

Lenten Devotions  
7:30 tonight

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
March 25, 1931

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The Index.

"Dear Father: This letter is prompted by a series of discussions prevalent in our hall of late concerning the Index of Forbidden Books. Several fellows have been reading books on the Index, and one in particular insists that his book is not forbidden. He fails to see the ipso facto qualification. Will you be so kind as to enlighten some of these headstrong sophomores and explain fully the Index in some future Bulletin?"

This is a rather large order. You will find a "brief" explanation of the Index at the pamphlet rack (in 54 pages); the latest edition of the Index is always on file at the reference room in the library. As for enlightening headstrong sophomores, you are asking a great deal. The word "sophomore" means "wise fool;" add "headstrong" to that and you have something.

Don't let any Catholic student kid you about his attitude on the Index. If he alleges disbelief in the General Decree of the Index the truth is not in him. No Catholic can be that dumb and get into college. But he must not admit the weakness of an evil mind, so he must find an excuse. Freshmen read dirty books for their literary style, sophomores, because the Best Smellers are not mentioned by name, juniors cultivate "art for art's sake, and seniors allege that "to the pure all things are pure." Back-scratching critics and loose-minded professors recommend such books for their "stark power," their "grim facing of the realities of life."

They are liars - one and all - and they know it. - Most mothers, thank God, are still mothers - at least the ones we know, the mother of Notre Dame students. Ask one of these men how his mother liked the book.

The Church is our Mother, as God is our Father. Our Mother forbids us, under pain of mortal sin, to read books against our Father or against His Laws. She does this because she wants us to love our Father and be happy with Him in eternity.

The law of life is the law of literature. How many of the foolhardy or the ignorant who have read Dumas can tell you why he is on the Index (rather, "they," for all the books of both father and son, with the exception of "The Count of Monte Cristo," are forbidden)? Not many. Analyze the books; what do you find? Doesn't the hero get away with murder? Is that right? Isn't that the glorification of vice? If the villain is guilty of crime, he gets punished. Not so the hero. And if you can't see a simple error like that in a forbidden book, how can you expect to detect subtle error? If you expect to be a decent man, protect the only mind God gave you. Respect the law of the Church, your loving Mother.

As for the other part of your request, while Scripture points out the way, the law of the land and the customs of parents place difficulties in the path of its fulfillment: "A horse not broken becometh stubborn, and a child left to himself will become headstrong. Give thy son his way, and he shall make thee afraid: play with him, and he shall make thee sorrowful. Laugh not with him, lest thou have sorrow, and at the last they teeth be set on edge. Give him not liberty in his youth, and wink not at his devices. Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat his sides while he is a child, lest he grow stubborn, and regard thee not, and so be a sorrow of heart to thee. Instruct thy son, and labor about him, lest his lewd behaviour be an offence to thee." -- Ecclesiasticus, xxx, 8-13.

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PRAYERS: A deceased cousin of Dick Klohr; a deceased friend of another student. Hugh McHarnoy's sister is ill. Harold Halpin, '28, died a few days ago as a result of an auto accident. Four special intentions. Three thanksgivings.