

Some 800 pledges in.
How about 1000?

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Don't pray
and cheat!

Before and After Taking.

These two letters came in the same mail last week. The first one, from a student, reads as follows:

"Dear Father: For once and for good will you please devote a Bulletin to a discussion of indexed books. You've done so before, but in arguments with several fellows recently the general opinion was that the information given was inadequate. Much difference of opinion rests on the Catholic practicality of reading _____ and In our belief, this author's works rank second to none in his knowledge and application of the English language and vocabulary. We admire him for this and read him in order to improve ourselves. Now, the question is, is it unfair to read such manuscripts even though one intends not to and actually does not heed unorthodox statements contained therein?....." There is more, but the point is made.

The other letter is from an alumnus. In part it reads:

"..... I had a dandy visit with X last night. He had just received a letter from Y, who, it seems, has lost his faith.... You might be able to do something for the poor kid, although he would be hard to talk to because he thinks he knows all about life. The least we can do is pray for him....."

Push the first letter back a few years and Y might have written it; at least it contains the very arguments Y used to use in his attempt to justify his perusal of indexed books. He read them 'for their style' - and style they had none any more than a passing freakish fad. (A Eugenie chapeau would be a creation of art eternal alongside the stammering, jejune, mawkish obscenity and stale, cheap blasphemy of the author our student and his friends want to read.) He was told that you can't read an author for his style without absorbing some of his philosophy. He didn't believe. He has made a public mess of his life. And now he says that he has lost his faith - sed nemo perdet quod non habet - the poor boy had no faith to lose. What he has lost is one pose, and he is trying out another.

Perhaps the information given this time is again inadequate. The same complaint will be made ten years from now if the Religious Bulletin returns to the subject and quotes as horrible examples the messed-up lives of students here now who read indexed books 'for their style.'

The teaching of the Church is adequate - for faithful Catholics. The decree and its proper commentary are too extensive for a Bulletin, but the pamphlet rack has a supply of copies of Betten's "Roman Index of Forbidden Books," which gives the substance of the Church's legislation with a good commentary (and a very inadequate list). Those who want full information will find it there.

But why flirt with indexed books at all? When you have the truth, why investigate every passing error? Learn principles: cases will then solve themselves as you meet them. And why soil the only mind God gives you with the obscenity of every upstart who prints a dirty story? The Devil howls with glee when a boy who has come to the feet of Our Lady to learn truth and decency is snatched from his place in heaven to wallow in the filth of hell - and if you want to run up his score, read his dirty blasphemies.

Suppose you knew that a certain woman was rotten with disease. Would you marry her because she wore with some distinction a Parisian gown? Just remember that infections of the mind are more dangerous than those of the body. Don't be a horrible example.

PRAYERS: Fr. Schmitt, C.S.S.R., of Rochester, who was host to the Army Game pilgrims, died Sunday. Tom Moynihan's grandfather, deceased; two deceased friends. Four special intentions.