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Father Connell's Address

(Continued from Page 5)
recreational facilities, give them more scouting and camping, get them interested in hobbies, and other natural means. Doubtless a small amount of good might be accomplished by measures of this kind, but they do not go to the heart of the problem. The only substantial remedy for this condition will be found when our youth are provided with religious and moral instruction and guidance. And those who are primarily responsible for providing this training are parents. And parents will fulfill this duty properly only when they accept the Christian concept of parenthood which emphasizes the spiritual formation of the young as a grave obligation to both mother and father—an obligation that must be undertaken day after day, an obligation that is to be fulfilled, not only by instruction but also by example.

The second of the three blessings of marriage, according to Catholic tradition, is fidelity. In our Catholic marriage ceremony we still retain the old English phrase: "I plight unto thee my troth"—which means, my fidelity. And the significance is that in every truly Christian marriage each gives to the other the fullest measure of loyalty and love. And in that pledge taken before God's altar there is included the promise of sharing together the joys and the sorrows, the triumphs and the failures that the years may bring, and of rendering to each other the fullest measure of trust that can exist in two human hearts. This is the idea of marital fidelity proclaimed by the Catholic Church, and this is the fidelity that God expects of those who are united by the bonds of Christian marriage.

HERE TOO, the modern world has gone sadly astray from Christian ideals, especially in our own land. There is much lack of fidelity among married couples. It is not speaking merely of those gross violations of the loyalty which should exist between husband and wife that lead to the gravest sin that can defile the holy state of matrimony. It is the sad to say, it is nowadays taken quite lightly in some circles when a married person deliberately violates the pledge he made on the day of his marriage and gives to a third party the love he vowed to his chosen spouse. It is tragic to realize that such incidents are becoming more commonplace in our land and less reprehensible. Popular novels and plays sometimes even surround such incidents with sympathy and glamour, as if at times they could be excusable. But even apart from these extreme transgressions of marital fidelity, there are so many instances of less serious transgressions, which however are unfortunate, such as the tendency of so many couples to divide their social life, to go their way separately in their hours of recreation, to seek their diversion and amusement individually outside the family circle. Thus, their marriage is deprived of that wholehearted devotion that is intended to make Christian marriage so noble and so happy.

Probably the lack of this spirit of complete devotion and loyalty at the present day is due in part to the abnormal conditions that prevailed during the war when oftentimes husband and wife were separated for months or even years. But it is also due to the fact that the Christian ideal of mutual fidelity is sadly neglected in our present day world. Love, as the world today understands it, is a mere matter of emotion, a selfish and self-centered desire to possess its object, a physical passion that is based on merely physical attraction. But, according to the Christian ideal, love is a perfection of man's deepest soul; it is a generous loyalty based on the appreciation of the spiritual excellence of its object; and its fairest fruit is the unswerving purpose of seeking no other loved one, whatever hardships and changes the passing years may bring.

The vast difference between these two types of love must be very evident. One is a love that strives to get all it can, the other is a love that strives to give all it can. In the Catholic way of life love is something holy, something consecrated, something true human love ultimately rests on the love of God. And the love between husband and wife is especially holy, for it is enriched with sacramental grace, enabling the couple to overlook each other's imperfections and to see in each other the supernatural beauty that remains in the soul when physical beauty fades away. If we could impress our American people with this concept of true conjugal love, this supernatural fidelity, the present that beset our home life would be greatly diminished. It is pathetic to see couples

who, after a few years of married life, regard life together as a burden from which they seek release as often as possible, or to see husbands and wife constantly bickering with each other to the scandal of the children, who receive no example of the love that should unite their parents. These unfortunate features of modern American life would disappear if conjugal fidelity, as the Catholic Church proclaims it, were known and accepted—namely, as a sacred, strong bond, linking together two hearts that grow in mutual loyalty and devotion with the passing of the years, because their love is fostered by a constant influx of divine grace. AND THE THIRD blessing of Christian marriage is its permanence. This quality comes to Christian marriage because it is a symbol of the union that exists between Christ and his Church, and the union between Christ and His Church will never be severed. Even our reason would tell us that marriage is intended to last until death. The task of rearing children, which devolves on both parents, demands that they remain together so that they may properly fulfill this important function of parenthood. The fervent love that is so essential to married life is impossible unless they both have the assurance that their union will endure through joy and sorrow, through sunshine and storm, until death parts them asunder. To the shame of American family life, the permanence of the marriage bond is being forgotten and rejected more and more widely throughout our country today. Steadily and rapidly the number of civil divorces that are annually granted is increasing, until it is now asserted on good authority that one-third of the marriages contracted in the United States end in the divorce court. What a sad reflection on the sincerity of our married couples when, after a few years of married life, they deliberately reject the solemn promise they made to remain as husband and wife until death do them part! And the reasons that are alleged in the petitions for divorce are often trifling disagreements that even children would be ashamed to take seriously. Even those who have little or no religious belief are becoming alarmed at the increase of divorce in the United States, for they realize the harm it is doing to our national life, and they are seeking means to remedy the situation. One proposal is to have uniform divorce laws throughout the entire country, for at present the different states differ widely in their legislation concerning the grounds for divorce and in the readiness with which they accede to the requests for divorce. Perhaps such a uniform legislation might effect a slight improvement, but it certainly would not substantially alter the existing conditions. WHAT WE NEED is not more legislation, but a return to Christian principles. As long as people regard marriage as a merely natural contract, entered upon for the convenience and pleasure of the parties themselves, without any reference to society or to God, it is easy to see that they will regard divorce as the most natural course when their emotional love for each other ceases. It is only when they believe that the marriage tie is supernatural, that it is a vivid symbol of the bond that unites the Son of God with His Church, that they will perceive the reason why husband and wife must remain united until one is summoned into eternity. It is truly sad to note that even some Catholics—or, rather, some who call themselves Catholics—are today having recourse to divorce and remarriage in an effort to find happiness. And then they realize that there can be no true happiness in the soul that has turned away from God. Beyond doubt one of the factors that has helped toward leading some members of the Catholic Church into this deplorable situation is that they had accustomed themselves to mingle socially with people of other religions, or of no religion, who took a very materialistic and earthly view of marriage and its obligations, and people who themselves had repudiated their marriage promises two or three times—and gradually these Catholics came to think that divorce is sometimes justifiable, that the attitude of the Catholic Church is too strict, that the Church should conform to modern customs—and so, when difficulties arose in their own domestic life they were ready to reject the basic law of the permanence of marriage, which is a law, not of the Catholic Church only, but of God Himself. Such, in brief, is the solution

Citations



Rev. John W. Simons, (above) chairman of the English department, St. Thomas More High School, Philadelphia, poet and distinguished literary critic, is chairman of the Poetry Sections of the Catholic Press Association Literary Awards Committee. (NC Photos)

offered by the Catholic Church for the chief problems that marriage encounters in our land today. And we know that through the Catholic Church God Himself is speaking to those united in the bonds of marriage, telling them that theirs is a sacred state, a state that is primarily intended for the propagation and the proper rearing of children, a state in which wholehearted fidelity between husband and wife is a grave, divinely imposed obligation, a state which involves the duty of love until death. And Catholics should hope and pray that the people of our land will hearken to this message of God before it is too late, for a nation will survive only as long as the home life of its people remains holy and upright and noble, and the home life of the American people is daily becoming more godless, more selfish, more degraded.

WE MUST REMEMBER, too, that actions speak louder than words. Catholics, as exponents and defenders of the message God speaks to the family through their Church, must set the example of generosity and fidelity and holiness in their married life for the people of the United States. They must fulfill God's law in its perfection in their married life, guarding themselves particularly against those sins so common today, contraception and marital infidelity and neglect of the spiritual training of their children. Above all, Catholics should remember that their Church proposes for their imitation a family in which all the blessings of marriage were realized in a most sublime manner. That is the Holy Family of Nazareth. In that family the child was the child Jesus, conceived of the Immaculate Virgin Mother by the power of the Holy Spirit. In that family between Mary and Joseph there was wholehearted fidelity, there was undying love. In that family all that was said of done centered about the Son of God, who dwelt in visible form in the humble home of Nazareth. And the same blessings will abound in every truly Christian family if the thoughts and the affections of husband and wife, parents and children are centered on Him who dwells invisibly with those who love Him. And when His abode by His grace in a home, even though there may be hardships and burdens, even though there may be sickness and poverty, family life will be contented and joyful, for where God dwells, there will be happiness and peace and love.

Prelate Urges New Social Order Based on Christ
Fargo, N. Dak. (NC)—For a dozen years, the annual Lenten pastoral of Bishop Aloisius J. Muench of Fargo has been published in booklet form and distributed in the various parishes. This year—like last year—despite the fact that the Bishop is absent from the country, serving as Apostolic Visitor to Germany, the pastoral has been distributed just the same. The Bishop tackles the major problems and evils confronting the world today in this year's pastoral, which numbers 32 pages. He contends that the principal reason for the chaos and confusion in the world today is because "men have turned their faces from Christ" and yet they want speedily to build a new social order. "The new social order must be built on the rock of the teachings of Christ" to endure, the Bishop states.

Book Club Selection
New York (NC)—"The Good Pagan's Failure," described as an indictment of modern, secularist civilization against a background of England on the eve of World War II, is the current selection of the Catholic Book Club.

Priest Urges Devotions to Mary

(Continued from Page 1)
that of the Mass and Sacraments.

OBVIOUSLY CONSUMED with zeal for his mission, Father Peyton described in great detail his personal reasons for devotion to the rosary. I: daily recitation by his own father and mother, he said, left an indelible mark on all 11 children. He told how he and one brother and sister had come from Ireland to America in 1923 and how, with no previous intent to do so, both boys became priests. He said his brother is actively engaged in promotion of the rosary devotion in his New Orleans parish. Once in his life, he said, just prior to ordination, "I faced a crisis. I developed consumption. I was in bed, helpless and practically hopeless. Men and science failed me. I begged the Blessed Mother to use her influence. She did not fail me. Mary showed me she had a memory—a memory of the many rosaries our family had said."

Father Peyton also described at length tedious efforts to get his idea on the radio, and of the glowing success the "Family Theater" program increasingly enjoys. It has been the overwhelming choice for first place in many polls and surveys of the best family program on the air, he declared. Although the Mutual network was skeptical in the beginning, they have asked him to put in writing that he never will take the program from them, he revealed. So outstanding was the recent Christmas program, in which 18 famous stars recited the Joyful Mysteries, he added, that it was voted one of the outstanding single programs of the year. HE URGED HIS listeners to tune in on a similar program on Easter Sunday, from 1:30 to 2:30 p. m. over Station WVEI, Rochester (1280 kc), when 15 top stars of screen and radio will recite the Joyful Mysteries. "The very thing that can destroy the world is here today," the cleric the Glorious Mysteries, priest concluded. "We see now how the people forgot God and decided to run the world themselves. Now we must beg God to take the world back. We must learn to kneel together—millions of families in millions of homes."

His Excellency, Bishop James E. Kearney, expressing his deepest thanks to the two speakers, declared that they had shown "there is a personality to the family as well as to the individual."

The Rev. Edward J. Lintz, Ph.D., professor of philosophy at Nazareth College, introduced the speakers. Four selections were presented by the Peruvian Choir of Nazareth Academy, under the direction of Miss Jean Ann Grey. The symposium was sponsored by Rochester Circle, International Federation of Catholic Alumnae and Mrs. A. Gordon Ide was general chairman.

Slovak Brand Red As Sowers of Hate
Pittsburgh (NC)—A resolution condemning the "false democracy" and "subversive activities" of communism and denouncing persons who would sow hatred between nations was passed at the annual meeting of the supreme officers of the First Catholic Slovak Union of the United States of America here. "Love for God and our neighbors cannot exist or be fostered where the rights of individuals and nations are hampered," the resolution state. It adds that "the freedom of the individual who seeks to do what is right and just" must be built on the Divine Law.

Talking Book On Church Published For Blind
New York (NC)—The volume, "Father Smith Instructs Jackson," which has been read by hundreds of thousands of Catholics and non-Catholics wishing to learn what the Catholic Church really is and teaches, has been made available in sound-by the Xavier Society for the Blind. "Father Smith Instructs Jackson," comprising 20 double-faced records, can be played in 10 hours. The cost of the book, approximately \$2,100, was a gift by the New York Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Isolated Priest Dies
London (NC)—Alone in his little presbytery at Fochabers in the isolated extreme north of Scotland, Canon James Anton

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