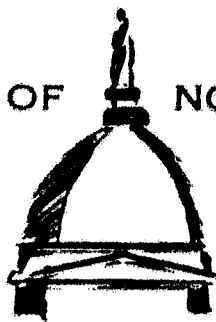


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CONFESSIONS DURING SUNDAY MASS

Most parishes, as you will learn later if you have not already done so, never permit confessions during Sunday Mass. Why? Because it interferes with proper assistance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and it is certainly not in keeping with the new emphasis on active participation in the liturgy.

Sometimes -- in some places -- necessity knows no alternative. Mass time is the only opportunity that some individuals can manage this obligation: the person whose means of livelihood demands that he work during regular times for confession; persons who live a long distance from the church, as in rural parishes or in small town parishes which embrace large areas. None of these conditions exist here on the campus, and yet we have confessions during Sunday Masses on the chance that it might be gravely inconvenient to get to confession at another time. But this grave inconvenience should not exist for many, with confessions in the hall chapels morning and night and in Sacred Heart before and during each weekday Mass and for two hours on Saturday evening.

If without good reason you habitually go to confession during a Sunday morning Mass, you are abusing a privilege and developing a bad habit which will not be catered to in your home parish. Incidentally, no one should go to confession during the Consecration of the Mass. Exclusive preoccupation with confession might divert sufficient attention from the Mass to make fulfillment of the Sunday obligation impossible.

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LENTEN READING.....

Spiritual reading has been called a preface to prayer; it prepares the way for dialogue with God. Little headway can be made spiritually without spiritual reading. For that reason sincere Catholics customarily make a spiritual reading program part of their Lenten practice.

To put out a list of RELIGIOUS BULLETIN recommendations is impractical, if not impossible. There is a large selection of religious books in the Notre Dame Book Store. An investment of a dollar, or two, or five could turn to a profit measurable only on the scale of eternal values.

MORALS, NEW AND OLD.....

What the Christian Century for January 29 called the "sexplosion" more and more preoccupies observers of the American scene. Time devoted a cover story to it (if "cover" is the appropriate word) in its January 24 number. Other mass circulation magazines had already reported at length on a spreading breakdown of sexual morals in this country.

Some of the most forthright comments on the "new morality" of sex that we have seen were made by Dr. Robert E. Fitch, dean and professor of Christian ethics at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California, and author of the Christian Century article mentioned above. He said:

"The revolt against moral restraints over sex is as old as the problem of the first Israelite families that settled in Canaan and had to guard their offspring against the enticement of the fertility cults, as old as the breakdown of Roman sexual morality coincident with the decline and fall of the Roman empire, as old as the flamboyant dispersion of all sexual restraints in the England of the Restoration....To talk of newness here is to talk nonsense."

But that is not to say that we may contemplate today's moral climate with the calm reflection that this, too, will pass. Dr. Fitch continued:

"The only new thing about the situation is the attitude of futility among those who should be the guardians of morality. And -- let's face it -- this attitude is at its worst in the ranks of liberal Protestants. Indeed, the situation is almost enough to make one want to turn Catholic or Jew, or to espouse some kind of religion that still has a residual belief in an objective moral law."

We do not quote these words for whatever sour satisfaction Catholics may find in reading them. We prefer to draw the moral that Catholics should think twice before embarking upon their own radical "re-thinking" of the objective moral law. Enough voices urging such a course are being raised in our ranks to make this warning necessary.

We do not frown on the efforts of contemporary Catholic thinkers to explore interpersonal relations more deeply and to gain precious insights from them. Our tradition, like all traditions, must develop or die. But the valuable elements in new approaches to ethics must be synthesized with, rather than simply replace, the objective morality that the Church has taught through the centuries.

Natural law philosophy, to be sure, has often been presented

in a somewhat wooden way. Doctrines that become enshrined in textbooks normally suffer that fate. It must be admitted, too, that in certain areas natural law morality has lost its appeal to the contemporary mind. But when we listen to what sincere non-Catholics are saying, we find a widespread hunger for objective principles and norms of conduct.

Few papal documents have been more enthusiastically received than Pope John XXIII's encyclicals, Mater et Magistra and Pacem in Terris. Yet both took as their starting point a natural moral order, and their strength lay in their intelligent and warmhearted adaptation of old principles to new situations. It would be ironic if Catholics were to weaken in their belief in objective moral law at a time when the world so evidently feels the need of it.

--from America (February 15, 1964)

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NOTRE DAME BLOOD BANK.....

Periodically throughout the year the RELIGIOUS BULLETIN asks for contributions to the Notre Dame Blood Bank. At present the account is very low because of several substantial withdrawals. Lent is an appropriate time to remind you of this form of true Christian charity. Plan to donate a pint of blood between now and Easter. You can make arrangements at the University Chaplain's office in Dillon, Room 116.

IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Deceased -- Mrs. Walter Clements, wife of Walter, Sr., '15, and sister of Mother Verda Clare of St. Mary's; Joseph Lamb, supreme secretary of the Knights of Columbus New Haven State Council and friend of Notre Dame; Leo J. Herbert, '27; Joseph F. Callahan, Jr., '43. Ill -- Lawrence Kellerman of Howard last semester, forced to leave school for reasons of health; John Toohey of Walsh last semester.

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ALL THE WORLD LOVES A LOVER.....

John of the Cross is credited with the saying that, "In the evening of life we shall be judged by love." Capitalize that last word and you have named the Judge. Leave it as it is and you have given the balance He will use to decide your eternity. But I say it is not only in the evening of life, but in its morning, noon, and night that we are judged by love. It is by love that we are judged by men as well as by God. Look at the late Pope John XIII and the late President John F. Kennedy. How were they judged in life and at death? Why were they so universally loved? Because they were lovers....Resolve to win from moderns that accolade the early Christians won from their pagan contemporaries: "These Christians! Behold how they love one another!"

--from Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O.
in Our Sunday Visitor (February 9, 1964)

Fresh from the Pad.....

PAINLESS LOVE -- NO-PINCH COMMITMENT

In a culture where we fluff and buff everything to a casimere softness before we wear, eat or use it, the gray powdery ashes trickling from our foreheads last Wednesday fit like a harp solo in the Beattles' routine. Mortification, self-denial, and penance are naughty words in the current Christian "Love Syndrome". For many the Christian life is being caught up in the headiness of togetherness and captivated by a strange euphoric experience in which they bask blissfully until the parousia.

The wonderful movement in the Church today towards emphasizing the positive in order to avoid empty formalism and meaningless negativism is not an attempt to create a painless Christianity. The season of Lent and its penitential spirit is right at the heart of the positive approach to the Christian life. Lent, too, is for love. But no one loves in a vacuum. We don't just press a button and love automatically. Love is a struggle, a harsh struggle.

Love is not without its obstacles. There is one giant obstacle to our love of God. It's our selfishness. Within our human frame we have big chunks of selfishness which like large boulders hinder our full response to God's love-stirrings. These boulders must be chipped away. They must be axed-out of our lives. We would like to handle our selfishness gently, tenderly, and painlessly. But this would be to condemn ourselves to the hopeless task of trying to chisel a block of granite with a feather.

No amount of mental gymnastics or labyrinthine rationalizations can dilute the Christian message. It's very simple: life through death, love through giving. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For he who would save his life will lose it; but he who loses his life for my sake will find it." This message rings loud and true today as it did when those people of whom they said: "Behold how they love one another," were led into the Roman Colosseum to be pulverized by lions.

A soft and undemanding Lent is as contradictory as a painless Christian life. If we refuse to back away at our selfishness no matter how big we are on "love" we will really never be immersed in the mystery of Christ.

--Father Baker, C.S.C.

P.S. "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent bear it away."