

How Can Parents Best Give Their Children Sex Instruction

All this talk about the need to give sex education in the home has some of us parents worried. We know there's a need and we recognize it's our job, but we're not very sure about how we should tackle it. Our oldest boy is in high school, and one of our daughters is finishing eighth grade. How can we best help them?

I SUPPOSE there are few questions which cause serious parents more concern than the one you have asked. There are many reasons. Each child develops somewhat differently.

Modern society places great emphasis on every phase of sex. Americans no longer agree on the meaning of sex so that acceptable conduct in this area is neither clearly defined nor uniformly practiced.

Because this problem is so complex, perhaps the best way to answer your question is to set down a few observations and principles for your guidance.

FIRST, WHAT should be your aim? Since sex, in its real meaning, is the special human quality of manliness or womanliness, your goal is to train your boys to be mature Christian men, and your girls to be mature Christian women.

This means that sex education must never be separated from general education. Boys and girls grow up to be men and women precisely as male and female persons. Part of this growing up process necessarily involves the knowledge of their reproductive powers.

Hence as male and female persons, growing boys and girls must gradually acquire some understanding of the "facts of life" plus all those religious, moral, psychological, and emotional attitudes toward these facts which adult Christians should have.

Your aim as parents is not to preserve ignorance (lack of knowledge) in your children, but innocence (lack of personal experience).

SECOND, IT follows that there is no special time which can be set apart for training in chastity, modesty, sex hygiene, or sex information. Individual children differ, and growing up is a gradual process.

Hence training should be gradual, adapted to the needs of each individual child, repeated and reviewed like all teaching, and aimed at anticipating the needs of the growing child.

THIRD, IT IS obvious that you can give this training adequately only if you have the confidence of your child. For this reason it is important that both father and mother start the religious and moral instruction and guidance of the child from the cradle.

Thus you will be identified as teachers in the child's mind, and he will acquire the habit of turning to you when problems arise.

Some parents foolishly hand over this early instruction and



guidance almost entirely to the school, with the result that the child's spiritual life is closed to them by the time he reaches puberty.

FOURTH, YOU cannot give what you do not have. Unless your own views in regard to sex are balanced and thorough, you cannot train your child properly. This should be obvious, but some parents have never developed mature attitudes toward sex in their own lives, so they communicate their fears, anxieties, and misconceptions to their children.

FIFTH, YOU MUST be realistic. Your own experience has taught you a great deal about normal sexual development during puberty and adolescence. You have considerable knowledge of the conditions and circumstances within which your child is growing up.

Call on your common sense and the grace of your vocation to instruct, guide, and direct him until he reaches maturity. Act on the assumption that your child is normal, with normal curiosity, drives, desires, and reactions under temptation.

Some parents evidently don't like to face the fact that their children are probably normal. They like to regard them as sexless creatures, alien to normal desires and reactions.

These observations are general and were not meant to meet all of your problems.

If you would like an excellent treatment of the subject, read Father Henry Sattler's little book, *Parents, Children, and the Facts of Life*. (St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N.J.)

It also appears in a popular, paper-back edition. You have an important job, but if you use common sense and the grace of your vocation, you have no cause for anxiety.

Msgr. Randall Announces Eisenhower Aide At CPA

New York — (RNS) — Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell will be the principal speaker at the 47th annual convention of the Catholic Press Association in St. Louis, Mo., May 14-17. He will address the convention's civic banquet on May 16.

Monsignor John S. Randall of Rochester, N. Y., president of the CPA, made the announcement at its headquarters here.

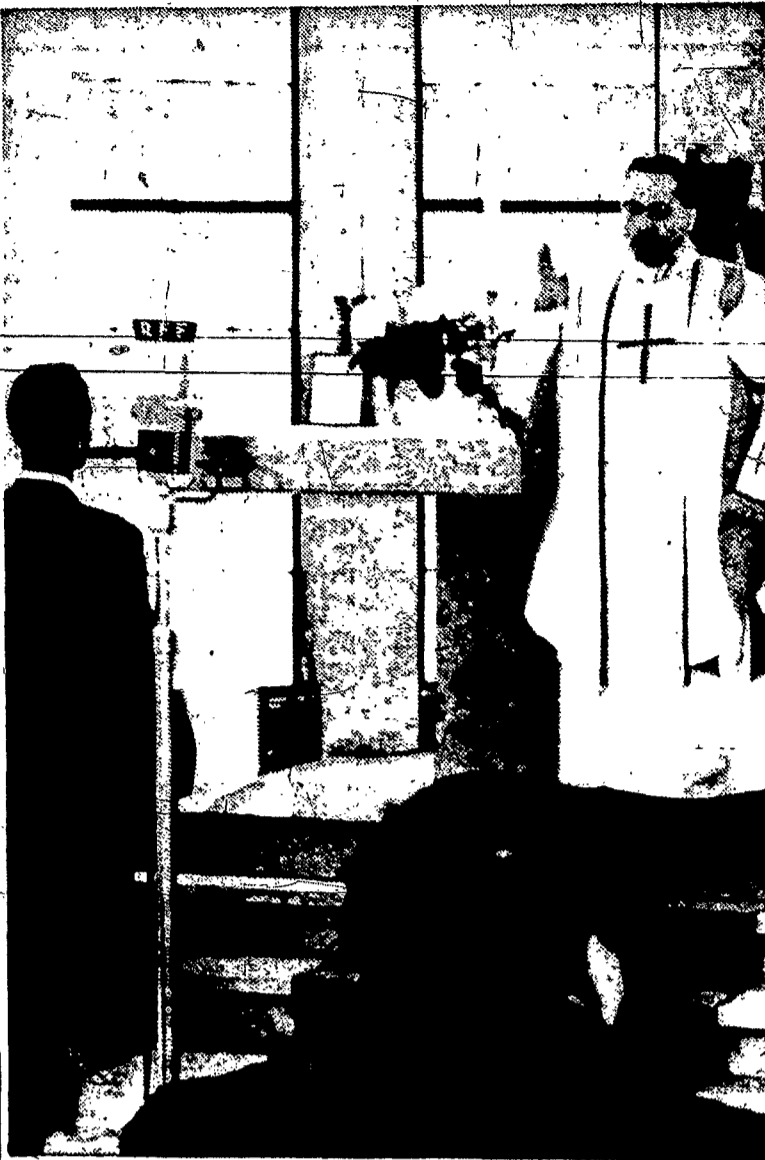
He said 350 delegates from all fields of Catholic publishing are expected at the meeting which will feature panel discussions, workshops and roundtable "clinics."

Mr. Mitchell was appointed Secretary of Labor in 1953. Prior to that he served as Assistant Secretary of the Army. During World War II he was director of

the War Department's Industrial personnel division. He has served on the National Building Trades Stabilization Board and on the Personnel Advisory Board of the Hoover Commission.

Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter and The St. Louis Review, weekly newspaper of the archdiocese, will be hosts to the convention.

Catholic Press
Sydney, Australia — (NC) — Catholic periodicals in Australia will launch a nationwide campaign next August to increase circulation. The campaign was planned at the annual convention of the Catholic Press Association here.



Mass To Iron Curtain

Being broadcast by Radio Free Europe is Easter Sunday Mass from the Redemptorist Chapel in Munich, Germany, with celebrant, Father Carol Fabian. The Mass broadcast is part of a complete series of programs over RFE's 29 transmitters to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania. Work of RFE is supported by American contributions to the Crusade for Freedom. (NC Photo)

Motherhouse Chapel Lists Easter Mass On TV

Solemn Easter Mass will be televised from the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse Chapel, Pittsford at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday over Rochester station WROC-TV.

Program is aimed at the sick and shut-ins who are not able to attend Mass on Easter in their own parish churches.

The Very Rev. John F. Murphy, C.S.B., president of St. John Fisher College will be celebrant and the Rev. Dr. William Shannon, chaplain of Nazareth College, will act as commentator.

Preacher will be the Rev. Richard Tormey, chaplain of Our Lady of Mercy High School.

Minor offices in the Mass will be filled by St. Bernard and St. Andrew seminarians. The Sisters' Choir of the Motherhouse will sing under the direction of Sister Mary Florian, S.S.J.

Florence's Giorgio La Pira

Mayor Who Lives In Monastery Cell Takes Lead At Sunday Masses For Poor

Florence, Italy — (RNS) — In this ancient city of poetry, art and many saints, two Masses of the Poor — one for women and the other for men — are offered every Sunday.

At each Mass the dominant figure is that of Giorgio La Pira, the Sicilian-born bachelor mayor of Florence who lives in a monastery cell and is looked upon as the father of the poor because of his extraordinary charity and piety.

LONG MINUTES before the Mass for the women is due to begin, the Church of the Apostles, which dates back to the time of Charlemagne, is already crowded with women, for the most part old and darkly clad. Suddenly an element of joy and youth seems to enter, like a ray of sun playing among the black marble columns of the Romanesque building.

It is the mayor himself. He kneels close to the foot of the altar and becomes absorbed in prayer as Father Spinelli, a Dominican priest, begins the Mass. Hymns are sung during the service, the Epistle and Gospel are read in Italian by a young man, and a prayer for the poor composed by Signor La Pira is recited in unison.

Finally the time comes for the blessing of the leaves of bread for the poor already placed in huge baskets before the altar. They are the gift of the St. Procolo Society, a welfare group founded by the mayor and his friends.

FATHER SPINELLI blesses the bread using the prescribed Latin formula. Then Signor La Pira, taking the book from the priest's hands, reads an Italian translation — "because nobody would understand the Latin."

From now on it is the mayor's "show." Standing on the floor of the church in front of the altar, he tells the women what has been happening during the week in this city.

With warm exuberant ges-

tures, the mayor speaks of the saints of the week, dwelling on their particular virtues and missions. He names those who died during the week and leads his hearers in a prayer for the repose of their souls.

WHAT FOLLOWS is a talk on a religious theme — more often than not on Christian charity. Many times Mayor La Pira has told how Florentine missionaries carried the Christian message to the ends of the world. Almost invariably, he speaks of the communist threat to the Christian faith here and elsewhere. He extols the Christian virtues, above all, charity.

"Whoever betrays his Christian vocation, he is a man, city or a country," the mayor told one congregation. "It comes ridiculous, like a nothing, and as miserable as a defrocked priest."

His warm words, eloquent gestures, burning sincerity and radiant face seem to cast a spell over the congregation. He ends by leading the women in a prayer for their city, and collecting the written petitions they thrust into his hands.

The Mass for the poor men is still to take place, as young helpers stand at the door distributing the freshly baked, fragrant loaves of bread to the

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