

'Peace Of Soul' - - - By Monsignor Fulton Sheen

This is the tenth of fourteen installments of "Peace of Soul," the challenging best-seller by Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, leading exponent of Catholic doctrine.

By MONSIGNOR FULTON J. SHEEN

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Installment X
Chapter Nineteen

The denial of guilt or the effort to reduce ethics to psychiatry is as unsound and unscientific as the error of denying that there are genuinely mental troubles or the reduction of psychiatry to ethics and moral theology. In actual fact, no moral theologian denies the validity and necessity of psychiatry; but since many analysts do deny the realms of the moral, the Divine, and the super-natural, it is important to continue stressing the difference between the two.

Even when a client has his psychoanalyst's encouragement to laugh off the possibility of moral evil or a sense of guilt as the cause of his worries, his rejection of ethical standards is still a form of escapism. In such cases, it is vain for the frustrated soul to say that he will work the problem out "for himself." For the soul that relies upon itself is unrealistic.

Cure is conditioned upon the realization of two basic facts: there is some evil in the soul; and the perfection and cure are not to be sought in the person himself. Just as medicine must come from outside of the body, so moral healing must come from outside of the soul. Yet many modern men run to the end of the earth to escape the one source of health and recovery.

Escapists refuse to face the fact that their own lives are disordered; or else they try an "easy" way out of their misery which lands them in confusion worse confounded.

Some of the "easy" ways out are the escapism of scandalizing, which seeks to find others who are worse than the self and thus make the self seem good by comparison; the escapism of ridicule, which makes fun of the virtuous and religious to avoid the reproach of their goodness; the escapism of noise, of drowning oneself in excitement, crowds, collective trance, so that the sweet, low voice of conscience, through which God speaks, is never heard; the escapism of Communism, an anarchical revolution by which one covers up his own need of personal, inner, spiritual regeneration by revolutionizing everyone else.

ESCAPISM FAILS
Escapism never succeeds. In every sinner whose struggles and resources are due to a burdened conscience, there is a latent contradiction. He is pulled in two directions. He is not to reach at ease with sin as to be able to make it his definite position, nor, on the other hand, is he to be so much in love with God as to show his faults. The dualism arises from a desire of God, on the one hand, and a turning from God, on the other. Such men have insufficient moral energy to be bad or to be good; they have not enough religion to find true peace of soul, yet quite enough of it to intensify their sense of frustration after they have sinned.

But there are some men and women who, admitting their sins and faults, are still unhappy. Where there is a genuine sense of guilt, release can come only from Divine Mercy confronting human misery.

Unless we are ready to ask for the forgiveness of our sins by God, the examination of conscience may be only a vain form of introspection, which can make a soul worse if it ends in remorse instead of sorrow. For the two are quite distinct. Judas had remorse. Peter had sorrow. Judas "repented unto himself," as Scripture tells us; Peter, unto the Lord. As a psychic malady sometimes results from a failure to adjust self to the right environment, so a moral evil results from the failure of the soul to adjust itself to God. Despair is such a failure. Judas despaired, but Peter hoped. Despair comes from unrelatedness from the refusal of a soul to turn to God. Such a soul opposes the order of nature.

For the sinner to be made well, his confession and sorrow are required. And the sorrow must have in it an appeal to God's mercy to distinguish it from remorse.

Chapter Twenty
Since the Christian is trying to do something very difficult in aspiring to follow Our Lord's precepts, he sometimes falls. His sorrow is greater than the pagan's remorse, for it is the result of his having offered an affront to One he loves.

Deep sorrow does not come because one has violated a law but only if one knows he has broken off the relationship with Divine Love. But there is yet another element required for regeneration, the element of repentance and reparation. Repentance is rather a dry-eyed affair; tears flow in sorrow, but sweat pours out in repentance. It is not enough to tell God we are sorry and then forget all about it. If we broke a neighbor's window, we would not only apologize but also would go to the trouble of putting in a new pane. Since all sin disturbs the equilibrium and balance of justice and love, there must be a restoration involving toil and effort.

WOUND OF SIN
To see why this must be supposed that every time a person did wrong he was told to drive a nail into the wall of his living room and that every time he was forgiven he was told to pull it out. The holes would still remain after the forgiveness. Thus every sin (whether actual or original) after being forgiven leaves "holes" or "wounds" in our human nature and the filling up of these holes is done by penance. A thief who steals a watch can be forgiven for the theft, but only if he returns the watch.

The temporal expiation for many sins is necessarily considerable, and it requires considerable self-discipline on the part of the penitent. Faith in Christ's merits alone is not adequate for the remission of sins, as a matter of fact, faith without penance is always insufficient.

The Church gives her penitents a fresh start. And the Church has a tremendous spiritual capital, gained through centuries of penance, persecution, and martyrdom, many of her children prayed, suffered, and merited more than they needed for their own individual salvation. The Church took these superabundant merits and put them into the spiritual treasury, out of which repentant sinners can draw in times of spiritual depression. Or this spiritual capital may be likened to a blood bank; whenever any of her members are suffering from spiritual anemia or the deep wounds of sin, the Church gives them a blood transfusion.

'MAKE-UP'
The sinner will willingly do penance he knows that all sins cost the God man something—His Cross and so must cost us something, moreover, he does not want to be "let off" but rather to "make up" for his sins. In the Christian ages, men who died continued their repentance even after death by leaving money to or endowing hospitals, churches and schools in Christ's name. The modern man more often endows a scientific laboratory in his own name.

Penance is a recognized fact, we have a "past." It is not morbid to recognize this fact, rather to pretend that it does not exist is morbid. The past will affect our future. We are not only what we eat, we are also what our sins have made us. If we do not make amends for our past we are postponing and increasing our eternal punishment. The only reason that time is given to us is in order that we may do penance. The true lover of God, conscious of having wounded Love, will voluntarily renounce his privileges and conduct himself in such a way as to be identified with the Christ Who bears five hideous scars on hands and feet and side.

In this world most of us mind pain more than we do sin; in fact, we often believe pain to be the greater evil. Penance helps us to set these disorders in their right perspective; when a man finds joy in penance, he realizes that no other evil can affect him more than sin. Unless there is love, sacrifice and penance will be felt as an evil, but not when love is there.

THE PENANCE
There are three general ways of doing penance: prayers, alms, and fasting. In prayer, we beg God's mercy on our souls. By alms we give back to God some of the gifts He gave to us, that we may justify our possessions. "Redeem thou thy sins with alms" (Dan 4:24). By fasting, we mortify the root of all cravings of a sensual character. The increasing comforts of modern life afford many occasions for mortification. If a person can not punish himself in respect to food, other pleasures within his reach, artistic, conventional, mechanical and social will supply many an occasion for actual fasting.

But penances are not done by ourselves alone, the penitent is helped by others who are in the Body of Christ. This would not be if we were isolated individuals, but it can come about if we belong to one Mystical Body where all are one because governed by one Head, vivified by one Soul, and profiting the same Faith.

Few consolations are greater than the knowledge that we are bound up in a great corporation of prayers and sacrifices. The Communion of Saints is the great discovery of those who, as adults, find the fullness of faith. They discover that for years there have been dozens, in some instances hundreds, of souls praying especially for them, storming heaven with the plea that a little act of humility by the convert might open a crack in his armor to let in God's grace and truth.

Every soul in the world has a price tag on it, and since many cannot or will not pay the price themselves, others must do it for them. There is probably no other way to account for the conversion of some souls than the fact that in this world, as in the next, their parents, relatives, or friends interceded to God and won for them the prize of everlasting life.

Why are there monasteries and convents? Why do so many young souls leave the lights and glamor of the world for the shades and shadows of the Cross where saints are made?

The modern world so little understands their mission that, as soon as a newspaperman hears of a handsome young woman entering a cloister, he telephones the parents to ask why she is disappointed in life. "Yes, with the love of the world, she has fallen in love with God."

These hidden dynamics of prayer, the cloistered men and women, are doing more for our country than all its politicians, its labor leaders, its army and navy put together; they are atoning for sins of us all. They are averting the just wrath of God, repairing the broken fences of those who sin and pray not, rebel and atone not.

As ten just men would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah, so ten just saints can save a nation now. But so long as a citizen is more impressed by what his cabinet does than by its chosen souls who are doing penance, the rebirth of the nation has not yet begun.

Next week: Fear of Death.

Prague Auxiliary Greece Church Celebrates 75 Years Consecrated

Prague (RNS) — A third new Roman Catholic bishop has been consecrated here without prior approval of the Communist dominated government. He is Bishop Cajetan Matousek, who was appointed Titular Bishop of Serigeno and Auxiliary to Archbishop Joseph Beran of Prague.

Thirty-nine years old and now the youngest member of the Czechoslovak hierarchy, Bishop Matousek was consecrated secretly in the chapel of the Virgin Mary at St. Ignatius church. He received the mitre and crozier from Bishop Antonin Eltcher also an auxiliary to Archbishop Beran.

In August Bishops Ambrose Lazik and Robert Pobozny were consecrated to Titular Sees at Trnava, Slovakia, in public rites which were regarded as a virtual proclamation of the Catholic Church's spiritual independence.

Following his consecration Bishop Matousek celebrated Mass in the small church of St. Wenceslas in the Nusle parish where he formerly served as an assistant pastor. During the Mass he publicly thanked his father, a mechanic for having made it possible for him to become a priest.

Army and navy put together, they are atoning for sins of us all. They are averting the just wrath of God, repairing the broken fences of those who sin and pray not, rebel and atone not.

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Greece Church Celebrates 75 Years

Edward Monney, Father Baker, pastor of St. Theodore's Church, Gates, also remained as pastor of the latter church until 1936.

During two years of Father Baker's illness, from 1938 to 1940, the parish was administered by the Rev. Albert J. Geiger. The Rev. David B. Singerhoff was appointed assistant pastor in 1940. In 1941 he joined the Armed Services and served as an Army Captain overseas.

The Rev. Francis Turner replaced Father Singerhoff as assistant pastor. In 1943 he was succeeded by the Rev. Daniel McCarthy, present assistant.

Under the pastorate of Father Baker, St. John the Evangelist's Church continues to be an ever-growing center of religious strength in the Greece community.

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