

University of Notre Dame

PRAYERS REQUESTED. Deceased:
father of Rev. James Healy,
CSC; Mrs. Frank Lloyd.

Religious Bulletin
February 15, 1957

Ill: brother of Father
Sheedy, CSC; mother of Sr.
Regina; Rev. John J. Burke,
CSC.

Religion For Servicemen

Chaplain John T. O'Connor, director of the Navy's Character Education Program, had some pointed remarks for Catholic schools, last week. He spoke before some 4000 nuns, priests, Brothers, and lay teachers in New York, cautioning them not to place too much stress on the esoteric aspects of religion, and too little on moral values.

The Chaplain noted that in his efforts to overcome character deficiencies among Navy personnel, he found himself inadequate. The Navy program, he said, was likewise inadequate. What's the answer to the problem? It's religion in the schools, and the job has to be done long before the young men and women reach the armed forces. A consciousness of the moral law must be inculcated during the formative years at school. If it's not done here, it won't be done at all. Father O'Connor added that many Catholics who were inducted, had but a passing acquaintance with the certitudes of our Faith. Even more alarming is the gap between knowledge and practice.

Chaplain O'Connor believes that an individual's moral outlook is just as important as technical know-how. Without basic concepts of religion and democracy, he related, a man will falter in the face of adversity -- because he has no backbone. Defections among our captured troops proved this very point.

And so the Bulletin, in keeping with Father O'Connor's directive, shies away from a long, lucid, brilliant discourse on the difference between essence and existence, or the theological niceties of the Trinity.

Instead, we remind you to be on time for Sunday Mass; and that you are answerable for your bad habits of speech; that no matter how old you are, you still owe your parents love and reverence and filial regard -- and strict obedience if you still live at home; that dabbling in bad books, filthy stories, shady movies, vulgarity and scandal is not clever -- but only a wanton lack of Christian decency; that sex is something holy because it has God for its author; that drunkenness puts us on a level with the brutes that have no intellect; that dishonesty in all its forms is forbidden by God -- even when not detected by man; that lying may be convenient at times, but always wrong; that the Friday abstinence is a pretty good yardstick of a Catholic's backbone; and that Christian charity has neither favorites nor foes.

Pretty drab stuff, you say -- something you've heard a hundred times over! That's right, because it's the cloth that covers our daily life, and dresses us in the livery of the saints. It's a little old-fashioned, maybe, and not cushioned by neuroses, maladjustments, urges, and other subterfuges that relieve us of responsibility for our failures.

The Bulletin, then, will continue to offer several hundred words to help us harness that human nature of ours within the confines of the Ten Commandments. If anyone comes up shy on ethics, and Catholic morals, it won't be due to the fact you were never exposed to them.

It's pretty obvious, too, that any one of you will show yourself in military service largely the person you brought to the service.

Saturday Afternoon Confessions -- from 4:30 until 5:30, in Sacred Heart Church.

Tonight at 6:45: The Sorrowful Mother Novena.