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*every moment is
worthwhile*

WHY I WENT INTO CHURCH WORK • 6

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YOU must have enjoyed the story of Topsy and how they say she “just grewed.” That is the way it has always been with me. My love and interest in the Church “just grewed.”

You cannot help but know something about the Church when you have grown up in a rectory, worshipped regularly in the church and at home, seen the ministry of the Church from the time you could recognize anything at all. You cannot help but wonder when you have watched people arrive at the church with troubled faces and seen them leave with a smile and a hopeful countenance. You cannot help but marvel when a child from a poor or broken home finds confidence.

These are the people I knew as a child. We entertained them in our home. We fed and clothed them, played and prayed with them. They were my first associates.

But school and college took me from this close bond to a far different life. Living now with contemporaries, there were often new and conflicting ideas. There were those who talked of big things, sought popularity and recognition in divers ways. There were those who were shy and looked with envy upon those who made quick friendships.

Like everyone else I had my heroes—watched, waited and hoped for the same things we all seek: recognition, acceptance,

and the chance to use our talents and to learn new skills. But it did not take me long to see that there were a multiplicity of ways for one to arrive at a goal. There appeared for the first time in my life the conflicting standards of the Church and the world. What I had been taught was the Christian standard.

I recall the day a friend came to me in tears. She had lost a campus election.

“I hate everyone,” she said, “Why? Yesterday when I had a chance to win, the world seemed bright and friendly. Today it is a stranger, and I am lonely.”

“Were you the only candidate who lost?” I ventured.

“No,” she replied. She had not thought of that.

Imagine our ego. Imagine the false pride. There are many who feel, as my friend did, that the world should recognize them.

It was daily experiences like these that made me ponder the question of man’s behavior. And it was daily living that made me realize that eventually we all must choose a standard for ourselves.

After graduation from college, I was offered a job in the New England division of college work as assistant and glorified secretary. I do recall that it did seem like tying myself down to something rather pious and

removed from the world I thought I preferred. It did seem that everyone was entitled to a bit of a fling after being glued to the books for all those years. I took the job, nevertheless, and only now, in retrospect, can appreciate the vision gained from this association. For it was here that I began to fit the pieces together. There are those now working for the Church who have been suddenly confronted with the task of the Church. Not so with me. I had been so surrounded all my life that often the very nearness obscured my vision. But God took the familiar and breathed new life into the old.

In a year I was ready to enter Windham House, the Church’s graduate training center for women in New York City. I would now have the responsibility of preparing myself for fulltime work in the Church.

These were stimulating and high velocity days with more to learn each moment than it seemed possible to absorb. There were the new friends, the new thoughts, the courses, the daily living, the corporate prayer. There were fun and seriousness, companionship and solitude. And, best of all, there was a chance to apply what we were learning in practical work.

My first parish was a large city church, Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, Conn.

Here only the roar of traffic can drown the voices of the choir boys, and the pace of living seems almost more than humans can endure. If I yearn to be a part of a variety show, this is my lot. As director of Christian education, my official duties are to direct the church school, select curriculum, train teachers, assist with the youth work, be a part of the Woman's Auxiliary, and, in my spare time, call, call, call!

How many times I have smiled when people said, "But what do you do during the week?" Business claims that only the salesman daily convinced of the worth of his product can sell his goods. God's business can only be sold by those who have found meaning, peace, and joy in the arms of the Church, God's instrument of His Love on earth, and are willing to share it with others.

For the professional woman church worker this means hours of listening to adults as well as children and young people. It means encouragement for the lonely, caring what happens to everyone you meet, teaching and living the faith in formal sessions and in daily living. It means hope as a child receives the Word of God, the Bible, and grows to accept its truth. It means strength as high school seniors, proving their faithfulness, pledge before the altar that they will try to continue

steadfast in the faith. It means joy as babes are brought to baptism; love as people grow in knowledge and are accepted into the redeeming fellowship of the Church in its full ministration; fulfillment as families are united in a common bond.

Yes, and it even means discouragements as we humanly expect earthly success when only eternity can judge. There will still be those who think you are just the Sunday school lady. There will always be those who think you should be using your abilities in some other way. But don't let anyone tell you it is not worth every moment of your life, or that it does not tax every talent, energy, or insight you might possess.

For all these reasons, I work for the Church. What started as love and interest has grown into active participation in every phase of the Church's life. No one can adequately say what this can mean.

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