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THE ADVENT

Once more we celebrate the Advent: we spend a month in preparation for the newest coming of Christ our Lord and Saviour.

The question is: Do we want Him?

At such a rude query, all who sincerely claim the Christian name will naturally bridle. Nevertheless, the question must stand. In religion, as in all else, it is salutary to re-examine occasionally our habitual assumptions.

The eminent Msgr. Guardini points out that believing man experiences a triple

reaction whenever he enters upon that holy ground which is the presence of God, whenever, that is, man encounters God.

The first instinctive reaction of man before God is a profound sense of unworthiness. "At seeing this, Simon Peter fell down and caught Jesus by the knees. Leave me to myself, Lord, he said; I am a sinner." The adequate explanation of such shrinking from the Divine Majesty is not far to seek. God is holy, as man understands well enough; and man is sinful, as man understands very well indeed. There is nothing artificial or pretended here. Man never really knows himself, or at least admits what he knows of himself, until he stands before God.

The second instinctive reaction of man to his Creator and Lord is oddly contradictory of the first. Sensing his

(continued on the back page)

FIRST FRIDAY OF DECEMBER

Friday of this week is the First Friday of December. According to custom, there will be Adoration in the Lady Chapel during the afternoon. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after the 11:30 Mass, and the adoration period concludes with consecration to the Sacred Heart and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 4:45.



A CALL FOR GOOD FELLOWS

to make a Novena

*of MASSES and HOLY COMMUNIONS as a
Christmas gift for your parents.*

Between December 5 and 13 a Novena of Masses will be said for the parents of those students who make a Novena of Masses and Communions themselves.

THE MANY USES OF MIND-MANIPULATION The Age of Mind-Manipulation is upon us, Vance Packard tells us in his most recent book, The Naked Society*, and of course this is news to very few of his readers. In this era when most so-called news magazines, as well as news media generally, are unabashedly opinion-manipulators, Americans hardly have to be warned that George Orwell's predictions in his novel 1984 may be rapidly approaching fulfillment.

To social scientists today, Packard tells us, the new promises of psychobiological control are very exciting. "We must assume the probability of a breakthrough in the control of the attitudes and beliefs of human beings through exceptionally effective educational techniques, drugs, subliminal stimulation, and manipulation of motives," a group of scientists at a Mid-Western university stated recently. Such men are enthusiastic about the possibilities of behavioral engineering, by which all human beings will be made to think alike, feel alike, believe alike, act alike.

Already, as Packard has told us in previous publications, social scientists have taught marketers how to play upon the human subconscious in order to sell goods. They have shown management how to spot conformists and non-conformists who will be either good or bad team players. They have made available to politicians the results of studies dealing with the anatomy of conformity, so as to produce the maximum suggestibility in the electorate. Experts of one kind or another may soon be able to take over much of the manipulation desired by national leaders, giving

them something approximating pushbutton control of their peoples.

Packard in this volume lavishly illustrates and, of course, deplores the wide use today of such mind-manipulating techniques as those involved in lie-detection, psychological espionage, personality testing, etc. All of these devices, he says, may be conditioning us for the advent of the universal mind-manipulator.

Such a jeremiad as we have in this book, however, doesn't mean that Vance Packard, the protester, is above the use of a little mind-manipulation himself at times. One notices, for instance, that he readily quotes authorities of one persuasion while neglecting those of the opposite persuasion. Such Justices of the Supreme Court as Warren, Black, Douglas, Brennan are permitted to air their opinions in these pages, while the reader would scarcely know that Harlan, Stewart, Clark, and White belonged to the same court. He heroizes such characters as Linus Pauling and Cyrus Eaton whom most Americans would consider very small heroes indeed. Perhaps mind-manipulation isn't reprehensible, so long as one mind-manipulates for the proper causes.

-- Claude L. Boehm

SACRAMENTS OF OUR STATE IN LIFE: MATRIMONY AND ORDERS

We come to those two sacraments which are unmistakably social -- designed for the community. Through Christian marriage, a man and woman are united in Christ in order that their mutual love may have its fulfillment, that children born to their responsibility may have a Christian formation as well as natural care. Through the Christian priesthood, a young man is selected by the Church from his companions and dedicated to the special tasks that pertain to God's work. Associated with these two sacraments are the profession of religious (men and women) and the dedication to a single life in the world. This latter, if religiously motivated, is a spiritual "sacrament" of acceptance, renunciation and self-denial.

Yet here again the inroads of our secularized society have left their marks. Reading a newspaper account of a modern marriage would never indicate any spiritual content. It appears rather as a fashion-show or the genealogical and social biography of a success story. Usually the groom is de-emphasized, or even eliminated. The society editors do not cause this truncated version of Christian marriage; they merely reflect it. The fact is that the sacrament of marriage -- two made one by God's action -- has been smothered by the more expensive details of a wedding.

This series is taken from the pamphlet How To Understand the Liturgy by Archbishop Paul J. Hallinan of Atlanta. It is available in single copies or bulk rate from GB Publications, P. O. Box 11667, Northside Station, Atlanta, Georgia, 30305.

The Holy Orders of a priest have not been secularized in this manner, but even here the ordination is likely to become secondary to the First Mass. In the renewal of Christian life envisioned by the Fathers of Vatican II, both of these sacraments need re-examination.

For matrimony, the following guide-lines are provided:

1. The grace of this sacrament will be more clearly signified in the new rite.
2. The duties of both spouses (not just the bride) are to be incorporated in a prayer of blessing. In the present formula, the bride, not the groom, is stressed.
3. The sacrament is normally to be celebrated within the Mass after the Gospel and homily.
4. But if apart from the Mass, the Epistle and Gospel of the Nuptial Mass are to be read, and the Nuptial Blessing given.
5. The sacrament may be enriched by "other praiseworthy customs and ceremonies" already in use, or a new rite, designed by the bishops of a region, suited to the usages of place and people.

The ceremonies and texts of ordination are to be revised, with at least the bishop's opening address to the people in English. So, too, there will be a revision of the rite for the consecration of virgins and for the religious profession and renewal of vows. "Greater unity, sobriety and dignity" will be the norms.

Liturgy sanctifies, but it also instructs. It is the Council's earnest hope that a more realistic view of the sacraments will be taught by the new changes. We are not asked to repudiate the past, only to purify it. We are asked to resist the lingering of past sentimentalities and the pressures of today's secular appetites.

We already have come to appreciate the directness of our "Amen" when the priest says "Corpus Christi" at communion. Christ through His Church acts upon us. We through His Church respond in our human way. It is no place for empty formulae or sterile gestures.

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THE ADVENT (continued from the front page)

In this diocese the new Eucharistic fast of only one hour from solid foods is now in effect

bottomless need, man reaches out to God, would run to God, would cling to God. At the very moment when honest Simon Peter uttered the words we have now quoted, he was actually kneeling at the feet of Christ, giving no sign either of leaving his Lord or of allowing his Lord to leave him. The situation is contradictory but entirely reasonable. We are indeed unworthy of God -- but still we must have Him.

It is the third immediate response of man to the approach of God that must be most closely scrutinized. It is the reaction of distaste, resentment, hostility. It is all evil. It is also a fact.

We must not fail to appreciate the subtlety of the Genesis account of the original sin. The luscious bait dangled before mankind by the "father of lies" was no other and no less than this: "Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God." Oh, the ecstasy! To know all and to be all, to lack nothing and to need no one, to be quit of humiliating dependence and be both supremely free and freely supreme, to be, in short, no longer a mere man but a very god -- there is the fearful seduction that underlies every temptation, there is the astonishing, Olympian passion that throbs in the hidden depths of every human spirit. Man does resent God -- for being all that man secretly longs to be.

As, therefore, we prepare anew for the latest coming of the Christ God, it is neither idle nor ironic to ask: Do we really want Him? "Come, Lord," we pray, "tarry not." Honestly, now? Is this a cry of real longing, of true and humble need, or simple love un-mixed with dread?

--Vincent J. McCorry, S.J.
--in America (Nov. 28, 1964)