Drivers, Not Statues

Culprits In Cars

Police in the nation's capital this week banned medals and statues dangling from automobile rear-view mirrors or religious stickers on car windows.

We certainly do not quarrel with the Washington police goal for greater safety but we do question the big stick campaign against little statues.

The police, we are sure, are aware of statistics which indicate that alcohol causes far more highway tragedies than do a few little religious medals. But the alcohol-loaded drivers continue to weave the roads of America as both legislators and law enforcement agencies witness the increasing havoc apparently helpless to halt it.

Equally as tragic are the accidents involving joy-riding youngsters who use highways for play-grounds and race tracks. Injured and dead teenagers are graphic evidence that any big stick action by the police could be more effectively applied elsewhere than against plastic statues.

We whole heartedly agree that Catholics should locate their religious statues, medals or stickers in places where vision will not be obstructed but we hope that police in New York state will continue their safety campaign drives against the real culprits in cars—the drivers, rather than against the little statues.

Overweight?

Practical Remedy

Overweight Americans are being cheated at a rate of $[illegible] a year by manufacturers of candy, drugs, and reducing machines who tell fat people what they want to hear — that they can lose weight and still continue to eat all they want.

The candy, drugs, and reducing machines are widely advertised throughout the country and net the manufacturers a multi-million dollar profit — but the overweight Americans remain overweight.

Authentic experts state quite bluntly, "The best way to lose weight is to push yourself away from the table."

These facts came to light this week as a Congressional subcommittee investigated charges that many current advertising programs were misleading the public.

The facts certainly reveal an interesting aspect of American life. A very sizeable segment of our country's population is obviously quite anxious to shed its excessive avoirdupois, but equally quite as reluctant to do it the hard way by just plain less eating.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A SPIRITUAL parallel in this story. There are also a good number of U.S. Christians who voice their deep detestation of sin and affirm they are ready to do anything to get rid of their nasty habits—that is anything except the one true remedy which is staying away from the occasions of sin, the persons, places or things which lead to sin.

Overcoming sin, like losing weight, is not half the problem we think it is, if we only face the facts and stop deluding ourselves with fanciful but ineffective remedies.

North Pole Prayer

London —(NC)— Cmdr. William Anderson said here that the crew of the Nautilus observed a minute of silence in thanksgiving to God as the atomic - powered submarine passed under the North Pole.

Comdr. Anderson said his men were silent because he had "impressed on them that we should give thanks to Him who made the journey possible."

SERMONETTE

Charity Is Patient. I Corinthians 13, 4.

By REV. PAUL COURTNEY

The cross-word puzzle asks for "a person of extraordinary patience" — a five letter word. That would be "saint", of course. Easy. "The patience of a saint", is a familiar expression. We who blow up easily use it to express our baffled admiration for those who remain calm, unruffled, and kind in situations which would make us explode.

Sometimes we blame our temperament. "I'm just naturally excitable. I've always been highly emotional. Nerves, . . . you know."

Such explanations have a curious one-way quality. They satisfy the impatient one, but not the victim. When I suffer from another's impatience, it is a clear case of uncharitableness. Not an excess of "nerves" but a lack of love.

Another strange thing about impatience — we seem to vent it more on those we love than on strangers. Clients, customers, colleagues, can stretch our patience marvelously, but woe betide the beloved spouse or child who tries the same a few hours later in the privacy of our home. We make the rafters ring.

An outsider overhearing us might think that we are angry. Only our guardian angel and our confessor learn later it was just a "loss of patience."

Much of our impatience is the result of habit. Careful habit. We are patient with strangers because we have to be. We have learned control. But with those we love — or should love — we know we can get away with quite a lot.

If we loved them more, we could train ourselves to spare them, too, the hurt of our impatience. Saints love so much, they are patient with everyone, — even people who love them.

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JOSEPH BREIG

Cold War Will End

Often of late I have been asked why I am so very optimistic about the world's future. Let me try once more to explain.

Forty-one years ago, in 1917, three children in Portugal reported that the Virgin Mary was appearing and giving them messages for mankind.

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Their accounts never varied, no matter how often they were questioned, singly or together. And yet they were very young, and could neither read nor write.

THIRTEEN YEARS of investigation by a Church commission convinced the bishop that the Virgin had indeed appeared to the youngsters, six times in all, and had prophesied to them.

In 1942, Pope Pius XII publicly made the bishops' judgment his own by broadcasting a message to pilgrims assembled at Fatima, where the apparitions had taken place.

Before and since, miracles at the Fatima shrine, together with the immense spiritual good accruing, have given overwhelming evidence of the authenticity of the visions and messages.

Travel mentally with me back to 1917.

World War I was raging. But it was the war to end war. So everybody thought. This war would "make the world safe for democracy," in President Wilson's words.

THE CHILDREN of Fatima, aged nine, seven and six, said otherwise.

The Lady, they said, had told them that the war soon would end, but . . . *Unless mankind stopped offending God, an even more terrible conflict would soon follow.*

Note what astounding predictions issued from these little ones as they reported the warnings of the Virgin.

"Russia will spread her errors through the world," they said.

Russia? Why, Russia was prostrate, smashed by German arms. What influence could Russia have on the immediate future of the world?

America, France, England—these were the powers. So it seemed.

But the children went on quoting the Lady. Russia's errors would give rise to wars and insurrections.

Religion would be persecuted. Good men and women would be martyred.

So dreadful would be the upheavals that some nations would be destroyed.

Everything the children predicted has come true—except one thing I have not yet mentioned.

RUSSIA'S ERRORS have spread. We have had World War II, Korea, Indochina, the bloody conflicts in Spain and Greece, and all the rest.

But the children said something more.

"In the end," they quoted the Virgin Mary, "my Immaculate Heart will triumph; Russia will be converted, and an era of peace will be granted to mankind."

WE KNOW, therefore, that God is going to collapse the very foundations of the tyranny behind the iron curtain — of what the West Germans call the Empire of Satan.

That blasphemous, anti-God despotism has been built up on the terrible, passive sufferings of the Russian people. But Russia is going to return to God.

With that return, communism will fall in chaos. The iron and bamboo curtains will splinter. The cold war will end. Human dignity and freedom will rise. "An era of peace will be granted to mankind"—and God grant that mankind does not forget whence the peace came: from God.

THIS FINAL promise of the Virgin to the children was unconditional. The conversion of Russia is certain.

How Church Canonizes Saints

By JAMES C. O'NEILL

Vatican City —(NC)— It is hard to become a saint, but even harder to be declared one because of the stringent scrutiny carried on by the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

The bulk of this congregation's work centers on the investigation of the lives, virtues and miracles of persons proposed for beatification and canonization.

A SINGLE CASE can require more than 1,000 pages of documentation and 10 times as many hours of work. The cause of American-born Mother Elizabeth Seton has already filled 13 volumes, 2,677 pages, and includes 800 personal letters written by the Baltimore nun who founded the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, Md., in 1809.

At present there are more than 70 canonization causes under consideration and more than 800 possible beatifications. Another 50 causes involve groups of persons proposed for honors of the altar.

While the making of saints and blesseds commands much of the congregation's time, this is not its sole responsibility. The congregation also supervises everything in connection with the liturgy of the Mass and the ceremonies used in administering the seven sacraments in the Western Church. The Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church governs the Eastern Rites.

Into the congregation's office flow a constant stream of mail from priests and bishops seeking information about the various details governing the ceremonies of the Church.

This congregation not only watches over all the various Rites of the Church but also all the details which surround the Mass and the Sacraments. Thus it has the final word in matters concerning church music, art, architecture, vestments and sacred vessels.

FOR EXAMPLE: In response to a query in 1956, the congregation ruled out the use of radio or phonograph music at church services and prohibited the use of movie projectors in church to illustrate sermons or teach catechism.

LAST YEAR it formally approved the use of ancient-styled bell-shaped vestments and this year it ruled that the Sanctus and the Benedictus may be sung together at High Mass.

In all these things the congregation insists on the worship of God in a befitting manner and opposes changes that would detract from the purity of the Mass and other rites. No one may change these forms of worship without the express consent of the Congregation of Rites.

The care of relics is also entrusted to the Congregation of Rites. It guards against the sale of relics and it must prescribe the rules of exposition of relics, so that their authenticity and their veneration is provided for.

Two other prerogatives of the congregation are the elevating of churches to the rank of basilicas and the authorizing of the solemn crowning of images of Our Lady.

Heading the Congregation of Rites is the Prefect, His Eminence Gretano Cardinal Cicognani, the 76-year-old brother of Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States. Twenty-one cardinals have been appointed to the congregation by His Holiness Pope Pius XII, including Cardinal Mooney of Detroit.

The congregation's Secretary is Archbishop Alfonso Carinci, who will be 96 in November but who, despite his age, is at his desk every day directing the administrative details of the congregation.

A total of 70 officials and consultors make up the staff of the congregation which is housed in the Palace of the Congregations in Rome.

The cardinals of the Congregation of Rites meet in executive session at the Vatican every Tuesday morning and Cardinal Cicognani takes the results of the congregation's work to the Pope for his approval on the second and fourth Friday of each month.

One other official of the congregation has a regularly scheduled audience with the Pope. He is the "promoter general of the faith," better known as the "devil's advocate."

Msgr. Silvio Romanani, who has held the office since 1955, goes to the Pope on the third Thursday of each month to report on the progress of the various causes for beatification and canonization under consideration.

The "devil's advocate" function is to make sure that all the rules for the verification of testimony and miracles in causes of canonization and beatification are observed. To protect the Church he must object whenever there is any question in the life, works or fame of a person proposed for sainthood.

A "CAUSE" reaches Rome and the congregation only after a thorough canonical investigation has been made in the diocese of the person proposed for sainthood. All the information gathered on the diocesan level is turned over to a lawyer approved by the congregation who makes a summary of it.

The next major step is the investigation into the proposed saint's writings, life and his practice of virtue to a heroic degree.

Following this there must be two miracles worked through the saint's intercession. Msgr. Romani has to be completely satisfied that they are truly miraculous and not attributable to chance or illusion.

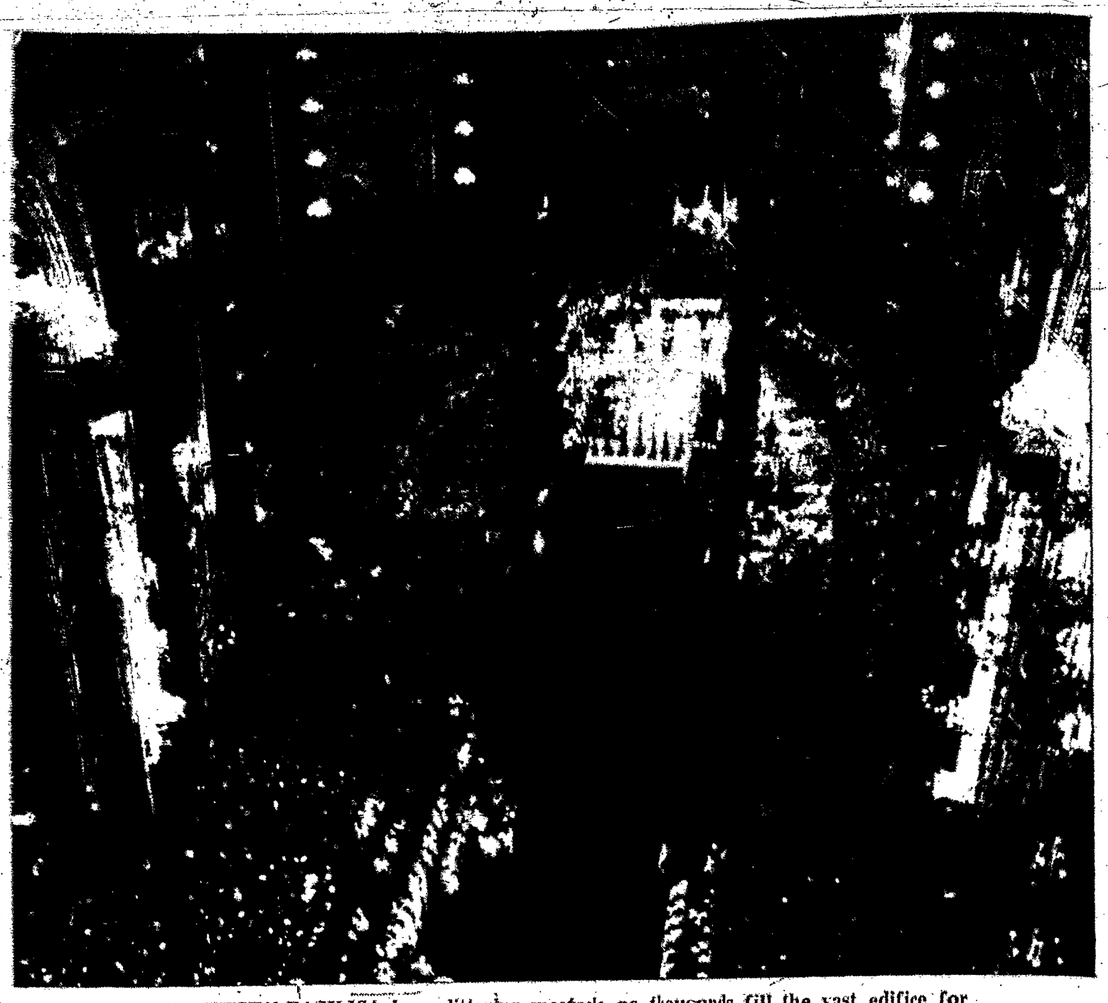
When the two miracles are declared valid, the person may be beatified. This means that he may be called Blessed, and may be venerated and accorded honors of the altar, but only in the dioceses where he lived or died, and in the religious congregation which the newly proclaimed Blessed founded or of which he was a member.

Two further miracles must occur before the beatified can be proclaimed a saint.

In certain cases there is a process known as equivalent canonization. In 1931, Pope Pius XI proclaimed the equivalent canonization of Albert the Great by naming him a Doctor of the Church. St. Albert was beatified in 1622 but had never formally been declared a saint.

Since the long process of canonization requires much research, travel expenses, and thousands of photostats and copies of documents, it is very expensive. It has been estimated that a complete cause costs about $50,000.

Papal canonization has been traced back as far as the 10th century but it did not become an exclusive prerogative of the papacy until the 17th century. For centuries saints was proclaimed by various bishops, and for a time popular acclaim was sufficient to mark a man as a saint.



ST. PETER'S BASILICA is a glittering spectacle as thousands fill the vast edifice for papal rite canonizing a new saint.

Church-State Tensions Stir Poland

(BY RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE)

The delicacy and complexity of Church-State relations in Communist Poland—the only Soviet satellite that has ever established a modus vivendi with the Catholic Church—has been dramatically underscored by two distrubing developments in the past few weeks.

Especially alarming was the police raid, reportedly carried out with brutal thoroughness, on the monastery at Jasna Gora near Cracow which houses the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, sacred to every Polish Catholic.

This action inevitably stirred a wave of popular resentment which was in no manner appeased by government charges that the monastery was being used to print "anti-State" literature.

The other development was the concerted outcry in the Communist press charging the Polish hierarchy, and especially Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, with seeking to exploit for "political purposes" relief shipments sent by American Catholics through Catholic Relief Services—National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Reports from Warsaw this past week said the crisis sparked by these developments had been eased by new agreements between representatives of the Gomulka regime and the Catholic hierarchy who met as members of a special government commission set up in the fall of 1956 to settle Church-State differences.

The agreements helped to stave off what appeared to be an imminent Church-State explosion.

But they offer no promise of a final solution of the basic problem. This is, in essence, the fear among Communist leaders that the Church, is exercising an influence that threatens the advance of the "socialist system."

AS REPORTED by the official Polish Press Agency, one of the agreements reached by the government commission provided that in the future all church publications, except those addressed exclusively to the clergy, must be submitted for clearance to the Office of Press Control.

This stipulation was seen aimed specifically at an Institute for National Vows which Cardinal Wyszynski organized at Jasna Gora to foster a movement of spiritual re-dedication among Polish Catholics. Part of the Institute's work was the printing and distribution of religious pamphlets. One of them, written by the Primate himself, was entitled "The Spirit of People's Work."

Another of the agreements provided that the shipments of charitable goods to the Polish hierarchy from the American Catholics would be distributed to victims of recent floods in southern Poland by a State relief committee set up in Cracow, with three Church representatives joining it.

The relief shipments, said to be worth $400,000, had been allowed to pile up on Polish docks because of a dispute over the question of distribution. The government demanded that the goods be handled by official agencies, while the hierarchy insisted that they be channeled through Catholic parish agencies.

The government had meanwhile levied high customs duty, which Cardinal Wyszynski protested the Church was unable to pay.

It is still a moot question whether the agreements worked out by the government commission will do more than temporarily ease a Church-State situation which was tended to become increasingly tense ever since Cardinal Wyszynski returned from a visit to the Vatican last year and Communist spokesmen began accusing the Church of "meddling in politics."

IN THE MINDS of die-hard Polish Communists, Cardinal Wyszynski and the shrine at Jasna Gora are a synonymous threat. They have consistently charged the Church with seeking to gain an "undue" influence over the people, especially through organized pilgrimages to Jasna Gora held under the cardinal's patronage and attended by increasing numbers of men and women of all walks of life.

As interpreted by the Communists, the pilgrimages have simply been thinly-disguised "political rallies" that violated state laws and were used, among other things, to spread intolerance of other religions and to encourage attacks on non-believers.

COMMUNIST leaders have recognized the important role of the Church in the country, and although they do not like the situation, they have agreed to live with it. But ever since the Church-State agreement of December, 1956, which saw religious instruction introduced in the schools, there have been repeated instances of anti-Church sniping.

Communist editors have denounced the "persecution" of parents who refused to enroll their children for the religious classes. They have reported cases of "fanatical priests" making trouble in village communities by refusing to marry or bury Communist Party members.

Many times they have accused the clergy of taking too large an interest in the Peasant Youth Union and the Polish Scout movement.

Thus the long-range question persists: Will Gomulka feel himself forced ultimately to abandon his tolerant position and revert to the policy of anti-religious repression and persecution that existed prior to the rise of "national Communism" in Poland?

Strange But True . . .