

# What Should Godparents Do When Parents Are Negligent In Religion?

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S.J.

Assistant-Professor of Sociology at St. Louis University

I'm terribly worried about the religious training of one of my godchildren. She's my brother's child, aged seven, and the oldest of three. My brother is very careless about religion. His wife is non-Catholic, an excellent mother but indifferent toward all faiths. When we visit them, they are evasive about the religious training of the children. They know their obligations in this regard, but I'm afraid they do nothing. What can I do?

You are to be commended, Mary, for taking the duties of sponsorship seriously.

Some sponsors forget that they have a serious obligation to look after the Christian education and spiritual training of their spiritual children. Of course, the care of children falls principally upon parents. When they neglect their duties, however, sponsors must do what they can to assure the religious instruction and formation of their godchildren.

This is the situation which confronts you now, Mary. It is clearly not an easy one to handle. Your obligations both as sponsor and near relative are clear.

**THE QUESTION** is, what can you, a mere "outsider" do to fulfill them? Your problem is further complicated by the fact that you do not live very near your brother's family so that it is difficult to learn what religious training the children receive.

Under the circumstances, I would suggest the following approach.

**YOUR BROTHER** should be reminded of his serious obligation to offer a good example to his children, and to guarantee their Christian education. I gather from your letter that you have attempted to do this without much success. However, as their children start



careful in dealing with your sister-in-law concerning the training of her children.

As you say, she is an excellent mother, but since she does not personally appreciate the need for religion, she may well resent any outside advice or interference. She knows her obligations, yet because of her own views, she isn't going to do much about carrying them out as you feel she should.

In this situation, perhaps the best you can do is to avoid antagonizing her, test in self-defense she takes a definite stand against religion and communicates this attitude to her children.

While the children are growing up, it is important that they come to know you and your family as models of Christian kindness and charity.

**YOUR EXAMPLE** in living the faith will have more lasting effects upon them than anything you may say. If they learn to love and admire you, they will find it natural to want to imitate your way of life, particularly when they are old enough to think for themselves.

Above all, be careful how you speak about religion to them while they are still young. Whatever you do in this regard must not be taken as a criticism of their home training.

Their first loyalty is naturally to their parents, and they will only be confused or resentful of criticism leveled against those they love.

Finally, Mary, together with giving a good example, your most important obligation is to pray for them. Commend them humbly to Christ and His Blessed Mother. Keep their needs constantly in mind when you pray.

I think you should be very



'The Church Of Silence'

Buffalo — (NC) — This is not a pleasant picture, but it is not meant to be. The symbolic picture shows an armed guard holding back his own people from religion and from Christ. The people, in a long, silent row stand for "The Church of Silence." The blood of 10 years of Red rule flows freely on the ground and the holocaust in the sky portrays the burning of churches in various countries since Communism came into power. The grinning face of Russia's dictator is formed by the fiery sky, grinning at what he believes is his victory.

## Grandfather Says Wedding Mass

Paris — (GNS) — A 81-year-old French priest, who was ordained four months ago officiated at the wedding of his granddaughter in the Church of St. Jean de Luz, where King Louis XIV was married. He was Father Andre Lepoutre, a widower for more than 15 years with five children and 22 grandchildren. After the death of his wife, Andre Lepoutre, who with his sons owned one of the largest hosiery and underwear mills in the north of France, began his studies for the priesthood.

# Low Cost Family Vacation

By GORMAN HOGAN

Portland, Ore. (NC) — What makes an ideal family vacation?

Out here an enthusiastic vote would be cast for the vacation program being offered by the Family Campers, a group that isn't listed with the travel agencies, or advertised in newspapers or magazines.

**FAMILY CAMPERS** is an incorporated nonprofit organization, comprising about a dozen families who live chiefly in the Portland metropolitan area, but it has members as far away as Pendleton in eastern Oregon.

Every year the Family Campers get together for a week's vacation. Just as they have every summer since 1953.

Topping it all, the campers have their own chaplain in Father Louis Chauvet, OSB, who leaves Mt. Angel Abbey each summer to go along with the group.

The idea for the camping vacation was born when Earl and Luella Zak of St. John's parish, Milwaukie, Ore., and Jack and Noreen Bevens of St. John's parish, Oregon City, decided to do something to beat the high cost of a vacation for their entire families.

The Zaks have seven adopted children, ranging in age from 5 to 17. The Bevens family includes six children, ages 4 to 12. Since the two families first went camping in 1953, the group has grown until it now comprises the 11 families who make up this year's camp.

The group bases the state camp, which includes several four bed sleeping cabins. Each family is quartered in as many

cabins, as are necessary to accommodate it.

Unlike most camping trips in which mother winds up doing the same old culinary tasks, Family Campers "chase" mother out of the kitchen so that she can enjoy the vacation.

To do the cooking this year for the hungry campers, Mrs. Jean Lavhead a regular cook for Forest Hill School in southwest Portland, was hired. With her on the job, all mother had to do about meals was eat them.

But even with a cook, Family Campers' vacations are inexpensive. A family with four children, two teenagers and two pre-teenagers, pays only \$89 for the entire week's vacation.

At a time when there is much talk about an economic recession, the Family Campers are showing folks around here that a family can still have a real vacation without big expenses.

## How-To-Do-It

# New Book Aids People Pray Mass

Cincinnati — (NC) — Pastors who attended the North American Liturgical Week here went home with a useful tool to get their parishioners to participate actively and intelligently in the Mass.

It came in the form of a how-to-do-it book titled, "Principles and Practices for the Parish Mass Book" was read at all of the community Masses at St. Peter-St. Thomas Cathedral during the week.

Prepared by a committee of the National Liturgical Conference, it is available to anyone looking for practical advice on how to achieve the kind of intelligent participation urged by Pope Pius XII. The publication is a handbook of instructions for the "Parish Mass Book," a 158-page volume

## Religious 'Junk' Again In Mails

Worcester — (GNS) — Bishop John J. Wright of Worcester has labeled as "sheer junk" objects that are being mailed unsolicited to Catholics by a Miami dealer. The objects are principally plastic crucifixes and statues.

The bishop advised in his weekly radio "visit" that these objects, he given back to the mailman or "thrown in the nearest ash can."

## Modest Styles Tertiary Goal

St. Bonaventure — (NC) — Members of the Third Order of St. Francis will wage a personal battle against the current trend toward immodest dress. It was announced at the fourth annual National Youth Congress at St. Bonaventure University here

DOWNTOWN and all suburban stores OPEN SATURDAY  
SHOP UNTIL 5:45 . . . CLOSED LABOR DAY, MONDAY



## SIBLEY'S SHIRTS FOR BOYS

go to the head of the class!

1.98 2.98 3.98

Dress, school or play . . . no matter what the occasion, Sibley's Boys' Shop has just the shirt for it. We've selected only 5 from our huge assortment, but the others are just as good looking, and sturdily made as these . . . all designed to suit a boy's taste and to satisfy your appreciation of long-wearing quality. Sizes 6 to 20.

Sibley's Young Fashion World, Third Floor, Irondequoit, Eastway, Southtown, Newark

Imported flannel sports shirts, plaids and solids, 2.98 to 3.98

Knit shirts in stripes, solids with contrasting collars, 1.98 to 3.98

Sport pima cottons in solid white, blue and red, 2.98

Cotton sport shirts in stripes and solid tones, 2.98 to 3.98

Dress shirts in snowy white, 2.98 to 3.98