

Pastor Has 100 Hands Mary Legion Arranges Neighborhood Meetings

BY JIM SHEA

Loveland, Ohio—(NC)—A pastor with 500 families in his parish would need more than two hands and more than 24 hours in a day to visit all of them each year and still get the rest of his parish work done.

Father Joseph V. Urbain of St. Columban's parish here, has no more hands than anybody else, but he has a hundred hands or more—most of them belonging to parish unit "captains" and to members of the Legion of Mary. As a result he is managing an annual visit to all the members of the parish.

He doesn't see them individually, however, but in groups of 10 to 15 families at a time. The meetings are arranged by the captain or co-captain of the parish unit, and there is time for social conversation and coffee and cake as well as a good two hours of face-to-face mutual discussion of parish life and parish problems.

When he arrives at the home of the host couple, Father Urbain first distributes a mimeographed "program." On one sheet are printed the topics about which he wants to talk to his parishioners; on another sheet there is a picture of the financial structure of the parish.

After greetings and introductions (including the inevitable remark by one neighbor to another: "I didn't know you were a Catholic!") Father Urbain begins the discussion.

AMONG THE TOPICS covered are family prayer and family Mass and Communion, reaction to the parish dialogue Mass, education and the parish school and the nature and purpose of the parish societies.

Father Urbain makes it a point to avoid turning the sessions into monologues. Instead, he encourages his parishioners to offer suggestions and discuss the pros and cons of every topic covered.

Following refreshments—usually prepared cooperatively by the women in the unit—the pastor begins a discussion of the financial structure of the parish.

"I don't discuss how much any person should give," he explains. "I just give them an up-to-the-minute report of what we're doing, what the expenses of the school are, how their money is spent."

To date, Father Urbain has visited nearly half of the 40 units in this fashion. Spade work for the scheme was done by the Legion of Mary, whose members took a census of the parish and arranged the census cards according to streets. Then the pastor divided them up into units and appointed responsible captains and co-captains for each unit.

These leaders do more than sponsor unit meetings for the pastor's visitation. They report new families that move into their area, distribute collection envelopes each year, pass the word along when a member of the parish dies, and perform other chores when necessary.

Each Saturday, for example, one captain and the men in his unit—or as many of them as are available—report to the pastor for work on the parish buildings and grounds.



Africa Shrine In Pennsylvania

Franklin, Penn.—(NC)—It's anniversary year for the White Fathers, international Catholic missionary society devoted exclusively to Africa. To be commemorated are the 90th anniversary of their founding, the tenth anniversary of the U. S. province and the first of the Arabic style national Shrine of Our Lady of Africa, at Franklin, Pa. Pictured at the shrine is the U. S. Provincial, Father J. Alfred Richard. The White Fathers' distinctive habit is patterned after the attire of the North African—a white cassock, flowing white cape and a fez.

Early Christian Tomb Found In Belgrade Church

Belgrade—(RNS)—A fourth-century Roman sarcophagus, said to be the oldest and most valuable ever found in Yugoslavia, was discovered under the altar of the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Split, Dalmatia.

THE SARCOPHAGUS is fashioned of marble and includes an inner chamber made from precious wood. Yugoslav archaeologists claimed it is older and more valuable than similar relics in the Paris Louvre or in Rome. The surface of the marble sarcophagus is inscribed with early Christian motifs showing obvious pagan influences.

Nuclear Tests Said Morally 'Allowable'

United Nations—(RNS)—If continued nuclear tests are necessary for the preservation of the United States, they would be "morally allowable, since this is a good of the greatest importance," a prominent Jesuit scientist told Religious News Service in an interview here.

He was Father Joseph F. Mulligan, president of the American Association of Jesuit Scientists, and head of the physics department of Fordham University, New York.

THE PRIEST offered the statement when asked to comment on the atomic radiation report recently made public by the United Nations Scientific Committee composed of leading scientists of 15 nations. During the interview he noted outstanding contributions by Catholics in the field of nuclear research. He also lauded free world experts for having triumphed over Communist efforts to convert the U.N. report into a vehicle of Soviet propaganda.

"When we turn our attention to the problem of the morality of continuing nuclear tests, which is closely allied with the broader study of atomic radiation effects," he said, "you have the yardstick of Christian ethics to steer by."

"The solution to the moral problem involved here is based on the principle of double effect: Many human acts have both a good and a bad effect with equal immediacy. If the good effect is the one directly intended and the evil effect is only indirectly permitted, and if there is adequate proportion between the good to be accomplished and the evil which is permitted but not intended, then the act is morally permissible."

Father Mulligan said there are many Americans of great integrity who believe that nuclear tests are necessary for the preservation of their country.

Our Boy And His Girl Threaten To Marry Without Our Consent

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S.J.
Assistant Professor of Sociology at St. Louis University

Do the parents of an 18 year old boy have the right to withhold their consent to his marriage in an effort to try and prevent his marrying at this time? Our boy will soon be nineteen and has two years to go serving in the Marine Corps. His girl is about the same age. They have stirred our every argument and now threaten to marry without our consent. Her parents finally gave their consent, but I don't feel right about it. What can I do?



I think you've answered your first question yourself, Amy.

You have the right, but what good will it do to refuse consent if they intend to get married anyway?

Under the circumstances, I think the most prudent approach is to grant your consent provided they show they have given serious thought to the following problems.

Where are they going to set up housekeeping? Is she going to live with her folks during the next two years? Move about from place to place with him, living either on the base or off of it as the conditions may require? If he is sent out of the country for a time, will she follow him or remain here?

Will the presence of a baby affect their plans concerning living arrangements?

They are a young couple. It is highly likely that the bride will become pregnant within the next two years provided they do not employ irrational contraceptive measures. Are they realistically facing the consequences of possible future pregnancies in terms of travel, expense, housing, separation, and so forth?

MANY COUPLES in such circumstances enter marriage with the intention that the bride will be employed while the husband is in the service. This doesn't indicate very real-

istic thinking on the part of young couples who are bound to observe the moral law pertaining to marital relations.

Have they considered the problems involved in securing early marriage adjustment under the changing, unsettled conditions of military service?

ALL MARRIAGES start out as relatively fragile, shallow associations, no matter how great the emotional display may appear. Through shared experience, deeper understanding, and mutual adaptation the couple gradually grow together and establish the firm bonds of an unbreakable union. When the husband is in military service, it is extremely difficult to provide the conditions which foster the growth of such unity.

I think you should put these questions to the young couple

honestly and without emotion. Marriage is a life vocation based on a holy, sacramental contract. In all fairness to themselves, they should enter it under conditions best calculated to make it a success.

Finally, why are they in such a hurry to get married? Obviously, to enjoy marital partnership and companionship.

More basic, though frequently unrecognized in such cases, is the difficulty of observing premarital chastity under the circumstances.

In this connection, Amy, you should point out to them that the observance of marital chastity also demands a great deal of restraint and self-control from Christian spouses. Many young couples fail to recognize this and hurry into marriage as an answer to all their problems.



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