

My Mother Is Irish. She Is Upset Because My Boy Friend Is Italian

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I'm nineteen and have been going with Joe for about two months. Mother is making my life very unhappy. She leaves the room when he comes and insists she'll never speak to me again if I ever marry him. You see Joe is Italian and I'm Irish, and that's what upsets mother most. Father likes him and I've found his parents to be wonderful, friendly people. Joe is beginning to mean a great deal to me, but I don't want to hurt mother. What can I do?

Your letter interests me, Rita, because it shows that national differences are still recognized and keenly felt by some people.

Most Americans tend to deny this. They feel it is undemocratic, but we can't alter facts by denying they exist. Unfortunately, differences tend to be regarded as marks of inferiority.

As the little Mexican boy in California explained when asked to define a minority, "It's the people who are considered different—and worse."

Just what national group tends to be at the bottom of the racial totem pole varies from region to region and from time to time. Whenever people of different national backgrounds start living together in the same region, a type of social prestige system usually develops, according to which some groups are ranked higher than others.

The original basis for this ranking may be wealth, education, religion, power, language, or mere numbers.

EXPERIENCE ALSO shows that the ranking persists long after its basis in fact ceases to exist.

In other words, a group image, a national stereotype, tends to be created in people's minds: All Germans, or Poles, or Italians, or Irish, etc., are ambitious, or lazy, or slow, or intelligent, etc.

Strangely enough, even when they know several members of a national group who clearly contradict the false image, most people tend to regard them as exceptions to the rule and never question the soundness of their opinion concern-



ing the national group in general.

This tendency of preconceived images or stereotypes to persist unchallenged in our minds is also at the root of most racial prejudice. When we meet a member of another race, we tend to interpret his words and actions in terms of our national image, rather than to check the validity of this image against our new experience.

Well, Rita, I'm not going to read you a lesson on group prejudices, but I think it will help you deal with your problem if you understand something of its origin. On the other hand, we must not ignore the facts.

National differences do exist, and some of them persist for generations even in our conformist society. Particularly in family matters, national traits concerning food, the raising of children, the influence and closeness of relatives, and so forth, are frequently retained and, in many cases, adopted by outsiders.

NOW THE FIRST pertinent question in your case, Rita, is whether the possible existence of national differences, either your own or Joe's, will hinder success in marriage.

You can answer this by finding out whether you agree on the nature and purpose of marriage, the statuses and roles of husband and wife in the fam-

ily, and so on. If you want success in marriage, you will have to answer this question satisfactorily, no matter whom you marry, even, as you say, an Irish guy" of your mother's own choosing.

WHAT ABOUT the loss of social prestige if you marry Joe? This seems to bother your mother. I think you will find that the present generation of young Americans pays little attention to this as long as you are successful.

Your mother, evidently was raised in a different climate of opinion and finds it difficult to change.

YOU ASK, Rita, what can I do to avoid hurting Mother? Well, in the first place, your father is on your side. Although most men are no match for their wives in such matters, he can probably help you modify her opinion. At the same time, you have the assurance that he likes Joe, so you may feel greater confidence in your own attitude.

Finally, this is your marriage. You don't want to hurt your mother, but her attitude is unreasonable and consequently cannot serve as a guide.

If you cannot change her attitude at present, you should ignore it prudently and respectfully. Sooner or later, every maturing person must learn to stand up for what he thinks is right, even though those who are dear to him feel otherwise. This occurs frequently in choosing a religious vocation; it may occur in choosing a marriage partner.

You and your mother may as well start learning that lesson right now.

Tallest In World



The statue of the Sacred Heart overlooking the city of Guayaquil, Ecuador, will tower 181 feet in height, the tallest statue in the world. Shows here in model form, it is the work of Spanish sculptor Juan de Avelos.

Judge Upholds Released-Time

Spokane, Wash. (NC)—A Superior Court Judge has upheld the local released-time education program, saying it is "not only a worthy, but necessary adjunct to our educational system."

Judge Raymond F. Kelley ruled that the program did not violate Federal or state constitutional prohibitions against using public funds for sectarian purposes.

BISHOP BERNARD J. Topel of Spokane hailed the decision as one which "brings great joy to all true Christians" and which "rests on the true concept of our American heritage, namely that we are a Christian nation."

In reference to the plaintiff's announcement that the ruling will be appealed to the state high court, Bishop Topel said: "May the Supreme Court be similarly guided in its decision."

The suit against the program charged it was unconstitutional and contended that it gave no "academic advantages" to pupils, but operated solely for the benefit of the sponsoring church groups.

JUDGE KELLY SAID: "Neither this court nor any other should lend its power to terminate the good that has been done during the last 20 years and is still being done by those responsible for the 'released time' program."

"Undoubtedly," he continued, "for many children enrolled in the program, it is their only opportunity to learn religious and moral principles. To deprive them of it might in effect be banishing from their minds all

original suit against the program. They were later joined in their opposition by the local branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, the International Religious Liberty Association and a Seventh-Day Adventist group.

A rare look at THE VATICAN

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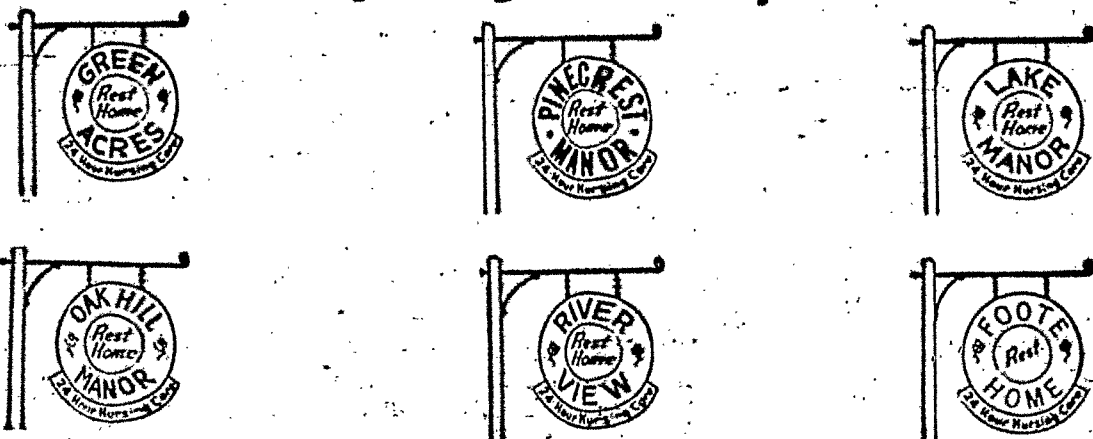
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5. Are the bath facilities adequate? Are there non-slip materials on bathroom floors and stairways, handrails beside tubs and showers?
6. Is there an automatic fire alarm, extinguishers?
7. Are patients neatly dressed? What kind of expression do you see on their faces? Do they participate in any activities? How do they spend an average day? Are the ambulatory patients separated from the bed-ridden?
8. How do the menus compare with what your parent has been eating? What's the kitchen like? Is tray service available for bed patients?
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