

# More Birth Control Madness

By Rev. James M. O'Leary, C.S.B.

It was bound to come. We have been expecting it. We have wondered why it didn't come immediately. It was as late as inevitable as logic. And now it has arrived. A woman, "industrial consultant" of a State Board of Health has urged that "women war workers be protected from unwanted pregnancies as a means of keeping the nation's production machines at full speed."

All of us—at least all of us Catholics felt in our bones, as soon as women went into the munitions factories, that the ever alert, never-sleeps birth-controlners would presently come out with a demand that the use of contraceptives be permitted as a war measure in all the States and that the ways and means of circumventing nature be taught to women workers.

I shall not here enter upon the argument against birth control. I have consistently refused to do so. I take the stand, now as always, that people who cannot see that the deliberate frustration of the process of nature is likely and vicious, immoral and criminal, are not amenable to argument. St. Paul long ago complained of moral degenerates in the days of the decadent empire. He said that they "left the natural use" and turned to the unnatural. With persons who have fallen that low you can do nothing. Reasoning doesn't appeal to them.

When human beings become so corrupt as to adopt unnatural practices and to justify what is decent people is obviously a vice. God, as the apostle says, "delivers them over" to a depraved sense. The corruption of the heart weakens the action of the mind. You may see it any day in those who give themselves over to indulgence in sexual sin. At first they are ashamed, but as they get deeper and deeper into the slime and discover that they cannot extricate themselves, they turn to self-justification; they declare boldly that all other men—and women too—are the same as they, secretly if not openly; that those who do not admit it are hypocrites; that self-restraint they make conscience is unnatural and impossible. And so on, and so on.

Likewise with the advocates of contraception. You may remind them that the interruption or frustration of the action of Nature is not only shameful but physically harmful. You may call their attention to the fact that nations which had resisted an attack by external enemies, fell to pieces from within, or became a "push-over" for vigorous enemies from without, because they had decimated their own population. You may read them a para-

graph from the notes of the day such as this: "What are the chances of the fall of France?" General G. said once asked, "First," he answered, "the general opinion of birth control." "Second," he continued, "France without the war, was on the verge of collapse. The family was disappearing. In the winter season, when the soil yields a living to anyone who wants to work it, the country is being depopulated."

In the General's speech, birth control was the self-same bait for you is almost the self-same bait in Roman documents in the days of Augustus Caesar. Tell the birth-controlners this, and it doesn't register. History has no lesson for them (any more than physiology). Try a little arithmetic on them. For example: France and Germany in the early eighteenth century had relatively the same population. By 1870 Germany had surged ahead and by 1914 had almost twice as many people as France. You cannot fight 70 million people with 35 million. But arithmetic does no good. Those who advocate unnatural vice have raised their voices. They cannot understand.

And now comes this latest form of madness. In order to win the war we are speed up production of war material. We need the women into the factories. Married women? Yes! But married women will naturally desire to be mothers. They will be periodically what we call "absentees" from work. Have no fear; we shall remedy that defect. Thanks to "modern science" we shall make it possible for them to work the year round without interruption. They need not cease to enjoy the privileges of matrimony, but we have devised a way to enable them to escape its responsibilities. This is the machine age; and we can regulate all things with mechanism.

So there are men and women, holders of public office, psychiatrists, and the honorable "university professors" advocating what they are pleased to call, by a slimy euphemism, "planned parenthood," to enable married women to avoid motherhood and to stick to their war machines.

Fortunately they are not permitted to go their way destroying the Nation without opposition. Vincent P. Mazzaola—his name one—member of the medical grievance committee of the New York State Education Department has "called the term" on the birth-controlners. "It is apparent," he says, "that war hysteria is an excuse to encourage birth control; for war plants to advise young women to obtain birth control devices and thereby escape parenthood will lead to social chaos and disaster," and expresses the hope that Manpower Commissioner Paul V. McNutt will make "proper adjustments" for mothers who have to absent themselves for awhile from work at the war machines.

We have to be thankful for one voice raised in the name of common sense and decency in the midst of what one columnist calls "this wacky world." Wacky and wicked.

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# STRANGE BUT TRUE

By M. J. MURRAY



# EDITORIALS

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Cross does for them in time of need, to contemplate the attention it gives to prisoners of war, and to add to this a survey of what it does locally, in state circles, and nationally, wherever mercy and helpfulness are needed to meet the call of plague, flood, fire, or other catastrophe.

Share in the wonderful work of the Red Cross by the response which you will make to the current drive for funds.

# REQUIEM OF A PRIEST

Elmira is mourning one of its noblest priests. The Rev. John R. Stremmler has been called from life, bringing to a close a pastorate of over thirty-seven years at St. John the Baptist Church. Bishops and clergy and laity gathered devoutly in St. John's last Monday to offer up his funeral Mass, to pray for his soul, to ponder the events of a priestly life that extended well over fifty years. The stirring words of Father Lane's eulogy awakened many a memory in the hearts of the congregation that filled to capacity the parish church that was the scene of his labors, and was now the scene of his funeral.

The Divine Virtues were present in a marked degree in the soul of Father Stremmler. Faith inspired his every action, prompted his every word and thought. Hope in God's goodness was reflected in his way of life. Charity that was a constant love of God and of man was the wellspring of his many years of activity as a priest and a shepherd of souls.

Father Stremmler has departed from his many friends in and about Elmira. But he has left a mark on that city and its people that shall never be erased. The love of Christ and the way of Christ have been impressed by him on many a soul in childhood, have gone on with that soul into youth and mature life, have marked that soul as belonging always to Christ. How many thousands have looked up to him as another Christ, as their spiritual shepherd, as their leader toward the better things of life! The best of earlier years gave way to a Christ-like spirit of patience in suffering in his closing years. He was a faithful priest, a devoted pastor, a loyal shepherd to his flock. May his priestly soul rest in peace!

# HOW THE SEED FALLS

It was a very large crowd that faced Jesus as He began the parable of the sower and his seed. Men from every town were resorting to Jesus; they had heard His word, they had seen His good deeds, they had pondered over the message He had brought them. Jesus knew the thoughts in their minds. Jesus was ready with an answer for them.

The answer was in the form of a parable. The sower sowed his seed: some fell by the wayside, some on the rock, some among thorns, some on good ground. The seed was good, the same in all four cases; yet only in one case did it bring forth fruit in abundance. God's will looks to the salvation of all men. Man's response to God's word is the measure of his spiritual success in life. God's grace and man's cooperation are the conditions for a fruitful life, for an abundance of merit and life eternal.

Some get away to a poor start, let the devil take God's word out of their heart; some easily fall away at the first call of temptation; some allow the cares and riches of this world to prevent the fruit from ripening. But there always remains the group that receives the word in a good and right heart and hold it fast, bringing forth fruit in patience.

Hold fast to the good things of God. His word and your faith in that word mean everything. Make them the foundation for your Christian life. Hold fast to them. By faith and knowledge of the things of God, make each day a fruitful one, replete with merit that shall mark you as worthy of eternal reward.

# Library Signpost

# Rendezvous: North Africa

By Rev. Benedict Ehrmann

What were once dots on the map are now places where our boys are digging in, facing fear. Geography books and maps now tell us as intimate a story as a photograph album. Through the ties of blood we are becoming aware of the world.

Just a while ago, say even six months ago, if a priest were to have mentioned Tunis, Algiers, Libya, the Sahara, in a sermon on St. Augustine, or on the Desert Fathers, or on Charles de Foucauld and Cardinal Lavigerie, showing the thrilling adventures of the Gospel along the southern coastal basin of the Mediterranean, he could not have hoped for more than polite interest in his topical references. North Africa was far from the sensitive nerves, then. But now? Boys you and I know, boys from the next street, boys whose stags are on the flag in our own front window, are now living there, four thousand miles away; and four thousand miles away becomes, as near as the next street, or as the next room, where all their things are being kept just as they were, for their return.

And so what? We want to hear all we can about this place. We eat up the maps and photographs of it. And now a priest would find it easy to preach on St. Augustine and his mother Monica, on St. Perpetua and St. Felicitas, on the Desert Fathers, on St. Francis of Assisi's journey to Morocco to convert the Sultan, on Cardinal Lavigerie's magnificent fight to evangelize North Africa, on Charles de Foucauld's dramatic sacrifice of self in the heart of the desert. These people become understandable to us, because they lived and worked where our boys are now living and fighting.

Because this is a time when we listen to these things with the beating of our hearts and the running of our blood, I shall tell you, off and on in this column, about some of these great Christians of North Africa. Because of them, our twenty-century-old Church is the richer. Shall I call the roll? It is a noble litany, that of the African heroes of Christ: St. Perpetua and Felicitas; St. Cyprian; St. Cyril of Alexandria; the great apologists Origen and Tertullian; St. Augustine, greatest African of them all, towering genius of all the Christian centuries; his mother, St. Monica; St. Raymond of Pennafort and St. Vincent de Paul and Ramon Lull; Cardinal Lavigerie, Charles de Foucauld and Ernest Psichari—none of these last six Africans, but taking Africa to their hearts and desiring to lift it to Christ.

Northern Africa of ancient days was a land of glories. After the fall of Carthage in the years before Christ, the whole Mediterranean shore and far inland became a mirror of the dazzling imperial splendor from Rome across the sea. During the scramble for power after the assassination of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony came to Egypt where he met his "other half of the world," Cleopatra, and wedded Egypt to Rome. In the first Christian centuries, the Church flourished in Africa as vigorously as in Rome. There, too, she had her glorious martyrs, her catacombs, her blood-witnesses. From the African Tertullian came the unforgettable verdict that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." The African Doctors and theologians were as magnificent as the Romans and the Byzantine in their witness to the Gospel. St. Augustine alone is great enough to have commanded the respect of the Christian world for the Church in Africa.

But something happened. Something, way back 1500 years ago, which changed North Africa so completely that there is nothing left of those ancient glories to impress them upon our heads who are now fighting upon that soil. First, there were the barbarian raids, swift and terrifying, in that movement from the North and East which finally brought Rome to her knees. When St. Augustine lay dying in Hippo (the present Bone), the Vandals were storming the city. Africa might have recovered from these invasions and restored her ancient glories even as Italy and Gaul and Spain did, by absorbing their conquerors and Christianizing them. But a further scourge swept over her northern rim—a scourge which left Italy almost untouched, which France threw back in the critical battle of Tours, and which engulfed Spain till the days of Ferdinand and Isabella.

This was the Mohammedan Conquest. It was so complete and devastating in North Africa, that today no link of continuity is left with the institutions of its Christian past. The Christian sees which now exist are of modern establishment, through the efforts of the French and the Spanish in the colonies where they have control.

For over a thousand years the fanatical Moslems (Mohammedans) have held firm. At different times, valiant Christians have tried to make the Cross of Christ prevail there once again. St. Francis of Assisi went in person to Morocco to speak of Christ to the Sultan, hoping by this pacific means to do what the Crusades had failed to do. St. Raymond of Pennafort, St. Raymond Nonnatus, St. John of Mathas established a ransoming Order to deliver the Christian captives from the Moslems. Ramon Lull, like Francis, devoted his life to the peaceful conquest of Islam for Christ.

In modern times, Cardinal Lavigerie organized the White Fathers exclusively for the African Missions. Charles de Foucauld, who had been a French soldier, spent a life of isolation in the Sahara to work for the remote Tuaregs there; and later, Ernest Psichari, another French soldier, did the same. All in all, the record of the Church in North Africa is heroic and glorious, and it is good for us to raise the present moment of intercal, so as to acquaint ourselves with this large portion of the Lord's Vineyard.

# FIVE and TEN Years Ago

From Feb. 23, 1938, Edition

Approximately \$3,000,000 were saved to taxpayers of the City of Rochester during the previous year by operation of parochial schools on the voluntary contributions of the faithful. His Excellency, Bishop O'Hara declared in a statement to Rochester's three daily newspapers for the information of all taxpayers of the city.

From Feb. 24, 1936, Edition

His great good will toward the National Catholic Welfare Conference in the United States and his satisfaction with its multiple beneficent activities were confirmed by His Holiness Pope Pius XI in a 25-minute audience accorded at the Vatican to Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit, Chairman of the N.C.W.C. Administrative Board.

Facts and figures revealing that the Catholic majorities in North Ireland were being denied a voice in voting were released by the N.C.W.C. News Service from Belfast.