

University of Notre Dame Religious Bulletin

May 21, 1932

Week of Penance, June 3 to 10

Yesterday's *Religious Bulletin* called your attention to the most recent Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, in which he calls upon the Catholic world for prayer and penance during the Octave of the feast of the Sacred Heart. Note the dates, June 3-10. Cancel any engagements for dances you may have made for that week, refrain from other amusements, tighten your belt. If we are to be freed from the depression we must follow the lead of the Holy Father; and we must be full-hearted about it.

Individualism has marked our prayers thus far during the depression. These are reports from all over the country that the present stringency has brought people back to the Sacraments—but only when the shoe pinched *them*. Concerted action has been rare and isolated. Where it has been attempted the response has been poor—except in the case of those who were in actual want. Where one church in a city has services for the needy, the needy flock from all over the city; if all the churches had such services, the response in each individual church would be unsatisfactory. Our Novenas for the Poor last fall were a demonstration of your lack of interest in the general problem; Holy Communion during those periods were fewer than during the same periods last year when the motive of the depression was not proposed.

There must be collective action. A collective sense of justice must be restored; a collective conscience on moral conduct must be regained. Many occasions of sin have been closed by the depression, but they were its gilded palaces where cover charges ran high. Filthy movies and filthy books are still the order of the day. The latest bulletin of The Catholic Theatre Movement recommends only four of the fifty plays it reviews; most of the others would not have seemed out of place in the most decadent period of the Greek Theatre. Divorce and free love still run riot in our society; and yesterday Margaret Sanger won her point and obtained hearings on the House Bill on birth control—the first time that the House of Representatives has surrendered in that point of degeneracy. (There is plenty of collective action on the part of the enemies of the Cross; its friends are apathetic.)

Pope Pius XI reiterates the points made in his Encyclical on Reconstruction, issued a year ago last Sunday: Capitalism and Communism are twin dangers which will involve us all in ruin if they are not checked. He pleads again for justice in the distribution of the world's goods. "A small group of holders of the world's wealth," he asserts, "manipulate the markets of the world at their own caprice, to the immense harm of the masses." This abuse of wealth by its stewards fosters the most dangerous plans of the communists: "They destroy every bond of law, human or divine; they engage openly and in secret in a relentless struggle against God Himself; they carry out the diabolical program of wresting from the hearts of all, even from children, all religious sentiment; for well they know that when once belief in God has been taken from the heart of mankind they will be entirely free to work out their will."

As Notre Dame men we have a special duty of loyalty to the Holy Father in answering this appeal. We are in the midst of a corporate Holy Communion for his intentions as a spiritual offering for his seventy-fifth birthday. Our loyalty is now put to the test. His request that we "refrain from entertainments and amusements, however lawful," puts the searchlight on our Catholicity. May we survive the test!

Questions From The Questionnaire

150. Does it make any difference whether you date a Catholic or non-Catholic girl?

Answer: It does to the poor girl.

151. Why don't priests marry?

Answer: Haven't they troubles enough as it is? The Church wisely applies to the Western Clergy the observation of St. Paul that the man who has a wife is concerned with the things of the wife, while the man who has none is concerned with the things of God. The Church could change that point of discipline tomorrow, but it is not likely that she will; its good results are too obvious.

152. Why isn't the Mass a Sacrament?

Answer: It is the beginning of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist; it is also the supreme act of worship of God, the Sacrifice of Calvary brought to us.

PRAYERS: Admiral Benson, Laetare medalist of 1917, died suddenly yesterday. He was engaged as a member of the faculty of the College of Commerce in 1920 when President Wilson claimed his services to direct the post-war Shipping Board. There will be a Requiem Mass for the repose of his soul offered Tuesday morning at 6:30 in the Church.

Tomorrow Is Trinity Sunday