

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 glance "The CATHOLIC COURIER" in every Catholic home.

JAMES E. KEARNEY, Bishop of Rochester.

FOR THE HOLY FATHER

All the world looks to the Holy Father in these trying times. His children of the faith look to Him as their Spiritual Father; as the one who as Vicar holds in their place of Christ; as one who is Head of the Church on earth; administering to the welfare of all the dioceses and parishes and orders and congregations, governing in things of the spirit men in every part of the world, caring for the missionary work of the Church in seeking out all nations. His children not of the faith join with their brethren of the faith, in looking to the Pope for timely assistance to all sufferers from the war. His ministrations to the poor, the suffering, the refugee, his largesse to prisoners of war, his ministry of sympathy to parents and relatives of war-prisoners are merely one part of a varied program of social assistance to all the people of earth.

War has at the same time increased the responsibilities and obligations of the Pope, and decreased notably the countries on which he usually depends for revenue.

America should answer the present appeal of the Holy Father in a way that will be generous and understanding. Generous in rallying to the Pope's side to aid him in doing his ordinary work of administering the affairs of the Church Universal, and in raising our ordinary annual gift to help him meet the extraordinary calls war makes on him. Understanding, in permitting our own knowledge of all the Pope is doing to relieve suffering and misery and to bestow the blessing of his sublime office on the souls of all men.

This Sunday within the Octave of the Feast of SS. Peter & Paul, is our day to help the Holy Father, to give our annual offering of Peter's Pence. May each offering made in the churches on Sunday reflect the love and devotion of a faithful people, and their joy that God has given us for the difficult times in which we live a Pontiff so gifted, so brave, so wise and so filled with charity for all! God bless our Pope!

PARISH CENTENNIAL

Bishop and clergy, Pastor and parishioners, united last Sunday in a Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving for the hundred years of service SS. Peter and Paul's Parish has given to Rochester. Founded to minister to the spiritual wants of German Catholics, it was the fourth parish in the district, which then belonged to the Diocese of New York. The relative newness of America is reflected in the fact that many of our older parishes are just now reaching their hundredth anniversary.

In European cities where Catholic Faith has been traced back over many centuries to the remote date of conversion from paganism, one hundred years would not seem to be much in the life of a parish. With us one hundred years takes us back close to the beginning of things.

Something of the fine tradition of Byzantine architecture has been caught in the stately church in which the people of SS. Peter & Paul's worship. All of the faith of the centuries of Catholicity, all of the tradition of two thousand years of Christian culture, have been treasured in the hearts of priest and people of the parish. God's word has been preached, God's law has been proclaimed, God's saving power in the grace of Holy Mass and the sacraments has been showered on young and old.

Father Earl Gelsi is to be felicitated on the completion of this centenary observance. He has given to his parish most of the years of his priesthood, has seen the growth of many generations in the faith, has built up a parish plant that is a living testimonial to his love for what is best in church architecture. May the future bring continued and renewed blessings on the parish and people and clergy of SS. Peter and Paul's Parish.

USE AND ABUSE

Present day happenings in the labor field furnish food for serious thought. The right of workers to organization and collective bargaining has been recognized by law in the United States, has been taught over the years by the Church. Where collective bargaining is outlawed strikes are in. The old attitude of the extreme employer that his will alone should decide all questions of hours and wages and working conditions, has disappeared to a great extent; but those who are sure there is no attempt now to bring it back on the part of present-day extremists, are not well-informed.

There have been and are abuses on the employer side, on the labor side. There have been abuses on both sides, where a just attempt should be made to adjust the case on a basis of social justice. The secular press would do a service to thinking Americans through, an honest attempt to give both sides of the case in non-partisan style.

In any case, the welfare of our country at war must be the first consideration. A coal strike that might lose the war can be of little use to miners even though the strike should be won. Likewise any attitude of holding down wages, hours, or working conditions of the miners, is just as much a disservice to the country as are the unfortunate strikes of the past month. The proper use of the rights guaranteed to both employer and employee alike, will help; abuse of these rights will hurt the interest of our America.

Pessimism About Purity

By REV. JAMES M. GILLIS, C.S.P.

One whose column carries the caption "What's Right with the World" must obviously overcome the temptation to pessimism and it is worse to communicate pessimism to others. And yet, in the matter of the attitude of our generation towards the "angelic virtues" of purity, it is difficult to be optimistic. Some years ago I asked a mother of a young woman whose companions were free and easy in their speech whether she feared they were "free and easy" also in their actions. "No," she said. "I think things are essentially all right; youngsters nowadays are only less observant of the proprieties than we used to be." Later that observant, intelligent and tolerant lady told me she had changed her mind. She had ceased to believe that things were "essentially all right."

And now I notice that my good friend Father Connell of the Redemptionists in the leading article in *The Ecclesiastical Review* for May says: "A person cannot justly be labelled a pessimist or a prude if he declares that moral conditions in the United States are steadily growing worse. This is especially true in the matter of sex morality. Like a loathsome plague the vice of impurity is constantly injecting its deadly poison into the very life-blood of our nation. Particularly alarming are the moral conditions among the youth of the nation. Boys and girls of high-school age have their love affairs and getting parties — and worse."

WRONG, OF COURSE

After all what seems pessimism may be in reality optimism, and on the other hand there is a so-called optimism which as O. E. Chesterton said is the most treacherous pessimism because it tells us that whatever goes on in this world is all right. Schopenhauer declared that the Gospels are a pessimistic document and that Christian doctrine is pessimism. Of course he was wrong. But it is easy to see how he came to be wrong. The Gospel says again and again in varying phrases that "the whole world is seated in wickedness," and that the world is allied in an infernal trinity with the flesh and the devil.

But in spite of these hard sayings, the Gospel is not pessimism. It doesn't leave the reader down in the depths. It preaches Christ Crucified, but doesn't leave Christ on the Cross or in the tomb. It dares "the world," the world that is so wicked that our Saviour would not pray for it, but the Gospel also assures us that Christ overcame the world.

It cannot therefore be pessimism to look ugly facts in the face, provided we have a helpful suggestion to make as to how the ugly facts can be changed — or exchanged — for something beautiful.

APPALLING FACTS

And now about purity. Father Connell has assembled some horrifying facts concerning the prevalence of impurity among adolescents in the United States. As it happens I read the article in the course of a speaking trip across the United States. I had found in a dozen great cities, and in some not so great, a terrible confirmation of Father Connell's facts. It is an open secret, or no secret at all, that parish priests and Bishops are gravely worried, and parents may well be worried about the prevalence of the kind of sin discussed in that article. I think I must have heard a hundred priests all the way from New York to San Francisco lamenting the increase of sex sin especially in the case of boys and girls in their teens, even in their early teens.

It is not my purpose to go into details. Facts, figures, details would be more fittingly described in a medical magazine or in a volume on social ethics.

Stuffed it here to make two observations on the matter.

First: the sudden and startling increase in sex sins and sex crimes among the young comes significantly within the first generation after a general decrease in church attendance and in the practice of religion in America. If there be any persons who imagined that religion could be neglected and that nevertheless the traditional standards would be maintained in the matter of purity, these over sanguine persons must now in all honesty confess that they were dimly and tragically mistaken.

Second: the priests with whom I have spoken — none of them theorists but all of them in daily contact with the fact — agree

that the war atmosphere, and the presence of soldiers and sailors in large numbers have vastly increased the evil. We could wish that the facts were otherwise. But facts are facts whether they be good or bad, beautiful or ugly. And the first step in reform — witness the confessional — is the honest admission of an unpleasant fact. I need not stop to answer the silly objection that to admit such facts is unpatriotic.

To those who object, let me add a third. The war and the presence of men in uniform are not the first cause of the phenomenon. Much of the blame must go to the new "philosophies" that have been taught in colleges and universities for a couple of decades, and that have slowly seeped down into the minds of youngsters whether or not their college professors teach that sex relations are no sin provided they do not bear

evil fruit. Together with that idea is the other that there should not be a double standard of sex-ethics, one for men and another for women. Of course there shouldn't. But when the exponents of "modern ethics" emphasize that principle, they don't mean that man should be judged as rigorously as women, but that women should be judged as leniently as men.

Such theories have been expounded for years. Now they are producing the logical result.

The cure? The cure is religion and especially the Catholic religion in which purity, chastity, modesty are and have been emphasized since the days of Christ and His Virgin Mother. When religion is neglected, purity declines. When religion disappears — in a person or in a nation — the virtue of angels yields place to animal passion.

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Diocesan Recordings

Our Catholic women in the diocese banded together in the Rochester Diocesan Council, National Council of Catholic Women, are opening a campaign for the sale of 25-cent War Stamps to advance the training of Catholic social workers. If they receive the same hearty response, and we know they will, as did the Knights of Columbus in the recent War Bond Campaign, they should have no trouble meeting their quota.

What will politicians do this year for pianos to attend?

Some sounds as unfair as Regents tests of 1943.

The Feast of St. Thomas More on July 6 should have an especial appeal for the laity. The great English statesman by his life furnished inspiration and example for the layman or laywoman.

Retreat promoters are actively promoting the parish week-end retreats for laymen at Our Lady of the Lake Retreat House, Geneva. A spiritual retreat is one type of vacation a man can take this year with satisfaction especially if he has a son or daughter in the service.

In addition to men who turn out for the First Friday Luncheon Club meetings in Rochester, there are other men who are making it

a practice to receive Holy Communion that morning even though their work prevents attendance at the luncheon. First Friday groups, whether they have luncheons or dinners or just take care of the morning privileges, could well be started by the laity in every community.

Feast Days

SUNDAY, JULY 4 — SUNDAY IN OCTAVE OF SACRED HEART.

MONDAY, JULY 5 — ST. ANTHONY ZACCARIA.

TUESDAY, JULY 6 — ST. THOMAS MORE.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7 — SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS.

THURSDAY, JULY 8 — ST. ELIZABETH OF PORTUGAL.

FRIDAY, JULY 9 — ST. VERONICA.

SATURDAY, JULY 10 — THE SEVEN BROTHERS AND ST. FELICITAS, THEIR MOTHER.

Come, let us praise the Lord with joy; let us sing joyfully to God, our Savior.—Psalm 68, v. 1. There is a way which seemeth just to a man but the ends thereof lead to death.—Proverbs 14, v. 12.

Drawing Near To Him

Publicans and sinners were frowned upon by the Pharisees. The welcome of Christ for these Publicans and sinners found no corresponding reaction in the hearts of those Pharisees. They would send them away; keep them from coming near to Christ, keep Christ from opening to them the treasures of mercy in His Sacred Heart.

But now they are drawing near to Him, these Publicans and sinners. They have used their powers of observation, they have studied the work and the words of Christ, and they are ready to answer His call. They are, indeed, sinners! But they have in their hearts the stirring of the grace that would lead them to forgiveness, and to seek pardon for it in the merciful Heart of Jesus.

Drawing near to Him! Men in every age since Christ came to earth have been drawing near to Him. Pharisees in every age empty of grace and filled with malice, mock their approach; uphold the Church with the crime of receiving sinners. But the mercy of Christ does prevail. Men are still drawing near to Him, men shall continue to draw near to Him even unto the end of time. The Saviour wills the salvation of all.

Note well the lesson Christ gives to the Pharisees, of the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. The figure of the lost sheep that was found, was clear to the mind of those first hearers of Christ, whose work and livelihood was the raising of sheep; whose means were so small that the finding of a lost coin meant much to the owner. Joy in heaven on one sinner doing penance, greater joy than over ninety-nine just who need not penance.

Christ's appeal is to us of today even as it was to the people of old. He is calling, inviting, appealing, to sinners to draw near to Him. May we correspond with His merciful summons, may we draw near to Him in confidence and assurance that He will receive us in His Sacred Heart, that He will give joy to His angels in heaven as He permits us to draw near to Him to do penance for our sins.