



How Early Should Parents Start Religious Training Of Children?

Assistant Professor of Sociology at St. Louis University

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S.J.

We have one child eighteen months old and another on the way. Both my husband and I have resolved that our children will get a sound religious training because we realize how important this is for their happiness. Our problem now is where to begin. When should one start the religious training of children?

A FEW YEARS ago in a talk to Catholic mothers, Mrs. XII answered your question directly. "It is your task from the cradle to begin their education in soul as well as in body, for if you do not educate them they will begin, for good or ill to educate themselves."

The Pope's words are clear enough. Together with modern scientific child psychologists, and our own common sense he tells us that the child starts learning from birth, and that this learning process is both rapid and lasting. What does the child learn? That depends upon the family circle which effects him. For the child, the family circle represents the world. In a very real sense he is the "product" of his family. What he learns come from them.

WHEN SHOULD he be told about God, the Blessed Mother, the angels and the saints? We only have to formulate this question to realize how foolish it is. There is no one time when the child should be told these things. Since he starts learning in the cradle, he must be subjected to an environment, an atmosphere, in which God, the Virgin Mother, the angels and the saints are realities.

When should he be taught religion? The truths of religion must first be lived in the home by you, his parents. Your attitudes, actions, and expressions convey to the child through every avenue of knowledge by which he is capable of learning.

the great religious realities. When should he be taught to pray? Obviously, simple prayers can be taught as soon as he can learn other things.

BIT ISN'T the preschool child too young to learn about God? Only one who doesn't know children could ask that question! After all, what does it mean to "know about God"? What does the average adult know about God? Essentially, it is that God is our loving Father, that He created us out of love and destined us for happiness with Him throughout eternity, that consequently we should reverence, love, and serve Him if we are to develop, to really "grow up."

The child readily grasps the truth that God is lovable and to be obeyed. The reality of the angels and saints present no problem to the child—provided he sees that these realities are accepted in his family circle.

As the Pope reminds us, you have already started training

your child because he has already started to learn. On the sensory level, he is capable of noticing the sound of the voice, the look, the gesture, the caress, the act of rejection or punishment.

On the emotional level, he can sense the feeling of those around him. He reacts to love, fear, joy, hate and tension. As he develops, he will learn to speak and understand language. Then he will receive ideas, sentiments, evaluations, and judgments. All through these stages he is steadily learning. What he learns about religion will depend on you.

CHRISTIAN PARENTHOOD is a noble vocation. By patiently molding into His image the human clay which the Divine Artist has confided to your loving care, you are sharing in the work of God. You are just starting your work. It will be finished only when your children stand beside you as full fledged "citizens of two worlds."

News Woman, Policeman Join Religious Communities

Philadelphia — (RNS) — A newspaper woman and a policeman have given up these careers to enter Roman Catholic religious orders.

Miss Mary Egan, 36, has become a novice at the Villa Maria Motherhouse of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at West Chester, near here. She has assumed the name of Sister Fidelis Maria in the teaching order.

MISS EGAN was in the news, sports and library departments of the Philadelphia Bulletin for 10 years. For the past two years she was on the Philadelphia bureau staff of the Daily News Record, a national textile trade newspaper.

ROBERT WELTZ, 24, of the city's highway patrol, exchanged his uniform for the habit of a Benedictine monk at St. Maur's Priory, Union, Ky. During his police career he received a commendation for arresting two armed bandits during a holdup. He is a Marine veteran of the Korean campaign, having spent

14 months there in 1951-52. Police Commissioner Thomas Gibbons bade Mr. Weltz a personal farewell and "God-speed" as he surrendered his badge to the department. The commissioner recalled that he was the second young policeman to leave for the priesthood in less than a year.

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Jesuit President

Educator Charges 'Defamation' In Recent Incidents

St. Louis — (NC) — The president of St. Louis University has called upon the law profession to take action on "the problem of character defamation" that he said has reached national proportions.

Speaking at the banquet of the university's annual "Law Day" observance, Father Paul C. Reinert, S.J., cited what he termed three cases of character defamation.

In each, the Jesuit said, a person's good name was besmirched before all facts in the case could be presented.

FATHER REINERT cited the case of two teenage girls who were killed several months ago in Chicago, a recent attack on Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg, last year's chancellor of Austria, and the current charge in a national sports magazine alleging the unfairness of a St. Louis area basketball referee.

attorney announced that the charges in the confession were unfounded. "But in the meantime, two girls and their families have suffered immeasurable harm," he said.

As for the local basketball referee, the priest said the magazine publishing the rumor that the referee is an collusion with a gambling syndicate was too much interested in a scoop.

And again, he added, regardless of what the facts were, another man's reputation was damaged. The official was recently suspended for the remainder of the season.

One of the cases cited by Father Reinert involved the main speaker at the banquet, Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg. The priest said the speaker has been "unjustly and cruelly misrepresented" recently at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

The chairman of the event at that university, he related, refused to appear, at the last moment, on the same program with Dr. von Schuschnigg. He charged the Austrian with being a "fascist." Resignation of the chairman and his accompanying statement received wide secular press coverage in this area.

THE FACTS and denial presented by Dr. von Schuschnigg in which it was noted that he was in a Nazi prison camp for seven years and that the "fascist" organization he was charged with leading was actually a Catholic youth organization, did not appear in the newspaper, said Father Reinert.

As for the Chicago girls who were murdered, Father Reinert said that a "confession" was obtained from a suspect "which raised very serious doubts about the integrity of the girls."

Stolen Spanish Church Art Linked To Moscow

Madrid — (NC) — Among the treasures of the Cathedral of Toledo now believed to be held in Moscow are several chalices of silver and gold ornamented with precious stones, monstrances of silver and gold, and a collection of unset jewels and an ancient gold crucifix.

ATTENTION WAS drawn to the missing Toledo treasures by Alexandre Orlov, former economic officer of the Soviet Secret Police once stationed in Spain, before the U. S. Senate subcommittee investigating communist activities.

Orlov told how 500 tons of gold, belonging to the Spanish government, has been shipped from the vaults of the Bank of Spain to the Kremlin for safekeeping when Franco's forces approached Madrid on September 13, 1936.

THE TOLEDO treasures were kept in the same place as the Spanish gold reserve and may have been taken to Russia along with the gold.

THEN, HE SAID, the district Many of the missing objects



Elected

Boston — (NC) — Monsignor Francis J. Lally is one of three newly-named members of the Board of Directors of the Fund for the Republic, an independent corporation founded to promote the principles of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Monsignor Lally is Editor of the Patriot, Boston archdiocesan newspaper.

Making Marriage Click

Steps On Love's Pathway

By MSGR IRVING A. DEBLANG

(Director, Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C.)

Man evidently goes through five stages in his love life. First, it was the "me" stage. At that time he was a tiny, selfish, little creature, and everything he could grasp was "for me." If there were two dozen toys around, they were all "for me." All the food he could put his hands on was "for me."



Monsignor DeBlang

The "me" stage is the childish, immature stage. Some obviously never outgrow it. If they go to a party now, they never make sure that others also enjoy it. They just cannot be bothered. Why pick up their own dirty clothes in the morning? (Mothers or wives are veritable vacuum cleaners par excellence.)

They are the kind who are satisfied with the community, with economies, with racial conditions as they are—no why changes? For "me" it's O.K. In fact, when they sing "America" it always sounds like they are saying, "My country 'tis of me."

Then there is the "he" stage. At this period one is conscious and well disposed to the existence of someone else. One can now relate himself to another. It could be Mom—who, incidentally, becomes the best cook in the world—or Dad—who is stronger than Roy Rogers himself!

Next there is the "we" stage. It is the gang age. Parents now are virtually useless. What "we" want now is gang recognition. "We" cannot stand to be different: hard-boiled, blue jeans, green fingerhalls, rock 'n' roll. The one who influences "we" most may be the leader of the gang—generally a youngster only a year or two older than "we."

SOON AFTER this the "she" stage appears. "Love-itis" takes over in different degrees. Love-itis is somewhat like malaria with this difference: malaria patients first get chills, then the fever; love-itis victims first get fever, then the chills. Those who

have acute cases of love-itis generally droop around like a sick calf or a dying goose or just a plain walking potato vine.

Many of the boys succumbing to the early onsets of the "she" stage like to gather around in corners at a C.Y.O. dance. They are so nervous and afraid to dance that some of them could model for a pretzel.

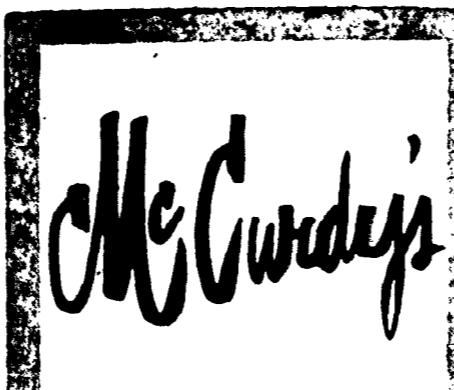
Finally, there is the "they" stage, which is the beginning of social love and the most distinguished of all stages. During this stage one not only wants to love and to be loved, but wants to belong to something greater than himself. At this time he is ready for marriage.

For marriage is a dedication; it is community life. It forces one to rise above self. In the grammar of the language of "they" love, it is not "we, you, they," but just the reverse, "they, you, we." "They" is first. Man now lives for his family. He takes no chances now with his life, his job.

Now he is deeply concerned about his neighbor; he may want to do something about the South, which has 13 million people and only one and a half million who are Catholic. He realizes that religion is not a private affair, like a diary. Now he wants to help wisely his neighbors who are neglecting Church—and may be 50 per cent of the parish is in this category.

It is now that the Mystical Body is alive within him. The Mystical Body is that organism of Christ, suffering in a tripod and suffering creates a capacity to handle it.

Love is sacrifice; sacrifice is cleansing. "They" love is God's own love. For God who loves sin does so not because it injures His Deity, but because it injures man. This "they" love is our greatest need in the world.



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