

Tonight at 6:45, the
Last of the Lenten
Series. Don't miss it!

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
April 7, 1954

If not yet Confirmed, see
the Prefect of Religion,
or Father Barry, this
week.

Millions Leaving The Church ?

Last week the Christian Herald reported that during the past ten years over 4 million Catholics had entered various denominations. The news startled everyone-- including Catholic pastors unaware that such a movement was taking place.

Experts on polls reported the Herald had violated "some of the most fundamental norms in arriving at the conclusions." Sometime ago, the Christian Century accused the Herald "of being naive in its methods" of compiling such data, pointing out that: "Church officials are not always as helpful as they could be. They like to report achievements; and habit is so strong with them that they go on reporting achievements whether they occur or not. In many instances they seem to be unaware of the possibility that modern statistical methods and procedure might greatly improve their lamentably poor record for accuracy."

Who And Where Are They ?

Always there have been a few defections; but Catholic pastors are unaware of, and cannot account for the millions supposedly lost to their parishes!

Look about your neighborhood, and among your own acquaintances. Among those groups who ever left the Church to draw nearer to God ? To find a more nearly perfect way of Life ? To lead a life of greater perfection ? Hardly any of these reasons, you conclude, entered into their decision.

More than likely, it was some law of God that got into the path of the individual; and the only way to circumvent that law was to repudiate the Faith of the centuries, leave the church, create or take up with some denomination that permitted what he felt the urge to do.

Indeed, if it weren't for the basic human motive of making up your own religion, there would be no such thing today as a denomination. Of people you read about, or knew personally, who are no longer in the Apostolic fold into which they were born or converted -- what was their reason for leaving ? Greater sanctity ? Greater austerity ? Greater humility ? Greater Penance ? What was the inducement for their leaving -- dogmatic ? Or was it merely a social one, or the shedding of obligations ? Or escape ? Or a tiff with the pastor ? Or just lazy ?

Study the names that appear in the daily papers -- DiMaggio, Sinatra, Regan, Tebbets, Hemingway - a few of our N.D. grads, and a host of others who don't make headlines. Do you think they were motivated by a genuine desire for higher sanctity when they walked out of the Catholic Church ?

And did you ever hear of a Catholic's being sincerely converted to a denomination on his deathbed ? No, and you never will!

Even Dr. Samuel Johnson (1712-1784) made the sage observation that: "No Papist's conversion can be sincere and lasting because he has to give up so much of what he held as sacred..." Indeed, no well instructed Catholic can possibly leave the Faith to find God. More than likely the vast majority become indifferent, and lazy. A few may join a denomination for social reasons -- but not for religion.

PRAYERS - Deceased: Peter O. Steger, '23; father of John Youngen, '37; father of Ted Feifer (Alumnus); aunt of Dick Farrell of Badin; father of Jim Healy of Zahm; grandfather of Ed Koscher, and Ramon Berrios of Cavanaugh; friend of Mike Thompson of Farley. Ill: Chuck Rohr, '30; sister of Jack Mannion of Alumni; sister-in-law of Dan Devine of Morrissey; Dick Plum of Farley; grandfather of Tom Russell of Cavanaugh.