for the Legion idealism. The foundation layer which goes into that cauldron is the Patrician Prayer. After that, the lay paper. Some have thought that this paper introduces too much formality and that the discussion would open more naturally and easily without it. But it does seem necessary that some spade-work be done on the subject and that this need is not sufficiently provided for by urging everyone in advance to study up that subject. The old adage applies : What is everyone's business is nobody's. Therefore a person has to be appointed who will be under obligation to do that preliminary research.

Then follows the vital discussion-session, which draws its tone from the previous " layers." Then the tea interval which has a many-sided value. It caters for the lighter, social side of things ; it opens up informal discussion, frees the tongue-tied, stimulates ideas, provides a sort of stocktaking which may radically shape the subsequent proceedings.

Then the most valuable Priest's talk. It has been said : Why not put the Priest's talk at the very end where it could take account of everything that has been said ? The answer to this is that the Priest's talk is intended to form material for discussion, and this it could not do if it were at the end. The idea is that the first paper and the ensuing discussion supply a rough construction which the Priest is able to pull together and to roof.

The last session takes hold of that reasonably finished product, subjects it to further examination and fixes it in the memory.

Then the concluding prayer and the blessing of the Priest.

DO NOT DEPART FROM THE PROCEDURE.

Probably it is a good thing that not everyone agrees with the exact detail of the Patrician formula. Because most advances in the world come from the stirrings of dissatisfied minds. But this is a different thing to the setting aside of formulae according to the individual liking, for that would only be the rule of the weather-cock and would produce certain chaos. So when the Patrician system is adopted, let it be administered according to the formula. If future working should demonstrate the need for alteration, that can be done. But for the present adherence to the formula is imperative. Variations, even small ones, will switch the Patricians into a different groove, meaning that something quite different to the Patricians is being paraded under the name of the Patricians. Possibly too this other method may be one which is already in use and which the Patricians is trying to keep away from e.g. Catechism class, lecture system, question-and-answer session.

It would be cruel to the Patricians ; if something, which was not the Patricians at all, were to die under that name.

THE MOTHER OF THE PATRICIANS

The little altar, which forms a serene centre of the meeting, is not meant to be an ornament. It stands for something basic. It is, so to speak, the official act of faith in the dominance of Mary. She presides over the Patrician destinies as she

does over the life of every society and of every individual. Of each and all she is the true Mother in a way far exceeding the ordinary motherhood. But it is the divine stipulation that her children play their little part. She has infinite maternal things for them but they can hold themselves aloof from her and her gifts. And not alone bad will but ignorance can frustrate her Motherhood.

And so, an intention pervading the system must be the helping on of all in appreciation of the unique place which is hers in the order of grace. As her altar is before the eyes of the members, so shall she be prominent to their minds. In the measure that they grow in union with her through knowledge and service, so will she gladly avail of their agency in her office of forming men in Christ and Christianising communities.

AGENDA OF MEETING

Ordinary Branches

- 0.00—Patrician Prayer. (*Recited in unison, all standing*)
 Address by lay speaker (**Limited to 15 minutes**).
 0.15—Discussion.
 0.59—Financial Statement and reminder that the Secret Bag will circulate immediately after the Priest's talk.
 1.00—Tea interval.
 1.15—Talk by Priest (**Limited to 15 minutes**)
 1.30—Discussion resumed.
 Secret Bag collection.
 1.55—Announcements (Date and subject of next meeting, etc).
 2.00—The Creed (*Recited by all in unison, standing*).
 Blessing of Priest (*to be received standing*).

College and Junior Branches

In the following cases where it may be genuinely impossible to conform to the normal system, that is in: (a) Branches inside Colleges and Institutions, and (b) Branches where members are all under 18 years; the following compressed procedure (total length 1½ hours) is permitted:—

- 0.00—Patrician Prayer, followed by lay paper (**limited to 5 minutes**)
 0.05—Discussion (**40 minutes**).
 0.45—Interval (**10 minutes**) (Tea may be omitted).
 0.55—Talk by Spiritual Director. (**10 minutes**).
 Secret Bag may be omitted.
 1.05—Discussion resumed. (**20 minutes**).
 1.25—Announcements as above.
 1.30—The Creed, etc, as above.

THE PATRICIAN PRINCIPLE

The human body lives by the functioning of its cells. The Mystical Body requires the co-operation of all its parts. So the Patrician body seeks its health in a universal participation. If some fail to contribute, there is a loss—just as missing fragments spoil the mosaic.

The two Talks have their importance, but they must not exceed their time. Likewise every other item must be subject to precise time-keeping.

The Patricians embodies the principle of chain-reaction—where one person draws another on to thought and speech ; where knowledge is built up into fulness by a slow-motion process understood by all ; and where advanced ideas are milled into simpler form and, so to speak, interpreted.

This principle is the opposite to the lecture system or the question-and-answer session or the catechism class—all of which belong elsewhere. If a few monopolise the proceedings, the Patrician plan is frustrated. It is the silence of those in authority, rather than their speech, which will lead all others on to talk.

Erroneous statements should not at once be dealt with by those in charge ; neither should direct questions ; nor should persons ask questions without adding their own idea as to the answers. Let the body itself try to digest everything on lines of parliamentary discussion, and on that training ground form its members for the battlefield outside.

If real error survives to the end, it should be corrected. But there is no need to tie up all the loose ends at a single meeting. There will be another and another meeting, and in that series completeness will be found.

II. Some Suggested Patrician Titles

1. Why am I a Catholic ?
2. Am I my brother's keeper ?
3. Is one religion as good as another ?
4. Have I a duty to my non-Catholic neighbour ?
5. What the Mass really is ?
6. Is the Church a kill-joy ?
7. The doctrine of the Mystical Body.
8. Obligations from Baptism and Confirmation.
9. Matrimony.
10. Indulgences.
11. The two compartments—secular and religious.
12. The Rosary.
13. The Holy Ghost.
14. Citizenship—the doctrine of the Mystical Body applied.
15. Prayer
16. Faith.
17. Is Our Lady necessary ?
18. I feel helpless in the presence of a Protestant.
19. Can we learn from the Communists ?
20. The Reformation.
21. The Inquisition.
22. Papal Infallibility.
23. Why confess to a priest ?
24. Our Lady in the Mystical Body.
25. Are prayer and good example sufficient ?
26. Are mixed marriages a mistake ?
27. The Devil.
28. Spiritualism.
29. Purgatory.
30. Penance.
31. Can we be saints ?
32. Our Lady needs *my* help.
33. Are there really miracles to-day ?
34. The Jews.
35. The New Testament.
36. The Problem of suffering.
37. Communism the opium of the people.
38. Keeping the Faith—to ourselves !
39. Authority in religion.
40. Is the Bible enough ?
41. Does the Church encourage ignorance ?
42. What is the idea of mortification ?
43. When is it right to strike ?
44. Why so many sinners in a Church which claims to be the true one ?
45. Is eternal punishment just ?
46. What is wrong with divorce ?
47. The Catholic Church—Mother of the Bible.
48. What is De Montfort's True Devotion to Our Lady ?
49. Can we prove the existence of God ?
50. The Church—a living body rather than a historical institution.
51. Is there too much devotion to Our Lady ?
52. Don't dare interfere with another's beliefs !
53. How would I explain the Eucharist to Protestants ?
54. Catholicism means poverty—Protestantism prosperity !
55. The phenomenon of the loss of faith.

56. I will go to your Church if you come to mine!
57. In war, how can God be on both sides at the one time?
58. What part should Catholics play in their Unions?
59. Should we obey everything the State tells us?
60. Bringing Mary, *their* Mother, to non-Catholics.
61. The Mohammedans.
62. Extreme Uncion.
63. Baptism.
64. The Immaculate Conception.
65. The Brown Scapular.
66. The Orthodox or Eastern Church.
67. Galileo.
68. The Deluge.

69. The Fall.
70. The Incarnation.
71. The Last Supper.
72. The Divinity of Christ.
73. Holy Orders.
74. The Last Judgement.
75. What are our community needs?
76. Is Patriotism a virtue for Catholics?
77. Anticlericalism and Catholicism.
78. Joan of Arc.
79. Censorship.
80. Jehovah Witnesses.
81. The sect known as Christian Science

III. The Patrician Prayer

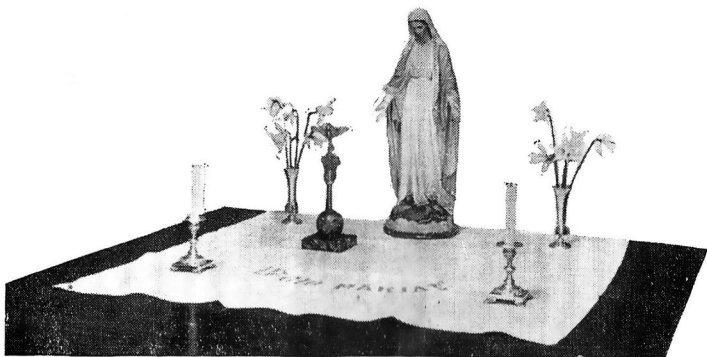
(To be recited by all in unison, standing)

In the name of the Father, etc.

Beloved Lord,
bless the Society of the Patricians
into which we have entered
for the purpose of drawing closer to Thee
and to Mary, Thy Mother, who is our Mother also.
Aid us to the knowing of our Catholic Faith,
so that its transforming truths may be operative in our lives.
Help us also to an understanding of Thy intimate union with
men,
by which they not only live in Thee, but also depend upon
each other,
in such manner that if some relax, others suffer and may
perish.
Enable us to glimpse the weighty but glorious burden
which is thereby laid upon us,
and to yearn to bear it for Thee.
We realise the stamp of men we are :
the reluctance of our nature :
how unfitted we are to offer our shoulders to Thee.
Yet we have confidence that Thou wilt regard our faith
rather than our frailty,
and the necessities of Thy work
rather than the inadequacy of the instruments.
So, uniting our voice with the maternal pleadings of Mary,
we beg from Thy Heavenly Father and from Thee
the gift of the Holy Spirit :
to abide with us :
to teach us Thy life-giving doctrine :
to supply all things that are needful to us.
Grant, too, that having been bounteously endowed,
we may generously give ;
for otherwise the world may not receive the fruits
of Thy Incarnation and most cruel Death.
Oh do not let labour and suffering so great be wasted.
Amen.

In the name of the Father, etc.

The "Trade Mark" of the Patricians— the Little Altar which must grace the meeting



A branch of the Patricians must be conducted by a Praesidium (branch), and approved of by a Curia (council) of the Legion of Mary.

The Legion is a society of Catholics which aspires to be used by the Blessed Virgin Mary in her office of Mother of souls. It now exists in all the countries of the world and continues to grow rapidly. Already it has produced many martyrs. It is honoured by the confidence of the Church. Legionary requirements are broadly: the attendance at a weekly meeting and the performance of a weekly apostolic task. These are within the capacity of nearly anyone who seriously wishes to work for the Church. There are no racial or social barriers in its membership.

Information in regard to local headquarters may be obtained from the *Concilium* (central council) of the Legion of Mary, De Montfort House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin, Ireland.

The Legion Names



The title of the Patricians, like most of the other Legion names, is derived from the terminology of ancient Rome. The word "Legion" designated the Roman army, the most formidable fighting force in history. Its might subjugated almost all the known world of its time, and its fame has not faded. It has afforded a model of the soldierly qualities.

To adopt that name obliges the Legion of Mary to be as virile. But to add on the name of Mary is a prayer for a spirit superior to every weapon.

Likewise, the term "Patricians" has its own picturesque significance and points to love and service of the spiritual fatherland.
