

Decency Pledge

On Sunday all Catholics of the Diocese will be asked to take the Legion of Decency pledge. This is a solemn and an increasingly important matter. By this pledge grown-ups and young people alike promise to keep away from indecent and immoral forms of entertainment and those that are dangerous to faith or morals. They promise to keep away from moving pictures that glorify crime and sin. They promise not to patronize those places of "amusement" that show such films and entertainments as a matter of policy.

Only a fool would deny the close tie-up between crime, especially among the young, and bad books and films. Minds are formed by what persons read and especially see in the movies, for here they are caught up in another world, their eyes and ears are assailed by suggestive or downright indecent ideas, their imaginations are catered to with all the skill and technical advantages that Hollywood has to offer, and these are considerable.

The most important single fact facing all our police departments is the rising crime rate among young people. It has been going up at a steadily increasing rate. Poor home influence, lack of discipline must take part of the blame, but the film industry cannot shake off its responsibility in the matter. The American Bishops, realistically recognizing this years ago, formed the Legion of Decency to evaluate, for parents and young people themselves, the moral tone of movies. The Legion aims not only at warning against positive dangers to faith and morals, but at encouraging those movies that are deemed educational or helpful recreationally for various classes of people.

The Legion has as its chief concern the moral and religious wholesomeness of Catholics and those other men of good will who support its work. It is as much a "censor" as the public health department is a censor of diseases, as vaccines are censors.

It seems that the only way a stop can be put to the production of unwholesome films is to hit the producers where it hurts, in the pocketbook. Catholics and others, by refusing to patronize unworthy films, are showing the producer that their moral taste is higher than his insulting judgment of it. They are indicating that they are concerned for their soul's well-being as they are over the body. They go on record as opposing any forms of so-called entertainment that would break down the moral restraints that are so necessary for public good order and personal holiness. They are protesting against any encouragement of crime and evil tendencies in impressionable young people.

The Legion of Decency pledge is not a mere formality. It has been potent enough, in other years, to bring about a radical change in the tone of movies when Hollywood felt its effects. It should continue to be a rating system that will keep the movie producers aware of the ideals that we cherish as Catholics and as citizens of a Christian country, ideals that we will not allow a handful of people to snatch from us under the guise of entertainment.

Making Marriage Click

Married Couples Must Not Desert Their Parents

By MSGR. IRVING A. DEBLANC
(Director, Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C.)

In-law problems are quite understandable! Can anyone be dazed with joy after a ruthless demotion or a compulsory abdication?

That is about what happens after some marriages. Mom suddenly gives place to another woman in the life of her son. Dad watches his daughter in a discolored look at some male who happens to have youth, strength, good looks and all of life before him.



Monsignor DeBlanc

THE IN-LAW problems were obviously greater a generation or two ago. Many of these problems are today dissolved because of social security, many disappeared when children and parents moved over the country, when modern houses were built too small to accommodate in-laws. But one problem that still does remain is immaturity from youthful marriages.

When the very young marry, in-laws are naturally inclined to interfere.

It is extremely difficult for parents to realize that wee little Jimmy, only 24, is old enough to marry. What can he do without advice from Mom and Dad and a bit of cash to tide him over? On the other hand, a youngster identifies marriage with certain independence and he is militant when parents interfere with this freedom.

If, however, they do not have security or do not learn to shift attachments and if one or the other remains tied to apron strings, the trouble starts. Then the wife has reason to feel that she is hardly more than a privileged servant and hubby takes refuge in childish tyranny, virtually demanding that his bride no longer acknowledge that she ever had a mother.

One or both will now soon be candidates for psychiatric treatment.

The troubles are not first with the in-laws, they are first with immature youngsters. They would have had in-law trouble regardless of whom they married.

JOSEPH BREIG

What Does Lippmann Mean?

I would like to know precisely what Walter Lippmann means when he writes in his newspaper column that the U.S. must learn to live with the Soviet Union "in the real world, without illusions of grandeur." I was not aware that we had any illusions of grandeur. Lippmann saying so does not make it so. He offers no evidence to support his statement; he does not bother to tell us what our alleged illusions are.

Lippmann asserts that "most probably" the Soviets before long "will have operational missiles capable of neutralizing the Allied bases in Western Europe and the Middle East."

If that happens, he tells us, our foreign policy will be unimpaired. He contends that it is time we started looking for another one. But observe his curious definition of what he conceives to be our policy.

HE SAYS THAT it calls for "the containment of the communist states by military encirclement in the hope that this will in the end compel them to accept, as the terms of a settlement, the equivalent of an unconditional surrender."

Lippmann goes on to say that "we have been taught by the official propaganda to suspect any terms of settlement in Germany, in the Middle East and in the Far East which are short of unconditional surrender. This is a great and, it might be, a fatal error."

"If we cannot correct it, if we cannot learn to live without illusions of grandeur in the real world where there is a rival as powerful as we are, we shall find — no matter what the Pentagon is now able to do — that our power and influence will continue to decline," says Lippmann.

It would be good of Walter Lippmann if he would tell us what he is talking about, and what he proposes that we should do instead of what we are now doing in face of the insatiable communist ambition to enslave the world.

OUR POSITION is that we want peace and justice. We want the communists to halt their aggressions, stop their war on the West, and allow oppressed populations to make their own decisions in free elections, as the Russians solemnly promised. Is this what Lippmann considers a demand for "unconditional surrender"?

Our belief is that if we will stand firm, we and the other free nations sooner or later will succeed in our effort to protect mankind from communist conquest, and to establish a rule of law and decency in collaboration with the United Nations. Is this what Lippmann describes as our "illusion of grandeur"?

Sputnik or no sputnik, we are confident that our rival is not — repeat not — as strong as we are, for the simple reason that communist governments seized power without the consent of the governed, and the governed will rise against them the moment the opportunity arrives, as was abundantly proved by the revolts in East Germany, Hungary and Poland. Is this another "illusion of grandeur" for us?

What does Lippmann want us to do? Abandon East Germany, the Middle East and the Far East to communist domination? Make a cynical deal to divide up the world with the communists, who at the opportune time would turn and rend us? Maybe Lippmann does not mean that at all, but why does he not say what he does mean, so that we may know where he stands?

AT THE TIME of the barbaric Soviet suppression of the Hungarian people's heroic bid for freedom in November 1956, Pope Pius XII urgently called upon the free nations to make it their first order of business to "try by every licit means" to liberate the millions enslaved under communist militarism.

He stressed that "every other problem and particular interest must be subordinated to that primordial and fundamental problem."

Those of us who have not lost our nerve because there are a couple of man-made satellites in the sky will prefer Pius XII's program to Lippmann's.



A missionary priest must also be doctor, dentist, teacher, engineer. Maryknoll Father Donald Hessler has invited U.S. laymen to come to his Mexico mission to aid him in his duties, giving him more time to do priest tasks.

Laymen Aid Missioners

(The author of the following article is editor of the Kansas City Catholic Register, official newspaper of the Diocese of Kansas (St. Joseph, Missouri).)

By ROBERT G. HOYT

Fourteen U.S. Catholic laymen are working out a new pattern of missionary activity for the Church in a primitive section of southern Mexico.

The three married couples among them have 14 children. All of them live on \$1.30 a day per family, and as closely as possible to the pattern and standard of living of their Mexican neighbors.

During a brief visit to the United States, Maryknoll Father Donald L. Hessler, who comes from New York, explained the ideas behind the experiment.

THE LAYMEN at his mission in Bacalar, Quintana Roo, Mexico, Father Hessler said, are not only auxiliaries of the clergy in the "direct apostolate," but also fill a role that properly belongs to the laity — the uplifting of the temporal order.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand why lay people are going to the missions, he added, is by understanding why the Church has missions.

"The purpose is not primarily to convert or 'save souls,' but to establish the Church. We must remember that the Church not only saves souls, it creates a society. We must think of Christ and the growth of His Mystical Body, and see the individual in context — not as a mind to be convinced, a soul to be baptized, but as a complete human being."

The purpose of the layman on the missions, Father Hessler explained, is much like the purpose of the priest — to make a life for himself. "The Church is not fully established," he added, "until there is a group of native lay leaders, doing the work proper to the lay apostolate anywhere."

For example, he went on, a priest can preach to his people about the meaning of Christ and marriage, but the married couples working in Bacalar can show what a marriage should be for Christians.

Before his own assignment to Bacalar, Father Hessler said, the people had been without a priest for 100 years, ever since an uprising of native Mexican Indians resulted in a massacre of the Spanish population of the area.

WHEN HE arrived, Father Hessler had only one lay catechist to help him serve the 3,500 people in the 12 villages of his parish.

The people around Bacalar are apathetic and "have no in-

Calendar
Sunday, December 15 — Third Sunday of Advent (purple), Creed, Trinity Preface.
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, December 16, 17, 19 — Mass at 7:00 on Sunday except Common Preface.
Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, December 18, 20, 21 — Ember Days, as in missal.

Inside Story On Santa Claus

Yes, Virginia, the big boy in the next block may have told you there is no Santa Claus, and he is entitled to his opinion, we suppose.

But right now we want to give you the real inside story on Santa Claus, so you, at any rate, will have the facts.

Those Santa Clauses you see in the department stores? They are kindly old men, created as a figment of the department store imagination, to help move up the Federal Reserve Board reports, some one-third of the entire department stores annual volume of sales during the Advent season.

We don't want you to confuse the real Santa Claus with these people, kindly and jolly though they may be.

Someone may have told you Santa Clause lives at the North Pole. Strictly speaking, this is not true. The real Santa Claus lives with God in heaven, and his name isn't Santa Claus.

Children about your age gave Santa his present popular name because at the age of three or four, they had a hard time saying his real name, San Nicolaus. That is his name in Dutch. And when our country was very young, the first ones who celebrated his coming were Dutch, and they lived in what is now New York.

So naturally they called him San Nicolaus. Sometimes they just called him Santicolaus, and sometimes, when they were in a hurry, Santelous.

About that time newspapers were invented, and a couple of editors who had heard of cities like Santa Ana and Santa Barbara, but never one had heard of San Nicolaus, began spelling it Santa Claus.

They didn't know any better, but you do. His real name in English, of course, is Saint Nicholas.

Saint Nicholas lived a long time ago — he died only about 300 years after Christ.

He lived just across the Mediterranean Sea from Palestine, in a city called Myra in what is now Turkey. Myra was later visited by the Apostle St. Paul, when he went from Jerusalem to Rome. He stopped at Myra, the Acts of Apostles tells us, to catch a ship bound for Rome.

About 250 years after Paul's visit, Nicholas was born near Myra.

Legend tells us that Nicholas, while still a child, decided to become a priest. And so he went to the monastery of a man near Myra to study. He became a priest, and later head of a monastery. Then he was chosen by the Pope to be Bishop of Myra.

It took a lot of courage to be Bishop because the Roman Emperor who controlled Myra hated Christians. The Emperor's name was Theodosius. The Emperor did not believe in God. He wanted to tear down the churches, get rid of the Bibles, and to destroy the "sacred Scriptures" by fire.

Many Christians refused to let this be done, and Theodosius killed them. Once he killed all the people in one area, he said they remained true to their faith.

Theodosius hated Nicholas because Nicholas kept preaching and trying to get the Bishop, St. Dositheos, to get Nicholas out of the city and to let him make him give up. But Nicholas would not forsake Christ. So then Theodosius had Nicholas put in prison.

Nicholas stayed in prison for years and years.

Finally Theodosius gave up being emperor. A new emperor was chosen named Constantine. Constantine liked Christians, and so Nicholas was freed from prison.

For 1600 years children have been told that St. Nicholas brings them presents. The first presents to children St. Nicholas is known to have given were to three girls.

The three girls were very poor. They wanted to get married, but they did not have enough money. So their father was going to sell them into a kind of slavery. Nicholas heard about this, and so he went one night to the home of the three girls and threw a bag of gold through the window.

The bag was so full of gold to form a dowry for the first girl. She did not have to be a slave. She could now get married. She was delighted.

Then Nicholas threw another bag through the window, with more gold, so the second girl could get married. The third night he returned with more gold for the third girl, so she could get married.

No one saw St. Nicholas come or go, until the third night when the girls' father caught him in the act of bringing the presents. The father told others, and that is how they know that Nicholas brought presents.

Nicholas died on Dec. 6. Later he was arrested and began to be called St. Nicholas. The Church has set Dec. 6 each year as his feast day. Soon, throughout Asia Minor, whenever his feast day rolled around children would wake up and find presents for them. Their parents told them the presents were brought by St. Nicholas.

About 500 years after Nicholas died, a princess from Greece named Theophano married a German King named Otto. Theophano told King Otto all about St. Nicholas, and before long everyone in Germany and Holland and other parts of Europe children were waking up on St. Nicholas day to find presents for them, which were reported to be the gifts of St. Nicholas himself.

About 300 years ago, some of these children came with their parents to America. Sure enough, on Dec. 6, presents were waiting for them. Their parents knew St. Nicholas could find America as well as Europe.

About this time other little boys came to America, who were not Catholic. They did not know about St. Nicholas, but St. Nicholas knew about them. They could not even pronounce his name. But even though they called him Santa Claus — which, oddly, means "Miss St. Claus" — instead of St. Nicholas, they got presents. The presents began to arrive later in many families on Christmas Day instead of on St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6.

How does St. Nicholas travel so fast? Being a saint in heaven, St. Nicholas isn't troubled by time or space when he moves from place to place. But children have been told that St. Nicholas when he comes to earth, uses animals to pull him along.

In Europe, he usually traveled by horse, parents would tell their children. In America, a poet named Clement C. Moore, believed he traveled by reindeer. Mr. Moore even gave the names of the eight reindeer — Prancer, Donner, Blitzen and all the rest.

St. Nicholas is usually shown wearing bishops' robes, because he was a bishop. When you see department store Santas wearing red suits that don't look very much like bishops' robes, just remember that a lot of people in America don't really know very much about St. Nicholas.

But St. Nicholas is not a fairy tale, even though we don't know very much about him because he lived so long ago. He learned early in life that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and so he gave his whole soul to Christ.

And he proved that this is truly the best choice. For today he is in heaven, and we who are still on earth, call him Saint Nicholas.

Strange But True

FLYING SAUCERS 650 YEARS AGO!
DOCUMENTS OF SPANISH ABOBEY ENGLAND, DATED 1300, RECORD THAT A ROUND, FLAT SILVER OBJECT LIKE A DISC WAS FOUND OVER THE MONASTERY, EXCITING "MAXIMUM TERROR" AMONG THE MONKS.
Brother Francis, COBBLER of the TRAPPIST MONASTERY, SPENCER, MASS., was a former European wrestler.
St. Nicholas on the Bank, Murm on the Oka, Russia, is now a modern electric chicken hatchery turning out 50,000 chickens a week.
WORLD'S ONLY MONUMENT TO CHEESE
ERECTED AT VIMOUTIERS, NORMANDY TO MARIE HUREL, WHO FIRST MARKETED CAMBEREDY CHEESE IN 1793 FROM A RECIPE SHE HAD FROM AN OLD PRIEST WHOM SHE HELTERED DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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