

# Single Women -- Do They Have A Special Vocation From God?

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S.J.

I am a teacher, unmarried, and probably will remain so. Every year our teenage girls at school listen to retreat conferences on the beauty and dignity of marriage and the religious life; but the single state as a vocation and a possibility that some may have to face or endure is never mentioned. Isn't there some theology of "the single life without vows," which would make it appear less like dull prose? How do we fulfill our role in the Mystical Body?



does this is not so clearly defined.

AS I SEE IT, Florence, the first requisite for success in your way of life is the full acceptance of what it personally and socially implies. In practice, this means that you will reject the "escapes" sometimes used by others. Don't try to console yourself by pointing out that some married couples are miserable and unhappy in their vocation.

There's no reason to feel insecure and to retreat from life as if you had "missed the boat."

Don't keep insisting how much freer and happier you are because you never married. Remember, also, that you remain a social being, and since society tends to restrict your associations with men, cultivate and maintain close ties with other girls, your married friends, and the members of your own family.

Avoid the danger of self-centeredness by deepening your understanding of the Mystical Body.

To serve Christ in His members, by example and cooperation at work, by the numberless opportunities for sympathy, kindness, and love available in daily contacts with others, by engaging in some of the varied forms of Catholic Action, by rendering witness to Christ through your attitudes and efforts in your career—all these are at hand provided you see them.

THESE GENERAL directives merely spell out the requisites for all balanced Christian living. More specifically, regard your vocation as a special invitation to sanctity.

As St. Paul reminds us, you are freed from many of the consuming concerns of your married sisters and consequently can give yourself more fully to God. Above all, deepen your Christian viewpoint on life.

We all tend to look for happiness from without, but true happiness flows outward from within.

You have raised a long neglected question, Florence.

The single woman is a minority in our much-married society so most sermons, retreats, and confessions tend to overlook her special needs.

Your letter shows that you recognize the basic dimensions of the problem: Society is geared to the family, and most adult social relationships proceed on the basis of couples.

THE SINGLE WOMAN is consequently under the dual necessity of developing and enriching her personality in some career other than marriage, and she must find legitimate substitute means for the expression of affection and intimate emotional response.

These "compensations" for family life must be significant and enduring enough to satisfy her needs throughout her entire life cycle. Although modern society provides extensive occupational opportunities for the single woman, it offers few substitutes for family life outside of religious communities.

Well, Florence, I see you understand the social significance of singleness.

YOUR PROBLEM is: how does your life fit into the divine plan?

If God created men and women as complementary helpmates and partners, how do the unmarried achieve fulfillment?

Christianity answers that we must keep in mind two aspects

of woman's vocation: first, her essential, primary vocation as a human person, requiring growth and development in knowledge, love, and service of God for its fulfillment; second, her complementary, specifically feminine vocation as a partner to man, implying marriage for total fulfillment.

The unmarried woman, whether in a religious community or in the world, achieves the primary purpose of her vocation in life, though she bypasses the complete fulfillment of its specifically feminine aspect of motherhood.

Failure to realize her capacity for motherhood would constitute a serious loss only if this were woman's primary purpose in life, or if it remained a mere negation, implying no fuller development of her other human capacities.

Thus, although the dedicated religious bypasses the privilege of motherhood, she fulfills her vocation as a woman by serving God and her fellow-men more perfectly. The singleton in the world must do likewise, though the way she



## Braille-Tat-Toe New Game For Blind

Newark, N.J. — (NC) — Father James McFarland, Essex County director for the blind in the Newark archdiocese, plays the "Braille" tic-tac-toe set he designed for the blind, with Ben Costa of Newark. The work is part of the program of the Mt. Carmel Guild of the Newark Archdiocese for the Blind.

## Protestant Lawyer Heads Bingo Board

Albany, N. Y. — (RNS) — The vice president of the Protestant Lawyers Guild of Brooklyn has been named the state's first supervisor of bingo.

Gov. Averill Hartman announced the selection of Richards Wesley Hannah, a former Domestic Relations Court Justice, as chairman of the new State Lottery Control Commission.

THE COMMISSION was created to supervise the legalized bingo made possible by a Constitutional amendment approved by voters last fall. The amendment legalized bingo games operated by religious, charitable, fraternal and similar non-profit organizations.

Protestant groups, led by the

## Oberammergau Plans For Passion Play

Oberammergau, Germany — (RNS) — Initial preparations for the 1960 performances of Oberammergau's famous Passion Play were started here after the local council voted to earmark \$800,000 for the purpose.

The money will largely be used to finance the building of new streets and accommodations for the thousands of visitors.

Held every ten years with only a few interruptions, the Passion Play originated over 300 years ago. The last performances in 1950 were hailed by the committee in charge as the most successful in history.

The Passion Play originated in a vow made by the villagers in 1633 when a plague devastated the land.

## Cardinal Spellman 'Stamp Champion'

New York — (NC) — An eminent philatelist has acclaimed Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, as the outstanding champion of modern stamp collectors.

Ernest A. Kehr, stamp news editor of the New York Herald Tribune and renowned as a philatelist, said that when President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the White House and his interest in stamps put philately on the front pages, the era of "philatelic promotion" began.

BUT IT REMAINED for Cardinal Spellman "to really do things that not only encourage 'lone wolf collectors' to come out of their shells, but to stimulate countless thousands of other persons all over the world to turn to stamp collecting," Mr. Kehr stated.

"Without fear of contradiction," Mr. Kehr states "that there isn't a single individual, living or dead, who ever did half so much as did Francis Cardinal Spellman in making philatelic converts from here to Manila, New Zealand or New Delhi."

Mr. Kehr expressed his views in an article written for Linn's Weekly Stamp News. He said it is "almost incredible" that stamp collectors are "so singularly honored" to number the busy churchman in their ranks and as an honorary life member of COROS, philatelist society.

HE SAID THAT while Cardinal Spellman is thankful for what philately has done for him, "it is much truer that it was he who did so very much for our avocation." Mr. Kehr said that the Cardinal sent his prized collection "to any and every stamp exhibition where it might be well-comped by exhibition committees."

Mr. Kehr recalled when Regis College for women in Weston, Mass., conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph, opened a new library building two years ago, Cardinal Spellman donated his philatelic properties to the college library.

Mr. Kehr added: "The bequest didn't curtail his interest; it merely put the collection in a place where it would do the most good."

## Good Books For Children

Philadelphia — (NC) — Parents overly generous in allowing spending money to their children ought to make readers of them by "getting them off the sweet stuff and getting them on the bread of books."

This advice was given here by Msgr. John S. Kennedy.

"In many things we spend money recklessly on supposed cultural and social benefits for our children," Msgr. Kennedy said, "but we are niggardly when it comes to buying them books."

He suggested that the money children spend on trivialities should be diverted by their parents into establishing for them a home library of books.

"We become what we read," he stated. "If we read only trash, we become trash; if we read only mush, we become mush—even though there may be an impressive facade."

## American Nuns Care For Moslems

Kwachi, Pakistan — (NC) — More than four times as many non-Catholics as Catholics were admitted in 1957 to Holy Family Hospital here, operated by the Medical Mission Sisters of Philadelphia.

Statistics released by the hospital show that a total of 3,878 in-patients entered the institution during the year—an increase of 500 over 1956.

Of this number, 1,369 were Moslems, 698 were Catholics, and 311 belong to other religious faiths.



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