

According to some reports, the poor visited Manila recently and was shown some beautiful things. In these many towns and fellow human beings live in the poor shocking poverty and degradation. There is

THE POPE IN MANILA

no running water, no latrines, no drainage, no collection. The shanties are built of misery and with no means of escape. There is a situation which we would not tolerate in our cities.

There you are, I was at what happened when the Pope arrived. He was not permitted to see the President as they really are. The government said that he had changed the appointment with him and some sort of arrangement. Doubtless he was not deceived, but it showed up the kind of hypocrisy of the government and the lack of true concern for the suffering citizens who depend upon it for aid.

P. F. JENSEN

There is certainly no word. And yet, this right love we so feel like that. We would have some sort of right. I suppose if we were in the situation of those who are in need as well as in word, love for the poor and weak. Love is the chief duty of the Christian towards others, and it must involve a practical care for those whose bodies cry out for food and shelter, whose minds cry out for education, and whose lives cry out for the knowledge of God. How can we ever claim to be Christians if love is strange to us?

Let us ask another question: to what extent is love valued and practiced in our society? It is easy to be cynical and to say, of course, it is always easy to paint a black picture. But the time has come, I believe, for Christians to cry out in the name of God that love has left our land. There

"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

According to news reports, the Pope visited Manila recently and was shown some dreadful slums. In these shanty towns our fellow human beings live in the most shocking poverty and degradation. There is no running water, no sanitation and no garbage collection. The shelters are built of flimsy and well-nigh useless materials. Here is a situation which we would not tolerate in our cities.

Were you as disgusted as I was at what happened when the Pope arrived? He was not permitted to see conditions as they really are. The government sent workmen who hastily changed the appearance with paint and some works of reconstruction. Doubtless he was not deceived, but it showed up the blatant hypocrisy of the government and its lack of true concern for the suffering citizens who depend upon it for aid.

Disgust is certainly not too strong a word. And yet, what right have we to feel like that? We would have some sort of right, I suppose, if we were in the forefront of those who demonstrate in deed as well as in word, love for the poor and weak. Love is the chief duty of the Christian towards others, and it must involve a practical care for those whose bodies cry out for food and shelter, whose minds cry out for education, and whose lives cry out for the knowledge of God. How can we even claim to be Christians if love is strange to us?

Let me ask another question: to what extent is love valued and practised in Australian society? It is easy to be cynical and critical, of course; it is always easy to paint a bleak picture. But the time has come, I believe, for Christians to cry out in the name of God that love has left our land. There

is lust of course - not so much sexual lust (though vulgar obscenity is a common feature of our very speech), but lust for power, and lust for wealth. There is a sort of passion to dominate, and to use other people, that makes our citizens strident, selfish, mean-spirited and ugly.

Of course you may point to charity as a feature of the Australian landscape - sentiment can easily be stirred by the popular press, for example. But what of love - real, genuine, on-foing, compassionate, gentle, thoughtful, steadfast, useful love?

We are not a generous nation. The poor people of Manila are our neighbours, as are the poor of Hong Kong, and the poor of India and Africa and South America. We do not insist that our government care for others; more important our private contributions to the agencies of relief and compassion are pathetic. We think that a few dollars here and there is more than enough - we assume no personal burden, no personal interest, no personal care.

Were we disgusted at the hypocrisy in Manila? Beware lest God may be disgusted with us!

