

Bishop Petit addresses Knights of St Columba

HAVE WE LITTLE INFLUENCE?

Why our protests are by-passed

"WHAT degree of influence has the Church upon the people of this island?" asked Bishop Petit of Menevia last weekend when he addressed some 200 Knights of St. Columba at the Order's annual meeting at Whitley Bay.

"This is an important question." said Bishop Petit. who is Ecclesiastical Adviser to the Order, "because we are the Catholic Church and Great Britain is at the heart of the social and political movements of Europe with all that this still means in world affairs.

" If the influence of the Church is slight it must be because we are at fault."

The Bishop then pointed out that conversion figures average about 13,000 a year but, judging by statistics, it appears that still, there is one Catholic Director of Education and he is a convert.

Catholic commercial magnates are "non-existent, the number of prominent Catholic Trades Unionists again is very slight, so slight as to be almost infinitesimal.

"It is easy from all this that although we Catholics from time to time raise our voices in objection to some course of action taken or proposed to be taken, it is small wonder if our protests are ignored or by-passed with a courteous word."

After quoting the Holy Father's words on the lay apostolate. Bishop Petit went on to examine the field of action open to the Knights of St. Columba.

"We are not doing anything like the amount we could," he said.

"I think the Order is not pulling its full weight in this work because, firstly, there is a great want of realisation on the part of its members of the urgency and vital nature of the apostolate implicit in membership of this Order. Secondly, because where there is some or more realisation of the vital importance of the work there is a disinclination-a want of resolution-in carrying it out.

'OUR TASK'

"Our task is not one which concerns the merely material - it preeminently concerns things and values which are spiritual. Therefore the major preparation of those who carry out this work must be their spiritual formation.

"Spiritual formation implies a model on which to form ourselves. This We have in the life and teaching of Our Blessed Lord as given in the New Testament interpreted by the Church. If members of this Order

therefore wish to form themselves spiritually they must study closely and meditate deeply upon the Gospels and make their lives correspond.

"I advocate strongly that each Subordinate Council Meeting should devote some of its time to this work even though it means dropping other items from its agenda. And I can think of no better method of this study than the 'See, Judge and Act' method popularised by Canon Cardijn, of the Y.C.W. Movement."

<http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/article/3rd-october-1958/7/bishop-petit-addresses-knights-of-st-columba>