

**Tonight: Start a Novena to the Immaculate Conception for the help you need most..**

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Explaining the "Index"

..for yourself, or for your family. Make it consist of Mass, Communion, and the Rosary daily.

Occasionally, if you are alert, you may hear some bright chap down the hall come up with the brilliant assertion: "I can read anything". In a way he's right -- he has eyes, an understanding, and free will. And he's the boss of his own life, he says.

But here's the rub: there are some books, stories, and articles that are dangerous. If we read them, sensing the danger, we offend God and commit sin. In some cases the sin may be big enough to send us to hell, if we die before getting the chance to repent. Some of our recent "best sellers" belong in this category. And not since Manhattan Island was sold for \$24.00 has so much dirt cost so little. Be careful: the devil can be behind a best seller.

Invariably the question arises on campus: "Are these best sellers on the Index"?

In case you don't know it, the Roman Index of Forbidden Books is a list which the Catholic Church forbids her members to read without special permission. In some cases the Index names the book by title and author; in other cases it merely specifies the subject matter that would make a book or article forbidden. A sensational "best seller" may not be on the Index by name. Does that mean you can read it? Not on your life. Why?

You have another Index that you must contend with. God gave it to you at your birth. It began to operate when you reached the age of reason. It is an Index that the Church did not specify by title or author. It's an Index that no professor made up, nor your mother, nor any priest. God gave you a Conscience as a guide to follow.

Sometimes, maybe often, that conscience tells you: "Don't touch this book; it's dangerous to your Faith, or morals". At other times, your conscience will whisper: "Stop, can't you see that this reading matter is whetting your appetite for things sexual? It's bringing on bad thoughts and desires you can't cope with. You slipped before, remember. And it was in a situation just like this one". When you close your eyes and ears to the cry of conscience, you commit sin -- because you deliberately step into danger.

And So ---

You can't read anything at all. You can't even touch the cover of some books, namely those books you know from a reliable source to be filled with sinful stuff. There is a sin of curiosity, a sin of snooping, where you know you should not snoop. The Catechism question about the occasion of sin still applies to all of us -- even though we have grown up and have arrived at college. It says: "Any person, place, or thing, that can lead one into sin must be avoided". Sometimes, some of our best sellers can turn out to be booby-traps -- and you can turn out to be the boob.

The Church cannot begin to keep up with all the rot published these days -- and so does not list specifically all the books you should not read. Like a good mother, she tries to keep poison away from her children -- but the sources of poison are beyond her scope; and she doesn't know them all by their specific names. But your CONSCIENCE completes the Index of Forbidden Books. You can stifle your conscience to a certain extent -- but not altogether, because it insists on warning you. Ultimately you must capitulate -- or put the book down. There is only one thing worse than reading one of these books. And that is passing it around to others.

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PRAYERS - Deceased: cousin of Bill Chessen of Morrissey; grandfather of Tom Sahn of Howard; James Rich, '31; grandfather of Bill (Morrissey) and John LeMire (Javanaugh); friend of John Thomas (O-C); brother-in-law of John H. Neeson, Jr. '35. Ill; daughter of Mike McGuirl, '49.

First Friday coming up this week.