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AGRICULTURAL HANDBOOK

FOR

RURAL PASTORS AND LAYMEN

Religious

Economic

Social and

Cultural

Implications

of Rural Life

By

THOMAS E. HOWARD

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC
RURAL LIFE CONFERENCE

discourage such holdings in favor of small and medium-sized farms.

The family-type farm must be encouraged and preserved. It is an efficient instrument of production in an economy of abundance of food and fiber, and by supplying most of the needs of the family on the farmstead avoids circuitous and costly channels of trade. In the words of Msgr. Luigi Ligutti, Executive Secretary of the Conference, the self-sufficient family-type farm escapes the wasteful cycle of overhead and tax. The processing of food and fiber on the farm is one of the chief economic characteristics of the family-type farm.

Because of the high social and economic value of the family-type farm the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, since its establishment in 1923, has turned special attention to its preservation and development.

The population of the nation is largely replenished from the homes in rural America. The birth rate of the urban population is not sufficient to maintain that population. The farmsteads of the country are the reservoirs from which cities mainly draw their population for maintenance and growth.

Not all rural young men and women can be kept on the farms where they were born and reared; nor would it be desirable that they should be. But all too many leave behind them economic security when they leave the farms and obtain a job in somebody else's factory and work with somebody else's tools. Bright lights, greater social opportunities, and modern conveniences are the main factors that draw rural youth away from the countryside into urban centers.

If rural America is not to be weakened, it must find ways and means of keeping on the land the best and fittest among rural youth. The Conference is aware of this, and hence advocates fair prices for the farmer, economic stability, attractive farm homes, increased facilities for education and health, as well as better recreational and cultural opportunities for the sons and daughters of the land.

The Conference seeks to create conditions of agrarianism, through measures of self-help and appropriate legislation, for the achievement of a truly prosperous rural culture. It endeavors to combine economic, social, and religious forces, fully integrated and fully co-ordinated, in order to attain the high ideals of rural culture. With vision, enthusiasm, and courage the Conference has accepted the challenge of the tasks of agrarianism.

The author of this book, Thomas E. Howard, is a warm friend of the Conference. Acquainted with the principles and objectives of the Conference, he has been at pains to give in these pages helpful suggestions to all who are interested in finding a solution for the varied problems of agrarianism, not only on economic and social grounds, but on moral and religious grounds as well. His firm grasp on the traditions of the past will create confidence in his proposals for the future. He writes from knowledge and experience. He does not glamorize rural life; he knows its problems, and is not unmindful of the obstacles that obstruct the road to sound agrarianism.

Only by facing the realities in rural America as we find them shall we make sure that our ideals for a better and fuller rural life will be made an actuality. We are confident that Mr. Howard's book will give the reader not only many pleasant hours but also new enthusiasms for the challenging task ahead — to build a solid agrarian structure of peace and prosperity in rural America.

✠ A. J. MUENCH,
Bishop of Fargo

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THE Conference sincerely extends its appreciation to all those who have assisted the author of this book in bringing it into existence. Obviously they cannot all be named here, but their assistance, in whatsoever manner given, will be gratefully remembered.

Regardless of the limitation of space, special mention should be made of the Right Rev. John R. Mulroy of Denver, Colorado, former President of the National Catholic Charities and now Director of the Catholic Charities of Denver. His continuous interest in the development of the book, his constructive and helpful suggestions, and his financial assistance in making the book possible are effective contributions toward a prosperous and happy rural population.

Outstanding in the list of those who have helped make the book available to the Conference and to all interested in making rural life in America successful and happy, and a continuous spiritual experience, is Dr. Raymond W. Miller of Washington, D. C. Dr. Miller is President of the American Institute of Co-operation. Because of his great contribution to the betterment of rural life in America, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, has conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Finally, without the practical and realistic suggestions and encouragement of James G. Patton, President of the National Farmers' Union, it is doubtful if this book could have been published at this time. Mr. Patton's wide experience in the field of social justice to the farm population of the nation has given him an insight second to none into the problems to be met in that field, and has made his suggestions invaluable to the author and publishers of the present volume.

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE CONFERENCE
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Foreword

It is a pleasant task indeed to fulfill the request of the author of this little book by writing a short foreword for it.

The book is not a technical treatise on agriculture. Its primary aim is to emphasize social, moral, and religious values, indispensable for true human culture and paramount to all other considerations. In this, the book places itself in accord with the basic ideas and objectives of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

Our civilization is literally reeling under the blows struck by war. No one knows how deep the wounds will prove to be. This much is certain, however, that the recovery of the strength lost because of war will not be complete unless there shall be established the blessings of a permanent peace.

Permanent peace cannot be achieved in disregard of a sound agrarianism as one of its essential and integral parts. The core of sound agrarianism is private ownership of the land. Such ownership should belong, primarily, to those who live on and cultivate the land. Proud of their possession, they will be producers of greater national wealth than those who are dependent on a landlord tenant economy; they will be also the chief guardians of our democracy. Through its insistence on rights, freedoms, and equality of opportunity, private ownership has ever been the main bulwark of democracy.

The Conference is convinced that the great need of the times is the building of a new generation of homemakers on the land. To check the growth of industrialized agriculture, dependent largely for profit on itinerant, shifting farm workers and accompanied often by slum conditions in rural areas, is a most pressing task for all interested in sound agrarianism.

Large holdings of farm lands have always been inimical to a nation's well-being, and consequently a way must be found to

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Prayer of the Christian Farmer

GOD, Source and Giver of all things, Who dost manifest Thy infinite majesty, power, and goodness in the earth about us, we give Thee honor and glory.

For the sun and the rain, for the manifold fruits of our fields, for the increase of our herds and flocks, we thank Thee. For the enrichment of our souls with divine grace, we are grateful.

Supreme Lord of the harvest, graciously accept us and the fruits of our toil, in union with Christ, Thy Son, as atonement for our sins, for the growth of Thy Church, for peace and charity in our homes, for salvation to all. Amen.

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