

University of Notre Dame

Got a Missal? Get one  
this week. First Friday  
coming up. Adoration  
all day!

Religious Bulletin  
December 5, 1956

Collection at the Saturday  
Masses, by order of the  
Bishop, for the Hungarian  
refugees.

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Filth And Profanity

Near-sighted managers of theatres and shady news-venders of smutty books -- with little souls and big, sensual appetites -- are dooming the theatre and a fat segment of the book world. They are working upon the abominable principle of racketeering: Fatten your purse on public weaknesses.

What about the morality of it? "Tut, tut. Morality is a Sunday school word; and we ain't been to Sunday school. Eh. Hyman?"

Obligations to the public? "We've heard that mentioned before by reformers. And so, get this: we're in this business for the money; and we serve up what the public pays for. That's our level, see!"

But smart theatre managers, and smart publishers, see the handwriting on the wall. Even Ed Sullivan of T-V fame (whose judgment might occasionally be questioned) once sounded this warning note:

"You hear more and more cheap profanity on Broadway stages. Kid actors step out on the stringpiece and deliver billingsgate that a hardy, West Side dock worker would hesitate to employ. Fragile actresses startle you with vulgarity that would singe the lips of a truck-driver. Anemic actors crash into a volley of oaths that raises the hair on your head. First-night audiences do not seem to object to it, because they have become too bored to object to anything. Audiences on subsequent nights, however, do object strenuously to the cheapness that is besieging the stage. Churches will step in if the producers are not careful, and install a censorship that won't be shaken off easily. There is a vast distinction between realism and refuse pails."

If profanity is stupidly coarse and insulting, rehearsed indecency is diabolical. That's what some of the movies and most of the stage find most attractive at the box-office. They don't mind introducing shame, and remorse, and sadness into happy lives. They don't mind tearing down standards, and replacing sacred ideals with something sour, and malicious, and vile.

A corrupted life starts with a corrupted heart. And there are plenty of young hearts corrupted today in the theatre, and at the news-stand, and at the bookstore.

Why This Diatribe?

Because such a reminder is needed -- even by Catholic college men -- that they may be alerted against these twin allies of the Devil that so often appear under the smooth disguise of culture. Every Notre Dame man should find it easy to follow the Legion of Decency in avoiding movies and plays that have been condemned; and to refrain from buying, reading, or circulating, salacious literature of every type. This Sunday, the whole Catholic segment of our country renews the pledge of the Legion of Decency. This is a wonderful opportunity for the big, "Wheeler Dealers" of the campus to throw their weight around in a worthwhile way regarding a matter that will merit a rich reward for them in eternity. It should not be above them to spend a little time and energy in behalf of Notre Dame ideals.

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PRAYERS REQUESTED - Deceased: grandmother, and friend, of Don Breitenstien of Alumni; Charles Hoover, '29; Peter Castelli, '47; aunt of Steve Penny of Alumni; father of Thomas Kenedy, '41; niece of Jerry Traffica of Walsh; friend of Garry Zimmerman of Alumni; father of Richard Fallon, '47; Ill: mother of Bill Bailey of Fisher; grandmother of Tom McSweeney of Zahm. 4 special intentions.