

Catholic Courier

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With the Approval of the
MOST REVEREND JAMES EDWARD KEARNEY, D.D.
Bishop of Rochester

The CATHOLIC COURIER has my most enthusiastic approval. A diocesan newspaper has become an essential part of the program of Catholic action in every diocese. The CATHOLIC COURIER should be found in every Catholic home in this diocese. I find it hard to understand how any Catholic can be so indifferent as to what is transpiring in his church throughout the world as to rely upon unreliable sources of information or even to seek no information whatever. Let us have a brief slogan "The CATHOLIC COURIER in every Catholic home."

* JAMES E. KEARNEY, Bishop of Rochester.

LENTEN PRACTICE

There is a negative as well as a positive side to our Lenten program. Each side is important. Each should have its right share of attention.

The negative side tells us what we must not do. Some of it is of precept, some of counsel. The law on fast and abstinence intends to tell us what we must not eat, even while it prescribes as to quantity and quality what we may eat. Giving up movies and card parties is not of precept, giving up luxuries in food and drink even though allowed is not of precept. Partial or complete abstinence from drinking or smoking is up to our own choice. Filling up self-denial banks with the nickels and dimes and quarters we save on all this may still be counted as part of the negative side of our Lenten Program, because it depends on proceeds from what we do not do. So with other Lenten aims.

The negative side will mean little if we omit the positive side. Prayer and the spirit of sacrifice should accompany penitential works. The whole purpose of Lent is to reunite us to God. Love of the world, of its pomp, its pleasures, its good things, separates us from the perfect service of God; if carried too far, involves us in neglect of God, in sin, and even in mortal sin. The negative side of Lent tends to take away these incentives to worldliness; the positive side must lead our souls to better knowledge of, better love of God.

A sincere Catholic will welcome Lent as a God-given opportunity to approach closer to God. There will be a lifting of his heart and mind to God, a definite effort to know more of God and His law. The Sunday sermon will be augmented by the Lenten Sermon during the week; the Stations of the Cross will be a weekly prayerful review of the sufferings and death of Christ. Daily Mass will be looked to as practicable and worthy of following. Weekly or daily Communion will be on the list. Under all of these will be charity, charity that is the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Without charity, all our penitential works will be as nothing. Charity covereth a multitude of sins; where charity is, sin cannot be.

In practice, the positive and negative side of our Lenten Program are closely allied. There is something of the negative part in the positive part, and vice-versa. Attending daily Mass and evening services is a positive act; but involves self-denial, a negative part. Fasting and abstinence is negative in itself, but depends on that positive good-will that flows from the love of God. God help us to make our Lenten Program complete, a true preparation for Holy Week and Easter Sunday, a remote preparation for our eternal salvation!

INFORMATION, PLEASE!

The air is full of it! Everybody wants to know! By the side of the radio sits America, young and old, weighing the varied questions on everything knowable under Heaven, attempting a possible answer or giving up, heaving, awaiting eagerly the correct response of the victim, or reluctantly the correcting one of the questioner. It's interesting, it is instructive, it is instructive! And we like it!

Every man an expert at his own line! Try to catch a mathematics professor off base on a question in arithmetic or algebra. Try to fool a shoemaker on the materials and the parts of a shoe. Try to catch a housewife on the ingredients of a cake, or her husband on the best way to make the furnace go!

But try a Catholic on his religion! Ask him who made the world, who founded the Church, the number and names of the Sacraments; and he will invariably answer correctly. But go a little deeper; ask Him about the written Word of God, the Bible; and will he invariably answer correctly? Let each reader question himself on this! Who wrote the Bible? Is it one book or many? What are its two principal divisions? (Have you doubled on your prize money so far?) How old is it? Is it a treatise on geography, history, ethnology, astronomy? Who is the Divine Author of the Bible? Name some of the human authors? What makes them different from any other authors? Would we have a Bible today were it not for the fostering care God's Church has given to it? Is all of the teaching of the Church contained in the Bible? (Have you been sent back to your place with a professional word of sympathy from the questioner?)

Information, please! That's what you should have, ready and accurate, on the Bible. You are a Catholic, a member of God's Church, and you should have accurate information about the Bible!

Why not join in your parish one of the Discussion Groups, now? The subject for this Lent is the Bible; a helpful text is ready in the pamphlet available at your church. Report to your Pastor, approach him and with a real yearning for the knowledge you need on the Bible, say—"Information, please!"

FIRST IN WAR

Our country entered into being through war! It was an unequal war, where the odds were all against us. But we had as a leader the great General Washington. We had the courage and the bravery and the vision of a General who knew the justice of his cause, who knew the power of prayer for obtaining divine aid, who had the gift of encouraging weary and worn veterans to press on unto victory. Over all the opposition of the enemy, George Washington came out First in War! He enabled his country to come out First in that War! His birthday draws this year in conditions that find America not

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PRAYED IN NATION'S FIRST CRISIS



The anniversary of the birth of George Washington recalls the scene depicted here by the artist, the General kneeling in the snow at Valley Forge to pray for Divine Guidance, when faced by a crisis in the affairs of the nation. Today, as in other wars, Bishops throughout the country are urging their flocks to pray for the welfare of the nation and its leaders. (N.C.W.C.)

Along The Way

An American Breakfast

By REV. DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.

The stout, well-to-do looking woman across the dining car from me came in for her belated breakfast as the rest of us were lunching. And it was a more or less typical modern American diner's breakfast.

She had a cigarette, a pot of creamless, unsugared coffee, and another cigarette.

Then they tell us that the Church's laws of fasting are hard!

Speaking of Lobsters

How in the world did unfortunate, generally objectional people get themselves named after as thoroughly delightful a fish as the lobster? As slang "lobster" is as passe as the insult "muttonhead" which used in my youth to be applied to particularly stupid people. (Queer how we use the same animal for endearment and insult. "You sweet little lamb!" is very sentimental; "You muttonhead!" is frank insult.) But I apologize to the delightful lobster for having in the past called less attractive members of the human species after him.

When I arrive in Boston, I push aside other food and concentrate for a few days on lobster. Out in the Midwest, we now, thanks to refrigeration and frozen food, don't get our fish out of cans. Even at that, I always eat lobster in Boston with the conviction that the one before me jumped right out of the ocean into the boiling pot. A real Bostonian once told me that in the early days of good eating in New England, when a man in a restaurant ordered lobster, this was the routine: The waiter brought in six large crustaceans. He placed them on the floor. Then he cracked a whip. The lobsters all jumped. The one that jumped highest and farthest was the one that the customer selected for his meal. Legend, I'm sure, but it lingers gratifying in my mind.

Yet can you fancy the heroism of the man who first decided to boil and eat a lobster? He must have been practically staked to death and on a desert island with no other food in sight. Tackling a lobster without centuries of precedent would be a little like proceeding a small and particularly obnoxious devil for your luncheon. A converted Jew I happen to know very well, had to make the most heroic act of faith before he tackled his first lobster. Lobsters, in case you've forgotten it, were forbidden to the Jews by their religion. Lobsters had a way in ancient times of living near the mouths of rivers where they gorged the garbage of the cities and houses. But then,

I saw a Jew once, fresh from the waters of baptism, swallow his first oyster. And that was an act of high courage too.

But going back to that original hero, who do you think he was? And how in the world did he ever have the courage to pry off the lobster's armor to find out if its flesh was edible?

Anyhow, I am grateful that he did. I'm grateful too for the first assault on the utterly repellant looking clam. (There we go again; we name uncommunicative, cold, unfriendly people after the delicious clam! You lobster, you! That cold clam! How we humans get our figures of speech all mixed up!)

God is good, the provident Father in Heaven who filled the earth and the gardens and the seas with wonderful and varied food. I sat once through a lenten dinner with a friend who considers fish as something to feed to cats. When I had finished he regarded me with complete disgust . . . and, let me add, a trace of frank envy.

Diocesan Recordings

Many Thanks. To the various Catholic lay organizations who have so wholeheartedly during their Catholic Press Month observances, advocated reading of the CATHOLIC COURIER, their own diocesan newspaper, the staff says "thank you" with deep sincerity.

Reminder. It may have been passed over in the reading but the Rochester Branch, Catholic Central Verein at its December meeting adopted a resolution urging its members to assist at Daily Mass. In view of the urgency of His Excellency, Bishop Kearney, that the practice of Daily Mass be incorporated in the Lenten devotions of the faithful, this year, the resolution of the Central Verein was called to the attention of this department, this week. The resolution states, in part: "that inasmuch as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most effective means of satisfying Divine Justice, we urge upon our members to assist as often as possible at Daily Mass for the intention of bringing about an end of hostilities and of securing a just and lasting peace."

Getting Ready. Organization of a Catholic Men's Luncheon Club in Corning which meets every Friday at the Baron Steuben Hotel has brought desired information based

QUERIES and REPLIES

Why Take Sides? I Believe in Withholding Judgment Even in Matters Of Religion.

Human life must be focused on a compelling and absorbing purpose toward which everything gravitates. Civilization must have a commanding center. The focus toward which human efforts converge is either this world or the next. If the center of gravity is this world we have secularism. If the focal point is in the other world, we have religion.

The opposition between these two tendencies is absolute and mutually exclusive. When the principles of religion prevail, we have a spiritualized civilization, when secularism predominates, human life is materialized and confined within its own horizon.

A survey of our day speedily reveals the fact that the supreme interest of the present is directed toward the things of this world. Secularism is stamped on our entire civilization. It has become almost a religion itself demanding the undivided loyalty of humanity. But real Religion rises to assert itself.

The God-given instinct of self-preservation and propagation is as strong today as ever. The result is a world conflict of unwanted bitterness. It would seem that the battle is centering on its final and decisive phase. Mankind is really at the crossroads. We have arrived at the stage where compromise is no longer possible. All men of good will must take this matter seriously and act accordingly, definitely and decisively NOW. Mere sympathy for Christ and His Church will not do. "He that is not with Me is against Me" (Matt. 12, 30) (From the pen of Father Richard Felix, O.S.B., Defenders of the Faith, Conception, Missouri.)

"What possible merit can you get out of Friday?" he demanded. I'm afraid the answer is, "None."

Turning the Tables

As most of us have had the experience of dining out on a Friday with non-Catholics, and being served a bit of cheese or a soft-boiled egg in concession to our religion, we are likely to enjoy this.

My friend, Wilson Benoit, who served as officer on a destroyer in the last war is this war volunteering as an air warden.

The night he "graduated," he and his associates were invited to a buffet supper by one of his good friends. The party was largely Catholic, so the table was spread with fish in all forms, cheese of wide variety, salads, and deviled eggs.

And as the party began, the host appeared with a small dish of cold ham:

"Just a little something," he said in all seriousness, "for the non-Catholics."

A person who butts in usually is the goat of an argument. -Illinois State Journal.

on Catholic thought and principles to many laymen of that city. It is furnishing a new forum for the dissemination of Catholic thought. It is bringing our Catholic men together during the business day for a period of concentration on the spiritual side of their everyday existence. The club should result in better informed and even more enthusiastic laymen fortified to defend their faith in times calling for men of that caliber.

Right Guidance. When concerned about how the Church stands on questions of the moment, the best source for right guidance are the Encyclicals of the Holy Fathers. Whether it's Communism, Fascism or sanctions or reprisals, the Encyclicals have the answers.

Speakers' Bureau. The Diocesan Catholic Speakers' Bureau sponsored by Rochester Council, Knights of Columbus, is gaining prestige as its members are heard in various parish halls throughout the diocese. What the bureau is, who comprises it, and what they have to say is all contained in a brochure, free for the asking. Write: Thomas C. McCarthy, 30 Chestnut St., Rochester, N. Y. This is a Catholic activity heartily endorsed by the Bishop.