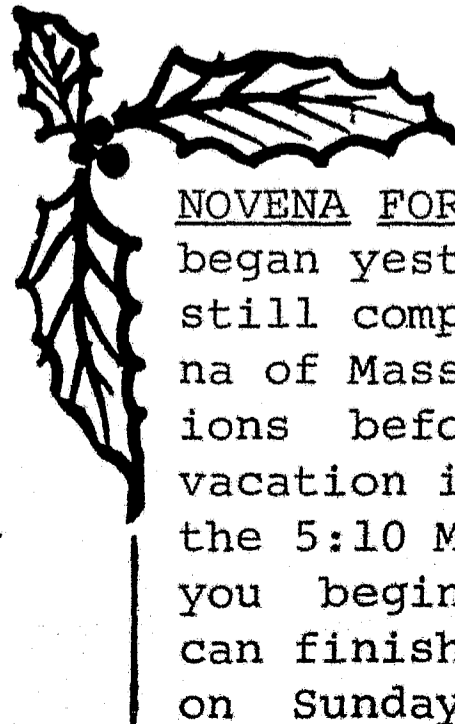
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION -- REFLECTIONS, 1963

Our Lord once said that the very stones would cry out to pay Him tribute were the voices of the people to remain mute. Such, so it seems to us, would be true were we to remain silent concerning our Blessed Mother. It is clear to men of Faith that it is God's will that we honor her whom He has honored above all creatures, whom the poet long since described as "our tainted nature's solitary boast."

The beauty of Mary's sanctity! It is the beauty of a soul filled with divine life (sanctifying grace) from the very first moment of conception, thus uniting it in a most intimate manner with the Blessed Trinity: with God the Father who sees in Mary a child of inimitable obedience, humility, reverence, gratitude and piety; with God the Son who sees in Mary His eternally chosen Mother to whom He owes the nature by which He would redeem man, and who sees in her the most perfect realization of that redemption; with God the Holy Spirit who sees in Mary a loving spouse making with Him, insofar as is possible and without losing its identity, a single spirit.

While admitting our limitations of expression we can be happy in the privilege of having our voices re-echo in salutation the very phrase with which Mary herself proclaimed to the world her preeminent sanctity: "I am the Immaculate Conception." It is by this title that we pay Mary sublime honor; it is also by this title that we as Americans invoke her as the patroness of our country.

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The CHRISTMAS NOVENA FOR PARENTS..... began yesterday. You can still complete your novena of Masses and Communions before leaving for vacation if you begin at the 5:10 Mass today. If you begin tomorrow you can finish your novena on Sunday, December 15.

TOPSY-TURVY STANDARDS OF SOCIETY It is a somewhat inverted idea of democracy, as well as of education, to believe that the less mature ought to teach the more experienced. At least this is the idea presented in Teen-Age Tyranny* written by Grace and Fred M. Hechinger. As a result of the abdication of the rights and privileges of adults for the convenience of the immature, they say, American civilization today is in danger of becoming a teen-age society, with permanently teen-age standards of thought, culture, and goals. American society is growing down rather than growing up.

We have, in fact, in America today a society tending toward infantilism. We have adults so caught up in the cult of youth that they are gradually adopting teen-fashions for themselves, succumbing to adolescent tastes. That's why television, for example, is loaded with crime and Westerns and situation-comedy shows of the quality of the comic strips adults read when they were kids.

Ernest Hemingway described the present age as The Millennium of the Untalented. "We are deluged with writers who can't write," he said, "actors who can't act and singers who can't sing." Most of the manufactured song-bird idols of the teen-agers today, for instance, rely on "tricks and gestures" to put their songs over and make the audience love them for reasons other than their mournfully synthetic voices. "Never has the public been given such a variety of swaying, hip-swinging and, of course, the inevitable finger-snapping. These mannerisms are frequently the only 'comprehensible' part of a performance which puts a premium on unintelligible diction."

In education today everything must be "fun", with fun interpreted as the effortless accomplishment of something pleasant. And yet the fun ethic, say our authors, "is a barefaced fraud, and the fact that it has been sold to adults as well as teenagers only makes it worse. In reality, of course, the reverse is usually the truth: most pleasant things must be accomplished by varying amounts of effort which can be exciting, stimulating, or, at times, downright difficult and troublesome."

It is a "fraudulent notion that important goals can be achieved without effort. Real fun is a by-product, not an end in itself. There is no such thing as quick and easy learning. Every new theory of education is sold down the river by the fun fraud--the sugar-coated pill of easy mastery!"

It will take great courage on the part of both schools and parents today to reverse the long-standing trend to permissiveness, say our authors. One mother says, "We owe it to our children to be unpopular with them sometimes. They have a right on occasion to think we are heels. When pressure is on them to join their group in something they know they shouldn't do, they should be able to say, 'I'd be glad to go along, but my parents are heels. They won't let me.'"

THE DIVINE LITURGY (MASS) will be celebrated in the BYZANTINE RITE on SATURDAY at 2:45 in SACRED HEART CHURCH.

Father Vladimir Tarasevitch, O.S.B., of Christ the Redeemer (Byzantine-Slav) parish in Chicago will be the celebrant and a group of his parishioners will serve as commentators and as choir members. Since the Eastern Rites have the privilege of using the vernacular, much of the liturgy will be in English.

Father Vladimir's duties in Chicago demand the unusual time for the Divine Liturgy. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion (under both species in the Byzantine Rite) will complete a three hour fast if they begin at 12:45.

This opportunity of participating in the Divine Liturgy of the Byzantine Rite is being given in order that Roman Rite Catholics may have a better understanding and appreciation of the richness of other liturgies. It offers an opportunity also of receiving Holy Communion under two species.

There will be no 5:10 Mass in Sacred Heart Church on Saturday.

THE NOTRE DAME DISPENSATION AGAIN

Saturday, the vigil of the Immaculate Conception, is a day of fast and total abstinence. This day is not excluded from the Notre Dame dispensation. Hence, meat may be eaten, but for campus residents, on campus only. The terms of the dispensation are very explicit. When the dispensation was extended to students living off campus, the provision was that scandal be avoided. Meat may be eaten by off-campus students in their places of residence, but it is hard to see how scandal would be avoided were they to eat meat in a public place. Hence, no meat on Saturday at banquets, in restaurants or public eating places off the campus.

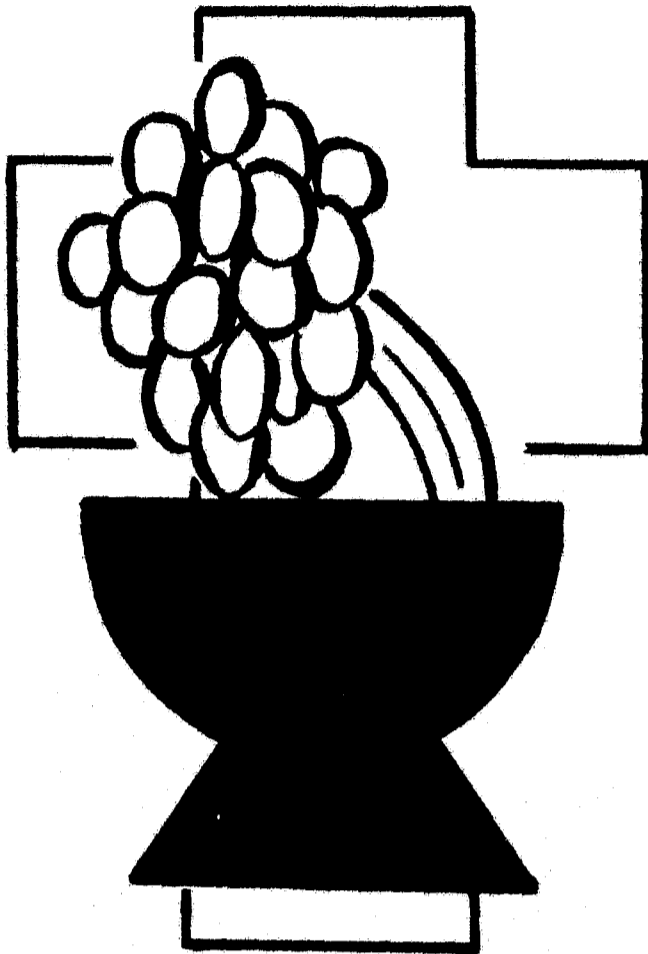
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (continued from the front page)

Although rejoicing in Mary's greatness and sanctity we should be mindful of this sobering truth: just as Our Lord once warned us that it is not those who merely say, "Lord, Lord," who enter the kingdom of heaven, so too it is not precisely by our words of praise but by our deeds -- deeds of imitation of Mary's virtues which form the mosaic of her holiness -- that we become more Mary-like, more Christ-like, more God-like which is the goal of all sanctity.

In the theology of history, better termed the theology of Providence, Mary was accorded the unique gift of the Immaculate Conception to prepare her spiritually to later become the Mother of Jesus. She would also become the most perfect copy of the Divine Model. All generations would indeed call her blessed. Today her one desire, her single aim is to aid us to grow into Christ.

--Father A. M. McDowell, C.S.C.

THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY AND THE BLOOD



The Mass, like chess, is a series of moves: God's and his people's toward one another. And a certain rhythm emerges: first God's move (His Word to us in Scripture), then ours (our offerings); next His move again (Christ's identification with the bread and wine), then ours (the Communion). This last move of ours, as with the whole rhythm of the Mass, is a good deal more than the play of the specially interested dilettante, to whom too many would too readily leave the field of play. God's movement towards us continues only to the degree that we respond. The reason: it is a person, God, who initiates it, and it is we as persons, in an interpersonal dialogue, who have the chance to respond. No dialogue continues unless both sides take an active interest.

The point is that sacrifice in every one of the known prototypes of Christianity comes to a moment of communion: a point when something common is shared, when a community of life is established with the deity. We see something here of the natural man trying to commune with the world of spirit through something material that has been made sacred: and in the form of a meal because this is the most humane gesture you can offer someone; to share a meal with him as a sign of friendship. Christianity's religion of the spirit does not overlook this longing of man's soul for communion with God, does not forget that it must be done in some form where we can sense a familiarity with God. And this is the reason we imitate Christ's action and observe His command: "Take this and eat; this is My Body, this My Blood. Do this in memory of Me."

But St. Paul has cautioned us: "As often as you eat this bread and drink this blood, you announce the death of the Lord until He comes." There is a risk, then, a responsibility: not just to do what Christ did, but to do it in good conscience. In communion we are ratifying something: Christ's offer of Himself, that had to take the form of His dying for us, the cost of Christ's move toward us. By our acceptance of this move, we announce our willingness to move toward Christ, to take on the living and the dying of Jesus that occurs in every Christian committed to a community of life with Christ.

The Mass, however, offers no push-button justification; we cannot remain morally passive observers. Every human relationship involves a risk. But there is no responsibility, no love, without risk. And the risk and the responsibility for us is in making communion a part of the sacramental realism by which we attempt to live out this community of life with God, and with others in God.

--Father Watzke