

appendectomy; Ray Clemens' father died; 10-year-old, . .

Religious Bulletin
November 11, 1951

of Ann Marron is very ill; friend of Joe Imbriace is ill.

B Stands For Baloney.

From the comments picked up about Tuesday's Bulletin, which published our Bishop's request that all Catholics sign the pledge of the Legion of Decency, we gather that some students saw the picture anyway (STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE). One remark about "B" pictures is worthy of pseudo canonization: "It's a lotta baloney."

The Bulletin does not think that this represents the attitude of most Notre Dame students. We have our own opinion of the common sense of the vast majority. This opinion is confirmed by experience. You pop off often enough, and you have the old Notre Dame custom of griping about the food and talking out of your hat, but it is our conviction that when the chips are down you have a lot of slumbering loyalty for the Church and what the Church stands for that will be converted into action--as far as movie morality is concerned in this particular case--when you once get the idea that "B" pictures, though not condemned in toto, are morally an insult to your faith.

For the rest of you who must drink rot-gut to make sure it is not poisonous liquor, or eat toad stools to make sure you are not eating mushrooms, or go to "B" and "C" movies to see for yourself what's wrong with them--we have no further quarrel. We leave you to God, who alone can judge your dispositions, who alone knows the secret (erotic) motives in your heart, who alone can discern whether in practice you can divorce art from morality.

No one is bound to take the Legion of Decency pledge, anymore than one is bound to take a pledge against the abuse of intoxicating liquors. But if all Catholics had unquestioning faith in the teaching authority of the Church and united their loyal efforts to cooperate with what the Bishops are trying to do in issuing warnings against abuses in movie productions, then we would have powerful, effective sanction.

Warnings are no more than means of calling attention to certain dangers. They are not in themselves capable of preventing anyone incurring the danger warned against. And while the object of the Legion of Decency is, obviously, to arouse a sense of caution in all, particularly in those who might otherwise not know that any danger exists, it would be folly to presume that such an objection of the Legion of Decency can ever hope for more than a reasonable measure of success. Human nature is like that--even at Notre Dame where in some cases a crowbar would be much more effective.

Dangerous Complex.

There is no apostolic spirit in the type of Christianity which is fostered by the "mortal sin complex." To settle matters of conscience, it is necessary, of course, to know what sins are mortal and what sins are venial. Knowing that one particular action is not mortally sinful is no cart blanche that the action itself is okay. A sin is a sin, and as sin is to be avoided. A venial sin is an offence against God.

If you love your sweetheart you are not so stupid in your courting that you only avoid displeasing her seriously. If you love her you aim to pleasure her in big ways as well as in small. To neglect venial discourtesies, of course, is less important than to neglect mortal discourtesies. The lover aims always to please his loved one.

What about God Who is love itself? By the 1st Commandment we are to love Him above all things. What kind of 100% love is this that says to infinite Majesty: "How much can I drink before I commit a mortal sin? . . . How far can I go with a girl before I commit mortal sin? . . . How late can I come to Sunday Mass before I miss a grave part of Mass? . . . How big must my lie be before it is gravely sinful, . . . How much cheating amounts to grave matter? . . . When does the petty thievery of ice cream in an ice cream machine add up to grave matter? . . . And so on.

A marksman aiming at a distant target always aims high. Aim such to save your soul,