

RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

VOL. XLIII, NO. 35
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1964

REV. LLOYD W. TESKE, C.S.C.,
UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN - EDITOR

DISCIPLINE IS A NAUGHTY WORD

The word discipline, like suffering and sacrifice, has unpleasant connotations. Human nature chafes at discipline. But discipline, like suffering and sacrifice, must be a part of every man's life. If discipline is not imposed from without, it must be self-imposed. In fact, the transition from external discipline to self-discipline is part of the process of maturing.

Self-discipline is described by Father Leo Trese (The Catholic Messenger, Davenport, Iowa, Feb. 13, 1964) as "the ability to make ourselves do, now, something which should be done, however distasteful the task may be." And sloth, he says, is the vice the person lacking in self-discipline is guilty of. "The person who procrastinates, who always postpones distasteful duties as long as possible, is lacking in self-discipline....He or she is a victim of the vice of sloth."

"It is not for nothing," continues Father Trese, "that sloth is classified as one of the seven capital sins. Sloth is bad enough on the natural level, where it wastes so much of precious time and of human resources. Because of sloth, physical, or mental, work is neglected or done in shoddy fashion. Duties are skimmed. Acts of charity are omitted. Evils which should be corrected are allowed to accumulate and to grow in intensity.

"On the supernatural level the effects of sloth are even more damaging. We quiet an accusing conscience by promising that 'some day soon' we shall begin to pray more regularly, receive the sacraments more frequently, stop drinking so much, quit the gossip or give up some other habit or occasion of sin which is impeding spiritual progress. The 'some day soon' seems never to come.

"Sloth is not an incurable affliction. Most of us slip into procrastinating habits by inadvertence. We let ourselves follow the line of least resistance without realizing that, in so doing, we are abandoning command of self.

"Self-discipline, like any other habit, is developed and deepened by practice. We begin by resolving, 'From now on, when there is something that should be done, I shall do it immediately. If something has to be postponed, it will be my own ease and pleas-

(continued on page three)

MORE LABYRINTHIAN WAYS OF GRAHAM GREENE "I am a kind of carrier of the disease of Catholicity, without being sick myself," says a character in one of Graham Greene's recent volume of short stories, A Sense of Reality* This man, a novelist, explains that he once believed, "but for twenty years I excommunicated myself. I never went to Confession. I loved a woman too much to pretend to myself that I would ever leave her. You know the condition of absolution? A firm purpose of amendment. I had no such purpose." This man's mistress died five years ago, but he hasn't returned to the Church. He says he has ceased to believe.

This fictitious writer was once a popular Catholic novelist, fresh and exciting, and many people reading him became interested in the faith. "They used to come here by the dozens to see me. I used to get letters saying that I had converted them by this book or that. Long after I had ceased to believe myself."

The man to whom he is speaking in the story, a visitor, has seen him at Mass Christmas Eve and says, "All the same you go to Mass." Morin, the novelist, answers, "I go to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. The worst of Catholics go then -- even those who don't go at Easter. It is the Mass of our childhood. What would people think if I didn't go then. I don't want to give scandal. I am their Catholic author. God knows I wouldn't take a hand in robbing them."

His visitor still has another question: "But if you don't believe, if the sacraments mean nothing to you, what kept you away from Communion? (The novelist was the only one in the church who

didn't receive.) If the host means nothing to you, why do you scruple to receive it?"

This question infuriates the novelist: "I told you I had lost my belief. That's quite different from what you are talking about. But how are you to understand?" The visitor finds here in the novelist a case of a man who accepts his own lack of belief as a final proof that the Church is right and the faith is true. In the end, the visitor goes back to his hotel puzzled by the strange faith which holds the novelist even when he has ceased to believe.

Greene is the master craftsman whether, as in this story, probing into the tortured consciences of so-called unbelieving men and women, or in dealing with even more fantastic situations, as in the rest of the stories here. These tales admit of a number of interesting interpretations, and each person will want to read his own into them. Whatever the doubt, however, about the ultimate true interpretation, there can be no doubt about Greene's still possessing his skill as an artist, or, in fact, about his being the outstanding practitioner of the short-story trade in our literary world today.

--Claude L. Boehm

SELF-DISCIPLINE (continued from page one)

ure, not my duties.' The implementation of this resolve will call for considerable firmness. Sloth yields, but it yields stubbornly.

"However, as time goes on we begin to enjoy a sense of satisfaction in disposing of tasks and duties as they occur....Moreover, we are released from the hidden tensions which we suffer when conscience continually chides us for duties undone. With 'do it now' as our motto, we enjoy our leisure twice as much when we come to it, because our leisure is unmarred by uneasy awareness of neglected obligations....In our spiritual life...each new act of self-discipline brings an increase of grace..."

* * * * *

RETREAT NOTES.....

This weekend a group of freshmen, principally from Cavanaugh Hall, is making a retreat at St. Joseph's Hall. The retreat begins after dinner this evening and ends Sunday noon. The retreatants stay at St. Joseph's Hall.

This weekend also another group of students is among those making the Cursillo at Fatima Retreat House. The Cursillo began last evening, Thursday, at 7:00 p.m. and will conclude Sunday evening. Another group of twelve students made the Cursillo at Fatima Retreat House from December 5 to 8.

The next opportunity for a closed retreat will be the weekend of March 13, 14, 15. This retreat will be at Moreau Seminary and will be open principally to upperclassmen. Anyone interested may give his name to his hall chaplain or see the University Chaplain in 116 Dillon. The nominal fee for these retreat is \$5.00.

The final retreat of the school year is scheduled for the weekend of April 10, 11, and 12. This retreat will be in St. Joseph's Hall.

* * * * *

IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Deceased -- father of Kenneth Hatcher of Howard; grandmother of Fred Gund of Howard; Charles McDermont; Philip C. Cooley, '35; father and brother of Marie Luczak, maid in Howard; mother of Paul C. Romweber, '25. Ill -- father of Fred and Phil Flusche.

* * * * *

My parents were modest and humble. Their domestic virtues are almost like a sacrament which imprints a character, an indestructible stamp on the soul, forming a man for a good life. --Antonio M. Cardinal Barbieri,
Archbishop of Montevideo

EXPERIMENT IN PARIS (Part 3: Communicating)



Our spirituality is essentially a communal spirituality, as is that of the Church. And in the third and final part of the Mass, the assembly of the faithful are gathered round the same altar to share the bread, that is, to unite with Christ, and through Christ with all their brothers. For union with Christ must necessarily lead us to union with our brothers, since there is no intimacy with Christ which does not become a sharing and communion with the whole Christian community.

Now, as Christians we have a redemptive mission in this world. It is our living community which must assume the world and offer to God the work, suffering, praise and petitions of all men. It is the community which must bring about in the world this society governed by the law of love. The early Christians instinctively understood this communal aspect of their mission (cf. Acts 2:42-47). Thus, this mission has nothing at all to do with withdrawal from the world. No, it means bringing Christ to the world, to the realities of this world, to every walk of life. That which our Mass has efficaciously but only fleetingly realized, this assembly of men, without distinction of race, class, culture, age, sex, this people must now be expressed in the reality of our life. And only our efforts towards love and fraternal communion will tell if our union at Mass was sincere.

To emphasize man's integration into God's plan of salvation for the world, the community of St. Severin receives the Body and Blood of Christ in a standing position. The symbolism behind this gesture is biblical. The manna, the first pre-figure of the Eucharist, was given to God's chosen people in the desert. It was the food of exiled, displaced persons in their haste towards the Promised Land. Today we are in a similar situation to that of the Jews of old. We are on a journey here on earth as pilgrims. To complete "what is lacking in God's act of redemption," we urgently need the food of Christ, but this must be taken in haste. Lack of time makes no allowance for withdrawal into a position of security from the world. We must hurry, prodded on by the presence of Christ within us, so that we may effectively and efficaciously reflect Christ in this world in which we are called by God to engage ourselves actively.

Standing to receive Christ is not new or a mere fancy. It is the practice of the Oriental Church and expresses spiritually and mystically that "we have come in passing to renew our strength."

--Father Norris