THAT'S MY BOY !

U. S. Bishops
The Christian Family

Washington, Nov. 21 — The following is the full text of the statement on 'The Christian Family' issued by the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of the United States at the close of their annual meeting here:

The world's horizons are those of time, not of eternity. Its interests are material, not spiritual. The world acknowledges God with an occasional word of reference, but it is not truly interested in God, His purposes, or His law. It wishes God to stay in His heaven; as occasion permits, it is willing to salute Him there. But it resents intervention of God in affairs on earth. It is irritated by any assertion of God's rights here, any demand for service to God, any mention of reliance upon God's Providence.

The western world today still proclaims human dignity. But in the main it treats man, physically, as the product of materialistic and mechanical evolution. It tends more and more to treat man, socially, as the creature of the State or of controlling groups within the State. Again, the world recognizes a vaguely conceived spiritual institution which it calls the Church. Yet, practically, the Church is treated as a collection of welfare centers, a human thing throughout and not divine, which is to be formed into a unified instrument of social action by general concessions and compromise. The world makes no quest for divinely revealed truth. It seeks no divine indication of duty and spiritual allegiance. It ignores ultimates, and restricts its vision to the here and now. In all this, there is inversion and disorder. Out of such disorder it is not reasonable to expect emergence of human security, prosperity, and peace.

FOR GOD comes first. God has revealed His purposes regarding man not only through the light of natural reason but also through the gift of supernatural revelation, which we accept by faith. Paradoxically, as a brilliant modern writer observes, if you take away the supernatural, you have left, not the natural, but the unnatural.

Perhaps the most evident and devastating effect of the disregard of supernatural faith in human society is to be found in what it has done to family life. The world, which discounts supernatural faith in God's revelation, praises family life, declares its place and function essential to human well-being, and speaks with high sentiment of the preciousness of the home. Yet by countless acts and agencies it moves steadily to disrupt family life and to destroy the home. It approves and facilitates divorce as a cure for domestic ills. It accepts multiple marriages which usually result in hopeless entanglement of the [illegible] of a plurality of broken homes. It sponsors planned parenthood by use of unnatural and morally degrading means, thus infusing poison into the heart of family life by destroying in husband and wife the self-respect and mutual reverence on which must be built enduring love and parental fidelity. It is unconcerned, for the most part, about its manifest duty of removing the great difficulties that lie in the way of those who wish to marry and establish homes. Its social [illegible] in point of suitable housing, decent material facilities, security in [illegible] and prospects, in slums, famine and bankruptcy. An unbelieving [illegible] recognition of the essential [illegible] of family life, actually [illegible] and moves to destroy [illegible] to cherish.

All [illegible] amounts to a calculated attack upon family life. To counteract this attack it is urgent to have the wiser knowledge which faith gives of what the family is, and of what it means to the individual man and to human society.

IN THE VIEW of faith the family is, first of all, a divine institution. A divine institution is not within man's control to abrogate or alter. It is God's own work. [illegible] upon it is even humanly speaking disastrous. It strikes tragically at the [illegible] balance of right human relations, [illegible] in calamitous disorder.

[illegible] merely confirms reason in holding that husband and wife constitute conjugal society. When their union is blessed with offspring, this society becomes a family. It is a divinely founded natural society. It is prior, in existence [illegible]

THE IMPORTANCE of family life for individuals is discerned in the service it renders to father and mother as well as to the child. Husband and wife find fulfillment in their fruitfulness, and find strength and comfort in the home. Family life gives dignity and peace and security to the mother. It exercises an ennobling and steadying influence upon the father. In both it awakens and develops a sense of responsibility, and fosters their growth in selflessness, sacrifice, and patience.

The state measures its true strength by the stability of family life among its citizenry. For the family is the social cell. It is the family that produces the citizen. No nation can be greater than its families. In vain does the world that disregards the injunction of God loosen family ties and break up family life and then look to state schools to produce good citizens. At its best the school is only a strong aid to the home. Good citizens must first be good persons. School courses in civics and political science, and inspirational studies of the lives and works of patriotic leaders, meet a practical need. But these alone never make good citizens. Virtue is best developed in a good home where God is held in reverence. And virtue is the basis of good citizenship. The state which weakens the family inflicts deep injury upon itself. Any attack of the state on family life is suicidal.

NO LESS important is the role of the family for the Church. The Son of God, when He walked among men, set up His one Church as a kind of family, and its members call that Church their Holy Mother. Only those who know and live the family life of that Church can appreciate the glory and the solace of soul that abides in this earthly home of the human spirit. The Church, through the Sacrament of Matrimony, constantly channels the essential grace of God to her faithful children in the home. But history proves that it is God's will and providence that the Church should depend for her continuity and growth, as well as for the devotion of the faithful, upon Christian family life.

Since family life is thus essential to the individual, to the State, and to the Church, it follows that whatever protects or promotes good family life is to be diligently fostered. It is of paramount concern to all mankind that family life be preserved in full soundness and moral health.

To exist in full effectiveness, family life must have permanence. This permanence depends chiefly upon the permanence of marriage. Strictly requisite is marriage that is monogamous and indissoluble: the marriage of one man and one woman in diverceless union that is broken only by the death of one of the spouses. Such a marriage is requisite, not for the mere begetting of offspring, but for the rearing and training of children until they come to full maturity.

Any marriage which looks to dissolution or divorce, even as a possibility, cannot give to children the security they need; cannot surround children with the enduring atmosphere of home; cannot breathe into children the spirit of true family life. Nor can such a marriage give to husband and wife the complete reliance on each other which is requisite for their peace and happiness under the exacting conditions of marital duty.

Further, family life must have freedom. There must be no undue intervening of the civil power in the domain of husband and wife. This requirement involves two points of obligation. Freedom implies that rights be respected. The state must respect the rights of the family. It must not therefore fail to provide opportunities for the adequate housing of families, for the requisite schooling of children, for the use of common benefits supplied through the taxing of citizens.

ON THE OTHER HAND, the state must not oppress the family. It must not discount parental authority by invading the home and legislating upon matters which are of strictly domestic concern. It must be neither arbitrary nor tyrannous. It must not usurp the right which belongs to parents, of educating their children. On this score, the part of the state is to furnish opportunity for schooling, and to see that parents are not recreant in making use of the opportunity on behalf of their children. The state cannot force a child to attend this school or that; it cannot prescribe courses of study that may involve intellectual or moral dangers for pupils. Nor can the state make discrimination among families, distributing common benefits to some and witholding them from others.

To the Church belongs the pre-eminent right to guide the child's spiritual and moral formation; to the parents belongs the natural right to govern and supervise the child's nurture and general education; to society is vested the right to transmit, generally by means of schools, the cultural heritage of successive generations.

The function of the state is to assist these three agencies to discharge harmoniously their responsibilities in the best interest of the public welfare. The state must ever keep in mind that children belong to their parents before they belong to the state, the resources to develop them into their full stature as human beings destined for eternal union with God are not the property of political government; these constitute the treasury of families and the Church.

Again, the family, to exercise its good influence in full effectiveness, needs a just measure of economic security. When, in a wealthy and prospering nation, diligent and willing parents are forced to live in grinding poverty; when parents have no opportunity of owning their own home; when the aid of government is extended to those who raise crops or build machines but not to those who rear children, there exists a condition of inequity and even of injustice.

Social legislation and social action must concur to improve man's economic opportunity, to enable him to marry early, to free him from the peril of unnaturally limiting his family, and to afford him some certainty of sufficiently gainful employment and some assurance that death or accident will not reduce his dependents to the status of public charges.

Finally, the family needs religion. It requires the high morality and the unvarying standards of duty which only the spirit of religion can supply to family life. It needs the strong quality of staunch loyalty to God and to His commandments, to His Church and to her precepts. It needs the filial piety which has its source and support in piety towards God. It needs prayer and the example of prayerfulness. We are consoled by the evident growth of pious practices in the home, the enthronement of the Sacred Heart, regular family prayer and the wide variety of Catholic devotions which have given to Christian homes the character of sacred sanctuaries.

THE FAMILY needs to gather again around its hearths and rekindle there the fires of religious fervor. The home must again become a shrine of fidelity, a place where God is the unseen Host. We commend the program of the Catholic Family Life Conference as one means of meeting the evident present need for better and happier homes. Family retreats, Cana conferences, courses on family life in schools and colleges, and study groups concerned with preparation for family life, should be widely encouraged and zealously promoted throughout our country. The press, radio, motion pictures and all agencies of public opinion should give constant aid in emphasizing the ideals of worthy family life. These powerful forces should be an unfailing support for the virtues which safeguard the home and give nobility to the nation.

These, then are the requisites for family life if it is to produce its wondrous benefits in full measure and effectiveness: it must be permanent in its establishment and prospects; it must be free from unwarranted interventions; it must have economic security; it must be religious. Yet even when these requisites are not perfectly realized, family life, though hampered, is productive of incalculable good. In the Providence of God it is the best of existing human agencies for social benefit. There is grave danger, however, that, if a godless philosophy be still permitted to prevail, family life among us will not only be further hampered but ultimately destroyed.

WE HAVE, indeed, supernatural knowledge that God's Church will not be destroyed, and while the Church endures family life will still, in some measure, exist and fruitfully function. But viewing our country and the world by and large, and noting the growing tendency to ignore God and His rights in society, the lethal danger to the family is neither chimerical nor remote. It is a present danger, more fearsome than the atom bomb.

After thirty-five years of war and its effects which have wrought incalculable injury to family life, we call for an intensive effort to restore the virtues and practices guaranteeing family stability and peace.

With confidence in the help of God, through Jesus Christ, His Son, and with constant faith in the intercession of His Mother, the Immaculate Mary, we urge all families to strive by their prayers for the restoration of pure family life. Let all recite the family Rosary. Let there be a renewal of devotion, a frequency in the reception of the Sacraments, a rebirth of all those virtues which make family life a mirror of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Joseph, the honest workman, is still the guardian of families. Mary, the Mother of God, is the blessed Mother of every Catholic home. And Jesus, subject to them, His creatures, is the model of every child. To Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we commit your hearts, your souls and your homes.

Signed by the members of the Administrative Board, National Catholic Welfare Conference, in the names of the Bishops of the United States:

Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia; Edward Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit; Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago; Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York; Francis P. Keough, Archbishop of Baltimore; John T. McNicholas, O.P., Archbishop of Cincinnati; Robert E. Lucey, Archbishop of San Antonio; Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston; Joseph E. Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis; Patrick A. O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington; John M. Gannon, Bishop of Erie; John F. Noll, Bishop of Fort Wayne; Emmet M. Walsh, Coadjutor Bishop of Youngstown; Michael J. Ready, Bishop of Columbus.

Editorials

Our Birthright of Religious Freedom

St. John's in Greece Marks 75 Years

How Assure More Permanent Marriages?

By Msgr. William M. Hart

We Give Thanks To God

There is in America a fundamental religious spirit. Our government was conceived in religious principles, was formulated on principles based on belief in God as Creator and Ruler of all men. Men equal in rights and in dignity before God were to make up the citizens of the new commonwealth.

God's blessing was asked upon our nation and its people in its first days of existence. An indication of renewed interest in religious principles and awakened realization of our dependence on God is the large number of those who are buying the religious books of Thomas Merton and Monsignor Fulton Sheen.

Our early settlers were religious men, believers in God. They knew all they had came from God, they welcomed the fruits of the flock and of the field as gifts of the Almighty. They were among the first to mark as a Day of Thanksgiving one civic holiday, when men should rejoice in God's goodness and partake in festive mood of the fruits of His bounty.

Thank God for a government in nation and state and city that annually proclaims as a public holiday the last Thursday in November, as a day of Thanksgiving, a day dedicated to giving thanks to God for the material gifts He has showered upon us, and for the spiritual gifts that have blessed us as a free nation.

All who know God by faith, who love God for His great glory, who love their neighbor because we all come from God; all who honor the traditional spirit of thanksgiving that has marked our country in all her years will be eager and zealous to follow the proclamations of President Truman, of Governor Dewey, of Mayor Dicker, and in their homes and churches give due praise to God in prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings He has granted to us in our free land of America.

75 Years At St. John's Parish

The memory of a holy patron, who has watched over the fruitful events of seventy-five years at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Greece, was honored on last Sunday by Bishop and Priest and people. Solemn and prayerful ceremonies centered around the offering of Holy Mass at the parish altar and the Jubilee Sermon preached by Bishop Kearney. A fitting climax to the Jubilee Program was the laying of the cornerstone of the new school addition, and the blessing of the building in all its rooms.

Bishop Kearney's sermon surely brought nearer to us the beloved disciple, St. John the Evangelist. His nearness to Christ, pictured so well in the scene at the Last Supper where John nearest to Christ rests his head on Christ's bosom, has meant much to the people of the Jubilee Parish. St. John has brought near to each of his children the Eucharistic Christ dwelling in the tabernacle of the church bearing his title. His intercession has been constantly sought by young and old within the hallowed walls of this holy shrine.

St. John has brought to all of them the second great love of his Apostolic heart, love for the teachings of Christ. Christ's eternal birth from the Father, Christ's birth in time, Christ's dignity as the Son of God bringing salvation to all the world—all the teaching of Christ as it fell from His lips, unchanged and unchanging, has been St. John's gift to the people of the parish dedicated to God under the patronage of the Beloved Disciple.

Our congratulations to Father Baier, to all the priests and sisters who have helped him at St. John's, our testimonial of reverence and respect to a line of worthy predecessors in the Jubilee Parish. May St. John's of Greece continue to bring to its people and clergy the blessings of nearness to Christ, of familiar acquaintance and love for Christ's word, particularly as recorded in the inspired writings of their heavenly patron.

American Bishops Speak

United in national conference, one hundred thirty members of the American Hierarchy last week gave to our country and its people a stirring message of exhortation to more permanent family life based on greater respect for the married state. The Bishops decried the increase of divorce, the evil effect of multiple unions unblessed by God and unsanctioned by sacramental guarantees.

They pointed out that there can be no promise of permanency in our domestic units without more conscientious devotion to the unity and holiness and permanence of marriage. They call on employers to see to it that employes may marry early on the basis of a modern-day living wage; that generous and just dealing with labor may keep far from our homes the fatal taint of sinful misuse of sex, by removing the temptation poverty might bring to our men and women.

The world looks to Catholics for proper living, for good example. Let us heed the advice of our leaders in the Hierarchy. Let us keep God close to us in all the obligations of our life, keeping ourselves worthy of the God Who made us, worthy of the country He has blessed for our earthly dwelling place.

Your Redemption Is At Hand

Christ came to give men redemption. Years of preparation for His coming were intended to make men conscious of their need for His salvation. With His coming into the world, man's redemption was at hand. That redemption would begin with man's Baptism, would go with him through infancy and childhood, through youth and mature manhood, through old age, would finally bring him to eternal reward in heaven. Through sorrow and sickness and death, man would finally enter into his glory. Through the portents of the destruction of the world at the last day, every man should go on to the General Judgment.

This First Sunday of Advent brings us Christ's prophecy of the end of the world. It is a prophecy that includes the miserable state of man as he sees the signs in the sun and moon and stars, as he notes in fear the preparations for the last moments of the world.

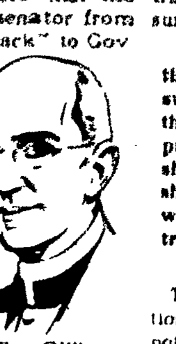
But it is also a prophecy of hope, unfailing hope, based on the redeeming power of Christ. "To those that love God all things work together unto good." What can all the passing writhings of material things mean, to a soul saved by Christ. "Your redemption is at hand!" Happy words, words of Christ; words most true and consoling!

Advent is for us, for a worthy preparation in the depths of our souls for the anniversary of the Redeemer's coming. How salutary a practice at this significant moment to size up the world for what it is worth: utterly incapable of satisfying our spiritual longings; bound to pass away for each of us as we die: bound to pass away eternally at the last day. Only in Christ, Our Redeemer, can we find lasting happiness. May Advent find us making a worthy preparation for His coming!

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS

Just How Far Would They Go? We Demand a 'Yes' or 'No'

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P.



Fr. Gillis

I see by the papers that the defeat of Dulles as senator from New York is a "setback" to Governor Dewey as candidate for the presidency and that in consequence Harold Stassen may make a bid to exchange the presidency of the University of Pennsylvania for the presidency of the United States.

With Mr. Stassen's political ambitions I am not concerned. His political principles however, are a matter of great importance to every American voter. Not more than Mr. Truman's or Mr. Dewey's, but not less.

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ONLY PLATFORMS are important, and even more than platforms the candidates' personal political principles. Mr. Truman's we think we know. Mr. Dewey's we think we know. But what of Mr. Stassen's? Of course he did state his views when he was runner up in the race as candidate on the "Republican" ticket. But now that he becomes a prospective candidate again, let's reconsider.

What I have in mind particularly is Mr. Stassen's, or any other potential candidate's convictions on how far we should go to help the rest of the world. Like every other humane person I am in favor of helping Europe, Asia, Africa with [illegible] to resurrect a phrase that had a short and tragic history — with "all measures short of war."

"What I demand as a Christian and a Catholic is an answer to the question, "Does the president or the would-be president believe that we should not stop with measures short of war, but should go to war to help the afflicted countries of the world?"

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THAT'S A point blank question. But just you try to get a point blank answer to it. Don't take a vague reply or something high sounding and polysyllabic. Demand, and get if you can, an answer as plain as "yes" or "no."

For example what do you make out of Mr. Stassen's oratorical utterance that he endorses a foreign policy "based on vigorous participation in the affairs of the world"? To me that is like saying, "I am in favor of a humanitarian policy." To which the only answer must be "Who the heck isn't?"

But the problem is not one of "vigorous participation," the problem is one of going to war. If by "vigorous participation in foreign affairs" you mean active participation in foreign wars, it would be only honest to say so.

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Mr. Stassen has also approached the vital matter in a negative way. He attacks those who would "draw back from exercising economic and political leadership around the world."

I am afraid we shall have to say of that pretentious phrase that like the other it sounds well but leaves the hearer in doubt as to what it means.

Are we to exercise political leadership around the world whether or not the rest of the world welcomes us as leaders? Could the nations [illegible] as leaders without surrendering their own leadership? Are we to snatch that leadership out of their hands [illegible] on to it? As [illegible] ship are we to [illegible] nations to share [illegible] views and adopt [illegible] system?

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NATHANIEL PEFFER, professor of International Relations at Columbia University [illegible] it would not be [illegible] the world if we were [illegible] attempt to assume [illegible] leadership of the world. His son Bard win a special writer on military and naval affairs for the New York Times says that if we ever had such moral leadership we lost it when we dropped the atom bomb at Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

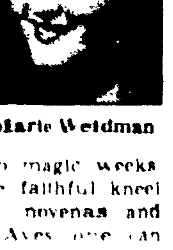
Can we exercise political and economic leadership with or without moral leadership. Does that mean that economics and politics need not go along step by step with ethics? What would Thomas Aquinas think of that proposition?

I ask for short simple plain words. To show what I mean, put it thus, "Just how far would you go to help the world?" The answer should be in equally curt Anglo-Saxon, "I would go to war," or "I would not go to war."

WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT

Praising the Lord Is Not 14-Day Palmolive Plan

By Marie Weidman



Marie Weidman

Contrary to current thought trends Prayer is not like the fourteen day Palmolive plan. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to that well known soap sesame by which one may, with close formula following and ritual performing, net allegedly dazzling results within two magic weeks.

However as the faithful kneel to murmur their novenas and their prescribed Aves one can only hope their fervor is not founded in any frenzied frantic appeal for quick temporal favors only.

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OF COURSE IT is edifying to view suppliant crowds at the ever more numerous special services our churches hold. The Lord wants an earnest entreating Church Militant. He said so.

But asking the Almighty becomes such a steadfast habit with most of us that to pray means only to ask. Prayer for many means not only the lifting of mind and heart to God but also empty pocketbook to God or else numbers of other apparently vital needs.

Certainly no one though, would have the temerity to hold forth on the sincerity of the petitioners whose whispered worshiping daily assails the Almighty. But it does occur to many of us as we kneel over our litanies that perhaps some of the wonderful meaning of Prayer is sometimes lost in the urgency of the matter at hand with which we wish to impress our Creator.

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THE LORD MUST of course have known about all the perplexities and fears from which we would require deliverance, all the bothersome little worries, the insecurities, the temptations, the vexing problems each of us carries with him, the annoyances which are so much with us that they become part of our personalities.

In the depths before time began Our Maker knew all about the modern neuroses, the atom, Joe Stalin and the threat of more and more horrible warfare. He knew the numbers of the laboring and the burdened would be great, our problems many.

And since He made us He knows our impatience, our petulant anger at having to shoulder each his particular set of troubles. When He told us to ask that we might receive, He knew all the great and small petitions He would hear, the worthy and the unworthy. Still, He wanted our prayerful homage.

So man prays mornings at Mass, when the Angelus rings, late at night. In his search for happiness and peace man often takes the wrong turning.

Not exactly any primrose path of dalliance but just confusing little left hand turns that look promising with glitter and ease. Then, lost and befuddled he keeps asking God for help along the puzzling cul-de-sac when all along the Lord has given directions and help for the main high way.

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NOW IN HIS Infinite Wisdom God knows how to take care of all requests, the great and the small. Seeing our hearts, He disposes of our petitions to our best interests. And of course the rub is just here [illegible] we humans feel we have stormed the gates yet the results we want are not forthcoming.

But God has answered our prayers. The fact that we are not pleased is slightly beside the point. On the subject of wanting and not getting the cynical worldling, Oscar Wilde said that there were two tragedies in life: wanting something very badly and not getting it, and secondly, wanting something and getting it — the second was the worst tragedy.

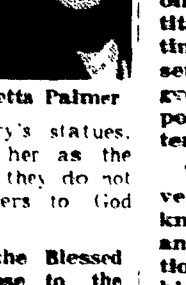
With human nature the way it is and the way it [illegible] to be our race will be [illegible] a very long time [illegible] the other side of prayer is [illegible] of God which can [illegible] heart with a kind of holy satisfaction that is literally out of this world.

Our hearts were made to bless and love our Maker. It is one of our highly human functions. If occasionally we thanked God for our wonderful [illegible] alive, for being one of His creatures, our novenas [illegible] might seem shorter, more meaningful.

THE TOP OF MY MIND

The Blessed Mother's Prescription for Our Time

By Gretta Palmer



Gretta Palmer

The Blessed Mother is the single figure of the Gospel story on whom today, Catholics have a tight monopoly. Even those Protestant sects which are orthodox enough to admit the Virgin Birth usually stop short at the Immaculate Conception. They do not adorn their churches with Mary's statues, they do not view her as the mediatrix of grace, they do not address their prayers to God through her.

And so when the Blessed Mother comes close to the earth . . . as she has done many times in the past 50 years . . . it is to be assumed that her message is addressed to us alone.

And when she assigns a task to be done, as she did at Fatima, it is a clearly Catholic task: it is something which she expects us to do alone, unaided by the good people who belong to other faiths. For we, and only we, have ears tuned to hear the message that she brings.

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THAT MESSAGE of Fatima was a curious one to modern minds: for it sweeps aside, as too irrelevant to mention, all the methods which are most congenial to our age. The Blessed Mother, in her appearances, has never hinted that she wished us to attack the ills of the world by doing a single one of the things which dominate the headlines of our newspapers.

Penance and prayer, prayer and penance are the recipe she offered us to accomplish the titanic task of redeeming our time. It is a recipe which sets us apart from all the groups who believe that temporal achievements require temporal methods.

This recipe requires faith, very great faith: for we do not know how prayers and penances arrive at their destination and shake the course of history. It is so much more satisfying to our earth-bound minds to send a telegram to a senator, urging his support of this bill or that, than to say a Rosary for the salvation of the world.

No apparitions are required to nudge us into joining committees or writing to the newspapers or helping start a direct-mail campaign to push our views. These things are easy on the ego; it is always enjoyable to try to direct some other person's views in the direction we approve. But prayer and penance are not easy on the ego. They do not get our names printed on any letterheads nor bring us testimonial banquets.

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PRAYER AND penance require faith, but logic too supports the belief that these methods and only these will save the world. For every poison has its antidote; and it is obvious enough that the corrective to hate can be nothing except love.

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THE ENERGY with which the enemies of the Church work today is immense and tireless. In a recent speech Archbishop Cushing of Boston stated that the amount of hatred [illegible] at this time is so staggering that he believed it to be Satanic in its origin.

He stated that the number of attacks on the Church in this country "has been stepped up enormously in the past two years. So has their passion. So has the publicity given them." And the Archbishop suggested strongly that "this kind can be cast out by prayer and fasting."

And if we ever become confused or bewildered . . . if we begin to think that modern times require a different strategy . . . if we do that, we are simply mistaken. The Blessed Mother took the trouble of telling us so herself.