

Orphans At The Communion Rail

One ceremony every year in every Catholic church which is sure to touch the hardest of hearts is the annual First Communion ritual.

As the line of white-clad, spic-and-span children file down the aisle singing the traditional hymn, "O Lord, I am not worthy," there is seldom a dry eye in the congregation.

Fond parents, Godparents, aunts, uncles, grandpar-ents, and other assorted relatives and friends will later deluge the child with gifts and affection and assure the youngster, "This is the happiest day of your life."

How unfortunately true that statement so often is!

The joy of First Communion day so quickly turns to amazement and disillusionment in the hearts of too many children. Here on one Sunday, they are surrounded with adults of all ages. But what about next Sunday? Especially at Communion time?

Look at the Communion-rail yourself and you will see the tragic answer.

There they kneel, the still innocent youngsters of a week ago, but they kneel alone. If they glance back to the pews they see none of last week's sham — the tears and pious smiles of emotional adults, this week they see instead the yawn, the boredom, the indifference of parents who spoke so prophetically a week before, "This is the happiest day of your life."

Now the youngsters realize they must walk alone when they walk to the Lord who said, "Let the little children come to Me."

"Why do children have to be orphans at the Communion rail?" sadly asked one child a month after First Communion.

Isn't it time we adult Catholics woke up to the fact that the hundreds and thousands of parochial school children watch us at Mass?

Sermons and catechism lessons are words, but people are real and if adults aren't interested in receiving our Lord in the Eucharist then how can we expect the youngsters will do what we refuse to do?

The theology of frequent Communion is well known. It is a topic discussed in every parish pulpit every year. This twentieth century is witness to the fact that the Catholic Church has thrown its mighty spiritual efforts towards the goal of having loyal Catholics receive Holy Communion devoutly and even daily. Our present Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, swept away any last obstacle by revising centuries old fasting laws so all Catholics can now receive the Sacrament at least every Sunday.

If Catholics don't respond then something is wrong with their faith.

FORTUNATELY, MORE AND MORE are awakening to the duty and the privilege of frequent Communion. Their example strengthens their own spiritual life and serves as a spur to encourage especially the children to retain the faith and fervor of First Communion day.

Why don't you personally look at your parish Communion rail this Sunday and ask yourself if any child there is wondering, "Why do children have to be orphans at the Communion rail?"

SERMONETTE

By REV. RICHARD MADDEN, O.D.C.
"Where There Is Sadness—Joy"

Every minute of every day somebody is turning up his toes, taking his last breath, and dying. And although we give him the best possible funeral, say the nicest things about him at his wake, and drive him to his grave in the most elegant Cadillac he ever rode in somebody somewhere is plunged into that deep, dark, miserable pit of despondency. Everyone, however, worthless or shillless, leaves sorrow behind him. Someone loved him; someone wept at his passing.

Nature does out to us tainted children of Eve a fair share, indeed, of the makings of sadness—death, injury, separation, loss, all of it creating a dull, empty thud in the human heart.

Nature must, of necessity, engender sadness. But why must we? Why must we create our own?

To spread a little joy as we make our one pass through life is not only a boon to ourselves but a priceless contribution to society. It takes more facial muscles to frown than it takes to smile. Many more. And while we are all ready to condemn and to curse the rain that ruins our picnic, it is the rare bird indeed who can say, "Aye, but, isn't it a soft, beautiful rain?"

What is wrong, for instance, with telling a woman who stands beside me at the bus stop that her hat is becoming. She might take me for a masquer, it is true; but she will feel better, step lighter, walk straighter. She will like it. She will be a wee bit happier. And after an hour in the chair when my dentist has turned me every way but loose, what is wrong with complimenting him on his skill. He must get so fed up looking down mouths that have nothing good to say about it.

A kind word or some honest praise, given when least expected, can do much to lift heavy burdens from bent backs; and the cost is negligible. Wise was the man who said, "A rose to the living is better than sumptuous wreaths to the dead."

Count Me Out

"So you have two sets of twins in your family," a new neighbor said to a little boy. "What a nice family. Are you one of the twins?"

Fallout

"How many successful jumps do you think a paratrooper has to make before he makes the grade?" Billy was asked.

"No," snorted the boy. "I'm just a spare."

Billy thought for a moment and then replied, "All of them."

THE CATHOLIC **Courier Journal** OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

Vol. 69 No. 30 Friday April 25, 1958
MOST REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., President
Published every Friday by the Rochester Catholic Press Association.
MAIN OFFICE: 25 So. St. Baker 5-4211—Rochester 6, N. Y.
ALBANY OFFICE: 100 Broadway, Albany 5-2410
SILVER SPRING OFFICE: 1000 E. Main, Silver Spring 4-1111
Entered as second class matter in the Post Office at Rochester, N. Y. at special rate of \$1.00 per year under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.
Mails on 10c. 2 year subscription in U. S., \$2.00
Canada \$5.00 Foreign Countries, \$6.50

JOSEPH BREIG

The Worst Is Over

From time to time in the past couple of years, I have been criticized for what some readers have considered my Pollyanna optimism.

I have never quarrelled with these people. My only reply has been to remind them, mildly, that I was viewing with alarm 30 years ago when they were pointing with pride and predicting a bright future for the world.

I was looked upon as a pessimist then. The difference in judgments has been due to a difference in facts understood and faced.

Thirty years ago, capitalism seemed hellbent upon its own ruination, and due to all appeals for reform; while almost nobody realized the menace, the black wickedness, the insane fanaticism of the communist conspiracy against all nations.

Somehow to my surprise, I have lived to see capitalism revolutionized—and that perceptibly—while communism's cruelty and falsity have torn the blinders from the eyes of everyone but fools and scoundrels.

I have seen nations uniting for defense, truth prevailing over abominable lies; the United Nations surviving where the League of Nations collapsed. And I have felt the wind of a new spirit of social justice, of concern for fellowmen, and of humility-blowing across the world.

I HAVE SEEN a gigantic turning toward God, including millions obeying the directions of Our Lady of Fatima. I have watched while an unknown priest, Father Patrick Peyton, became world-renowned by preaching family prayer to an astoundingly receptive mankind.

For those and other reasons, I have concluded—and have said publicly—that the worst is over, and that the strange, wonderful, touching and exasperating family of the human race was about to find itself making a breakthrough into a noble new age.

I have been rather alone in my opinion—as I was alone in the opposite judgment 30 years ago. But now I find myself, astonishingly, in the best company on earth—that of Pope Pius XII.

I AM AWARE that the Holy Father would like it to be little mentioned that Christ appeared to him in his apparently fatal illness a few years ago, and gave him to understand that God willed that he continue to lead the Church for some time to come. But I think it wise to remember that a fact when weighing the force of what Pius XII concludes about the future.

He voiced his judgment a few weeks ago in a supremely confident—indeed a soaringly cheerful—address to 100,000 members of Italian Catholic Action youth in St. Peter Square.

THE POPE'S happy outlook, in other words, was due to his considered belief that the positive factors—enormously outweigh the negative in our time.

What did he say? He said that "all the world is reawakening," and mankind "stands on the threshold of a new springtime in history."

Humanity, said Pope Pius, is emerging from its "dark winter" of errors, lies, hatreds, dishonesty, broken families, and devastated and disunited nations.

"Also in the life and activity of the spirit, there are evident signs of a reawakening. . . . We also note evident signs of reawakening in social life."

"For the first time, men are aware not only of their increasing interdependence, but also of their marvelous unity. That means that humanity will be, come always more ready to feel itself a part of the Mystical Body of Christ."

In this "springtime of the world," the Holy Father said, there will yet be some "winds and storms." But "there is passing through the world a voice of reaction against evil."

So it has seemed to me also.



Breig



Reliquary in Drogheda, Ireland, St. Peter's Church contains incorrupt head of Ireland's great martyr Blessed Oliver Plunkett, executed in London in 1681.

Tyburn, Hill Of Martyrs

Tyburn hill on the outskirts of medieval London was the scene of 108 martyrdoms between the years 1533 to 1681. Last of the martyrs was Blessed Oliver Plunkett, archbishop and primate of Ireland.

Earlier martyrs included St. Thomas More, the Lord Chancellor of England, St. John Fisher, Cardinal Bishop of Rochester, and 107 additional victims of English royal edicts branding the Catholic faith as treason to the realm.

Martyrs were English, Irish, Welsh and Scots.

A Fella's Lament

By MARGENE BEETS
Geo, but it's tough growin' up, for a kid,
Living with grown-ups who want to get rid
Of a guy's ball and mitt, his dog, 'n his toys,
'N the things in his pockets a fella enjoys.
Ya gotta be clean, and wash your hands
When they aren't even dirty!
Obey commands
All the day long, 'n be kind
To others, even girls! I've a mind
To run off and live like Huck Finn,
Tomorrow, well maybe next week, I'll begin.



(NCWC News Service)

Attorney Says:

'Let The Courts Know What You Think About Smut'

'Top Prices' For Obscenity

high standard to be contravened by the kind of material found in these magazines."

He suggests that citizens disturbed over the spreading of obscene materials should "tell your local courts what your manners and morals are. If the judges have to measure seized publications against the standards of the community, they have to know what those standards are."

Publishers and distributors who deal in such materials are worse than the ancient pagans who poisoned the well of their enemies, according to the Cincinnati attorney.

"The pagans of antiquity at least recognized the poisoning of the wells as one of the most horrible of all crimes," he says. "What's the difference between that crime and the crime of the fifth merchants who poison the minds and hearts and souls of our children?"

"Perversion" the attorney charges, "is the basic message of many of these magazines." Instances of sexual depravity are presented as "average and natural," he says, with the result that young readers are led to regard such actions as normal.

Psychiatrists have judged some of these publications capable of corrupting morals even of normal adults, he adds.

"This is without a doubt one of the major social and moral problems of our time," according to Mr. Keating, who claims that "there is enough pornography marketed today to saturate our communities."

He points out that magazines which contain such material are cleverly written and skillfully illustrated, and that they "pay top prices to contributors."

Mr. Keating notes that one such popular magazine, begun a few years ago with capital of \$11,000, last year reported a net profit of three-quarters of a million dollars.

Catholic Lawyer Leads Fight On Filth Merchants Who Poison Souls of Children

Citizens who wish to do something about the growing trade in pornographic and obscene publications should make the courts aware of their objections to such material.

That is the advice of Charles H. Keating, Jr., Cincinnati attorney and chairman of his city's Citizens for Decent Literature committee.

The young Catholic attorney points out that the U.S. Supreme Court, in its Roth decision last year, spelled out a test for obscenity.

"The court has made it clear," he says, "that material is obscene if it appeals to prurient interests—if it is low, if it tends to incite lustful desires. The test is whether the material contravenes the manners and morals of the community, of the people in the community, on the average."

Consequently, Mr. Keating holds, "communities must prove to their judiciary systems that their manners and morals are of a sufficiently

Blessed Oliver Plunkett Last of Tyburn's Martyrs

By PAUL D. VINCENT

Drogheda, Ireland — (NC) — Among the most important of this town's many historic sites is St. Peter's church. It contains the glass reliquary in which is preserved the incorrupt head of Ireland's great martyr, Blessed Oliver Plunkett.

The hair of Blessed Oliver's head is gone and the skin is constricted, but otherwise the head is pretty much as it was on the day in 1681 that he was hanged, disembowled and beheaded at Tyburn in London.

His teeth show through a faint smile. Still apparent are the burns on the left side of his face and upper lip, suffered before the head was rescued from the fire into which it had been flung after being severed.

Yes, this is the head of the Archbishop of Armagh, the last of the Tyburn martyrs, who in the words of the late Patrick Francis Cardinal Moran, was "the brightest name in the Irish Church throughout the whole period of persecution."

Oliver Plunkett was born in Lougherew, County Meath, on November 1, 1625. He was the son of John Plunkett, Baron of Lougherew, who belonged to one of the wealthiest and most influential of Ireland's Anglo-Norman families.

From his seventh to his sixteenth year Oliver lived with Patrick Plunkett, abbot of St. Mary's, Dublin, and to him the youth's education and spiritual formation were entrusted. He elected to study for the priesthood, was assigned to Rome, and in March, 1651, received tonsure and minor orders in the Basilica of St. John Lateran. He was ordained to the priesthood three years later, whereupon he was appointed by the Irish bishops as their Roman agent.

The assignment to work in Rome was due in large measure to the fact that any hopes of returning to Ireland were dimmed, at least temporarily, by the overthrowing of Ireland by the English dictator, Cromwell, who had overthrown the monarchy and was then in the most powerful and brutal stage of his career.

For twelve years Oliver Plunkett served as a professor in the University of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome. He also held the office of confessor in the Congregation of the Index, and engaged in many charitable activities in the hospitals and orphanages there.

During these years, he took a particular interest in the Irish students who came to Rome to study for the priesthood, helping several of them generously from his own slender resources.

In March of 1669, after Primate Edmund O'Reilly had died while an exile in France and the most important see in Ireland was vacant, Oliver was appointed Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland by Pope Clement IX.

For reasons of security, his consecration as archbishop took place in Ghent, Belgium.

To get from Belgium to his see in Ireland, the man marked for martyrdom was required to travel through England, a dangerous task which he accomplished in the disguise of a military captain.

He arrived safely and triumphantly in Dublin, and subsequently took residence in Ardpatrick, County Louth, on a small property held by his brother, Edward, long since driven out of Lougherew by the Cromwellians.

As biographers have pointed out, Oliver Plunkett had no political affiliations, but maintained a policy which took account of the situation in all its bearings: it was to placate the English masters, who again had a king, he was neither pro-Irish, nor pro-English, he was simply pro-Catholic.

The results proved the wisdom of his policy, for he was the only bishop in Ireland who was enabled to labor continuously and successfully for the next few years—into those years, in youth and magnitude, were compressed several lifetimes.

Archbishop Plunkett set out from Ardpatrick every second year on a visitation of his diocese. He conducted two diocesan synods, and in one six-week period, he confirmed more than 10,000 persons throughout the diocese.

Writing to Rome in December, 1673, he was able to announce that during the past four years, he had confirmed "no fewer than 48,653 people."

In 1672, the clouds had gathered and an outbreak of persecution seemed imminent. The next British Parliament confirmed these fears and Charles II was forced to publish an edict commanding all bishops and religious order priests to leave Ireland. Blessed Oliver did not abandon his flock, however, but went into hiding and carried out his duties as best he could.

Blessed Oliver was arrested and taken to Dundalk for trial. Perjured informers were on hand to testify against him, but fearful that no Irish jury would credit their evidence, the English had the trial transferred to London, where there would be no such problem.

In London, Blessed Oliver was convicted of rebellious and traitorous action and of plotting with the French and Spanish against the English. But there was no secret that his chief "crime" was being a Catholic bishop. Sentence of death was pronounced as a matter of course.

On Friday, July 11, 1681, Oliver Plunkett was led to Tyburn, and before a big crowd was put to death. Official letters of the day record that "the displayed such a serenity of countenance, such a tranquillity of mind and elevation of soul that he seemed rather a spouse insinuating to the nuptial feast, than a culprit led forth to the scaffold."

His relics were rescued by friends and in time the head came to be enshrined here.

Oliver Plunkett's name appears today on the list of the 264 heroic Servants of God who shed their blood for the Faith in England during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Likewise, he had the honor of being the last of the heroes of the Church martyred at Tyburn.

July 11, 1861 — the day he died was a day of glory for Oliver Plunkett. He had another day of glory on March 17, 1918, when a declaration of martyrdom was solemnly made in Rome in the presence of Pope Benedict XV, and still another on May 23, 1920, when the decree of beatification was promulgated at the Vatican. . . . Now the Irish await Oliver Plunkett's final and greatest day of glory, his canonization.



ARCHBISHOP PLUNKETT 17th century martyr

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Dr. Herrell De Graff, food economist of Cornell University, adds his optimism when he points out that "we have the same amount of cropland as 50 years ago and 60,000,000 more people, yet we eat better today because food output per acre is up 70 per cent."

The right fools and know how are a major part of the answer: farmers in this country produce 10 to 20 times more than those in the Far East, the Near East, or Latin America.

Japan for all its progress in production per man hour still produces only one-sixth of what a worker here in our country will produce in the same time. India's rice yield is only one-third that of Japan.

The problem obviously is, not so much the lack of food power but of brain power, capital and international cooperation. Birth control is not the answer. It is an "easy" answer but not the real answer.

The Holy Father in his Papal Plan for population problems gives this as one of his major recommendations: "make better use of the earth's natural resources."

Research, then, in agriculture is certainly as important as research in military defense. Adress Spielman, director of the Connecticut Experiment Station, says convincingly, "What man can imagine, he can do."

Making Marriage Click

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

It is predicted that schools in the U.S.A. will have to care for 64,000,000 students in 1975 instead of the 41,000,000 that we now have. But already one weary school teacher confessed that her classroom was so crowded that she sent her morning attendance report to the principal in one short sentence: "Help, they're all here!"

That's classrooms, but what about food? This morning in the U.S.A. 8,000 more mouths demand to be fed than yesterday morning, and in the next 20 years we will need 50 per cent more food than today.

At the same time, each day the U.S.A. is losing 4,000 acres of irreplaceable food producing soil—eroded into uselessness, or buried beneath broad super highways, sprawling factories and mushrooming suburbs.

Some specialists are predicting that within 60 years it will be almost a continuous city from Boston, Massachusetts to Wheeling, West Virginia.

This looks like population explosion, doesn't it? Could Malthus have been correct 150 years ago when he said that there was a limit to the number of people the earth could support and that we should start limiting births before the earth becomes so crowded?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that if we are to eat properly by 1975, our farmers must produce 62 per cent more eggs, 61 per cent more broilers, 58 per cent more hogs, 54 per cent more truck crops, 50 per cent more cattle, 47 per cent more corn, 37 per cent more milk, 28 per cent more sheep, 23 per cent more wheat.

Dr. Firman Bear, distinguished soil scientist from Rutgers University, says defiantly, "I have no fears about our capacity to feed our population."

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