

Bad Thoughts.

Three weeks ago, a truck loaded with 1,500 sticks of dynamite was travelling at normal speed along a highway in California when the driver detected the odor of something burning. A few hurried looks revealed to him that the engine of the truck was on fire. The driver kept his head. He did not abandon the vehicle and allow it to explode on the highway. Instead he drove it deep into an adjoining potato field. Parking it there, he leaped out and ran back to the road to warn oncoming motorists. In a few minutes the truck blew up with a tremendous blast. No one was killed or injured, thanks to the heroism and quick-thinking of the driver.

A stick of high explosive is not an article to be avoided under all conditions. Many tons of dynamite are put to good use every day in breaking the way for necessary roads and bridges, in making war ammunition for demolishing enemy objectives. "It's good," we say, yet we hurry to add, "but it's pretty dangerous stuff."

So with bad thoughts; they are dynamite. They are not bad, that is, sinful in themselves, otherwise no theological works on the subject of purity could be printed for priests, nor could professional men like doctors and lawyers handle cases involving problems of sex and married life, nor could pamphlets be printed on the subject of purity for young people, for every discussion or treatise on this matter is bound to create sexual images. But like the dynamite, bad thoughts are pretty dangerous stuff. They have enticed more than one man into impurity, and have blasted others into hell.

Inevitable.

Good souls are sometimes driven mad by impure images. They need a thorough understanding of themselves and the counsel of theologians and the saints. Some persons have the wild idea that purity of thought implies freedom from all impure images. They consider themselves to have sinned if they discover an immodest phantasm in their imagination. They are attempting the impossible. A life exempt from impure images is a miracle of grace, which no one has a right to expect. Two saints are known to have received this gift of freedom from desires of the flesh, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Aloysius of Gonzaga, but only after they had won notable victories over their lower nature.

Temptations towards impurity in thought will follow men to the grave. Men are animals and their animal senses will always crave satisfaction in sense pleasure. Moreover, the Devil is very frequently the source of evil thoughts. He can shoot attractive pictures into the imagination and reshew images the mind once saw in the past. Temptations which come suddenly and are vicious are usually the work of Satan. Peace of heart is based on the truth that there is nothing abnormal in being tempted and that the presence of an impure image is not a sign of sin.

When Sinful.

Two conditions must be present before one can sin by impurity in thought, namely recognition of an image as impure and awareness that it is dangerous, that is, it is enticing one to approval of evil (wilful desires, wilful rejoicing in past impurity, wilful delight in imagining that one is performing an evil act). When the driver of the dynamite truck recognized danger afoot, he lost no time in getting out of that perilous spot. Sin begins when one does nothing to escape the danger of falling into sin once the soul is cognizant of its plight. Impure stories, suggestive shows, pictures and books are dynamite. Drive the truck load of them into the potato patch and run for your life.

PRAYERS (deceased) Betty Jane Collings, friend of Harold Wismann (Dil); sister-in-law of Prof. Joseph Ryan; Lieut. John Savage; Corp. Pete Watson; friend of Bill Boyd (B-P) Brother Anastasius, C.S.C., seriously ill at St. Joseph's Hospital.