

Accepts A Portion

Education is inseparable with religion in religious faith. In the United States religious education is the responsibility of the Church and the home. In St. Louis

the schools accept a portion of this responsibility by co-operating in a program of weekly religious instruction. Philip J. Hickey, Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction, St. Louis, Mo.

DONATE YOUR BLOOD

Birth Rate Drops In Wartime America

Growth of the American forces overseas and wartime separation of husbands and wives is tipping our national birthrate downward.

For the first time since the war began the birth rate is in reverse, according to New York "Daily News" correspondent, John O'Donnell, who this week commented:

"Exactly nine months after Pearl Harbor, the unemotional adding machines over in the Census Bureau revealed that America at war was producing a splendid crop of babies. Now, for the first time since we entered the war, the birth rate is falling off—due, of course, to the simple fact that war has prevented or delayed the marriage of sweethearts.

"Now comes the plea from wives of officers and enlisted men that the armed services, particularly the Army, work out a new scheme of furloughs so that the birth rate can be maintained at last year's record output, and the number of divorces, due to prolonged separation, be cut down.

"Our Director of the Census, J. C. Capt, pointed out to us today that last October was the first month in which the number of babies produced was less than the number produced in the corresponding month of the previous year. The answer, of course, was the shipment of millions of potential fathers overseas or their assignment to military posts within the borders of the continental United States but far removed from their wives.

"The census figures are significant. In September, 1943, before Pearl Harbor, 179,109 babies were born. In October, 1943, the number jumped to the astounding figure of 214,800. Last October, we dropped back to only 199,800 babies.

"The 1942 birth rate in the U. S. (the first full war year available to the Bureau of Census) was 31.0 per 1,000, and the total births 2,308,000. In 1941, the rate was only 28.8 per thousand and births totaled 2,812,427. These are complete figures for the entire country. Complete figures for 1943 will not be available until final reports are in from all the states, possibly in late February or March, but they are expected to repeat the October story—a steady increase in births in proportion to the number of males separated from their families."

Rockne and Son

There are many stories told about the immortal Rockne of Notre Dame, but none is more touching than the following.

It was First Communion day in the church attended by Rockne's family, and one of his little boys was among those who were to receive Our Lord for the first time.

The time came for them to go up to the altar, the organ began to play that much-loved hymn: "O Lord, I Am Not Worthy," and as Rockne's son, who was last in line, rose from his place, he was surprised to see his father accompany him with folded hands. Everyone knew that Rockne was not a Catholic, and could not receive, and the little boy turned to him and said:

"Daddy, go back to your seat! You can't receive with me!"

"It's all right, Junior," whispered Rockne. "Don't worry. It's all right."

They went up to the Communion railing and knelt side by side, but the little boy had a very worried look on his face, and just before the priest reached him with the sacred host, he turned again to his father:

"Daddy, please go back to your

'Why Didn't I Say 'No?'

By Rev. John E. O'Keefe, Ph.D.

"God! . . . Why did I let her go? Why didn't I say 'No'?" Thus sobbed a mother as she knelt over the mangled body of her daughter, looking in vain for some sign of life. It was 7:30 A. M. The speedometer still pointed to 70, the speed at which the car was traveling when it ran into the up-ribs of a culvert and catapulted its occupants into eternity.

The radio was still splintering the silence of the night. Its blaring jazz sounded a ghastly contrast to the silent figures of the two victims sprawled upon the roadside. The boy was twenty-one, the girl but sixteen. They were returning from a hilarious party at the beach cabin of one of their friends.

As the mother peered into the face of her daughter, looking for some twitching that would betray the least flicker of life, and saw only a motionless face, glassy eyes distorted in terror, a gaping wound in the forehead, the scene enacted at her home but six hours before came back to her. She could hear Marjorie's plaintive remonstrances: "But, Mother, they are all going. Why should I be kept at home? Why can't I have a good time like the others?"

The mother had been morried over the thought of her daughter going to a two o'clock dance at a beach cabin. The younger set was fast. There would be drinking—the show-off drinking of youth, taking not wisely but too much. Chaperones would leave obligingly at eleven. What protection would her daughter have in those subsequent hours? No wonder that she pleaded with Marjorie not to go. Only to yield at last to Marjorie's counterpleading.

Hence it was that she sobbed her regrets—regrets that she did not say "No," regrets that she did not fulfill the duty imposed upon her by God and nature to safeguard her child from harm, even though it meant occasionally the cruelty of saying "No."

Now, however, all her regrets are useless. Her blinding tears, her aching heart, her tortured soul were all impotent to put back life into the mangled body in her arms. Stark tragedy had followed in the wake of her child's importuning—the failure of a mother to do her duty. No power on earth could now undo the effects of that tragic blunder.

The incident illustrates one of the most important factors in the damaging of youthful character that is so widespread today. That is the failure of parents to do their duty, their failure to protect their children from temptations almost too strong for weak flesh and blood to resist. Their failure to fulfill their divinely appointed duty of watching over their offspring.

Rochester Diocesan Council

N. C. C. W.

Columbus Civic Centre Lobby

May our Christmas be a season of hope and joy, with gladness and cheer—Peace and Good Will!

Plans are being made to again have the Christmas Crib at the Rochester New York Central Station.

It will remind the many traveling to and fro of the true meaning of the Christmas festival.

He pleaded, "You're not a Catholic. You can't receive Holy Communion." But this time the priest himself interposed.

"It's all right, Junior," he said, kindly. "I baptized your Daddy last night."

—The Liguorian.

Birth Control

By Delight Cronin

Sometimes at night they come to me, The babes I should have had. They stand in silence at my knee, The muteness of nonentity. They drive me nearly mad.

Their beatless hearts, their steps untrod, That only I can hear. Oh, will they follow me to God— That measured beat, that soundless plod— So far and yet so near?

They'll ask no mercy for me there, Their lips were never made. Their unborn voices know no prayer— They'll only stand and stare and stare. And this makes me afraid.

—Our Sunday Visitor

and safeguarding them from the pitfalls which mar the shining innocence of their youthful souls. The epidemic of youthful crime, the undermining of youthful morals will continue until the consciences of parents are aroused and they begin again to give to inexperienced youth the guidance and the protection which they so sorely need.

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Second Christmas after Bataan

- Wonder where they're going for Christmas?
What songs will they sing Christmas Eve?
Who'll wish them "Merry Christmas?"
What's on their menu for Christmas dinner?
What Christmas gifts will they exchange?
What Christmas memories will haunt their hearts?

- ...the stillness of a snow-robed countryside, and the friendly laughter of free people?
...the glitter of acres of show windows, and the holiday bustle of free people?
...the stockings hung, the trees trimmed, the kids up at dawn, the presents unwrapped—the carols sung by free people?

Here at home let each one of us answer this question:

What am I sacrificing this Christmas to help bring them home sooner?

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