

Why Does The Church Demand Mixed Marriage Agreements?

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

Why do Non-Catholics have to make all the concessions in a mixed marriage? This question has come up several times at school, and I'm not sure that I have the right answer. My Non-Catholic friends argue that it would be more democratic if the parties were allowed to work out their own agreements. They say the Church is authoritarian in regard to the premarital promises.

It's not surprising that your Non-Catholic friends find it difficult to understand the Church's position on mixed marriages. Their problem stems primarily from two sources.

First, they do not agree with Catholics that Christ established a visible Church endowed with infallible authority to teach us the basic truths concerning man, marriage, and morality.

Second, with a few exceptions, they do not believe that marriage is a sacrament; although all who are serious-minded agree that it is a natural institution, based on a special kind of contract, and involving obligations of the highest order.

Because they disagree with Catholics on these two points of doctrine, Non-Catholics experience difficulty in appreciating the Church's claim to regulate the marriages of the faithful. However, if marriage is held to be a sacrament, it obviously falls under the jurisdiction of the Church.

Likewise, if it is believed that Christ endowed His Church with infallible teaching authority, the Church must specify the moral obligations of the faithful in relation to marriage. Hence the Church's position can be called authoritarian only if we deny these two doctrinal points.

Perhaps it will help you explain the Catholic position if you keep clearly in mind the precise content of the promises in question. In the first place, the Church tries to protect the faith of its members. Hence the Non-Catholic party must promise not to interfere in any way with the religious practice of the Catholic partner.

Through baptism the faithful have received the tremendous privilege of becoming members of Christ's Church, and it would be a serious sin to place this membership in danger. The promise exacted before marriage thus represents a reasonable attempt to secure a human guarantee that this privilege will be respected.

Second, canon law requires that both parties promise to have all their children baptized and raised as Catholics.



This obligation stems from the primary purpose of marriage, and no Catholic could enter a marriage morally without assuming this responsibility.

Hence the Church could not logically permit the faithful to contract marriages in which they could not raise their children as Catholics.

Catholics must cede to the prior obligations of their Catholic partners because it is maintained that the Catholic Church is the one true Church founded by Christ for the salvation of all mankind. Non-Catholics naturally find this hard to accept, but they must agree that the Church could take no other position.

These are the promises demanded by the Code of canon law. The Code further reminds Catholic parties of their obligation to work prudently for the conversion of their partners, and both parties are reminded that there is to be no religious ceremony other than that performed by the Church.

Finally, since many Non-Catholics do not accept the Church's teaching on birth control, they must promise to respect their partners' obligations in this regard. Likewise, some dioceses also require a promise concerning respect for the indissolubility of the marriage bond.

All of these promises and regulations aim to guard the sanctity of the sacrament and to protect the faith of the

Around The World

Alaska... Death March... Pennies

Trip To Alaska

A conducted tour through the Canadian Rockies with optional extensions to Alaska and California, has been announced for this summer, under the personal direction of Mgr. James A. Wagner, Professor of Theology at the Catholic University of America. Information and applications for membership in the Tour may be secured by writing to him, in care of The Catholic University of America, or to Paul L. Klein, Travel Service, 100 West Monroe Street, Chicago.

Byzantine Bishop

Washington (NC)—A priest stationed in Philadelphia has been named a titular bishop and assigned to an office in Germany. Father Platon Kornyljak, chancellor of the Byzantine Rite Apostolic Exarchate of Philadelphia, has been named Titular Bishop of Castra Martis and Apostolic Exarch for the Ruthenians of the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite in Germany.

Doctors Charged With Sabotage

Warsaw (RNS)—A Warsaw Radio broadcast said the Communist government is considering taking stern action against Roman Catholic doctors who are "sabotaging" legally permitted abortions in this country.

According to the station, the demand for legal abortions is so great that hospitals have run out of beds, and in the Lublin, Gdansk and Bydgoszcz provinces even clinics are being used to accommodate women patients.

Death March

Seoul (NC)—Two survivors of the North Korean "death march" in November, 1950, renewed an old friendship here. Columbian Bishop Thomas Quinn, Vicar Apostolic of Chunchon, and Salvation Army commissioner Herbert A. Lore met here for the first time since their release from a communist prison camp in North Korea in 1953. Both were taken prisoner by the Reds in July, 1950, and were together through almost three years of captivity in North Korea.

Roualt At Rome

Vatican City (NC)—Within a few months the works of such 20th-century artists as Rodin, Roualt and Utrillo will join Raphael, Michelangelo and other great artists of earlier periods represented in the Vatican Galleries.

"This is only a continuation of the close relations of the Church has always had with the finest artists of every age," explained Prof. Filippo Magli, acting director general of the Vatican Museums and Galleries.

Malik-Speaker

Belmont, N.C. (NC)—The president of the General Assembly of the United Nations will be the principal speaker at 83rd commencement exercises of Belmont Abbey College.

Charles H. Malik of Lebanon will address a convocation at the Benedictine school on June 2, it was announced by Abbey President Father Cuthbert E. Allen, O.S.B.

COURIER-JOURNAL
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Laity Swamp Theology School

New York (NC)—The School of Theology for the Laity, which started out as a small project here, is making plans to accommodate about 450 students in its classes next semester.

The success of the school has been a welcome surprise to the Dominican Fathers who started it, said Father Francis N. Wendell, O.P., provincial director of the Third Order of St. Dominic for the eastern U.S.

The idea of establishing a school of theology for lay people in New York was formulated late last year. Original plans called for the registration of about 80 students in classes on moral and dogmatic theology.

When the school was flooded with registrations, plans were changed to accommodate a student body of 215. Despite this, a number of prospective students had to be turned away. To meet the demand, the school is doubling its facilities.

The school is staffed at the administrative level by lay people. Father Wendell said the school has received requests for help and advice in establishing similar projects in other parts of the U.S.

Red Clergy Take Over Budapest Seminary

Vienna (RNS)—The new government-appointed rector of the Roman Catholic seminary in Budapest was reported here to have confirmed that all students who refused to pledge obedience to the Communist regime had been dismissed from the institution.

He was Father Imre Potonyi, who was named to replace the former rector, Father Imre Papp, when the latter and several members of the faculty also were ousted.

One report quoted Father Andor Szorenyi, who had served as acting rector following the dismissal of Father Papp, have been their refusal to support the activities of Opus Pacis, an organization of pro-government "peace priests." He should be appointed to the seminary as a lecturer in dismissed varied, some giving Marxism.

Refugees Aided

Gothenburg, Sweden (NC)—Nine Hungarian refugees from communist oppression have left here to begin a new life in the United States and Canada.

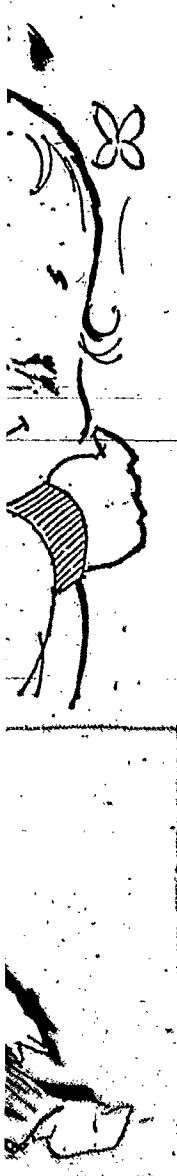
Details for their emigration were arranged by Catholic Relief Services-National Catholic Welfare Conference, worldwide relief agency of the U.S. Catholic Bishops.

Thieves Caught

Bayreuth, Germany (RNS)—Police arrested two men who allegedly forced their way into the famous Roman Catholic Wieskirch church, one of the most beautiful rococo shrines in Bavaria, making off with more than \$25,000 worth of precious art treasures.

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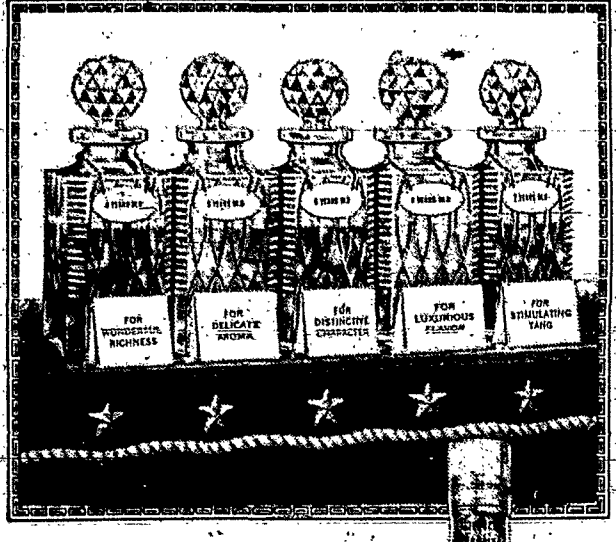
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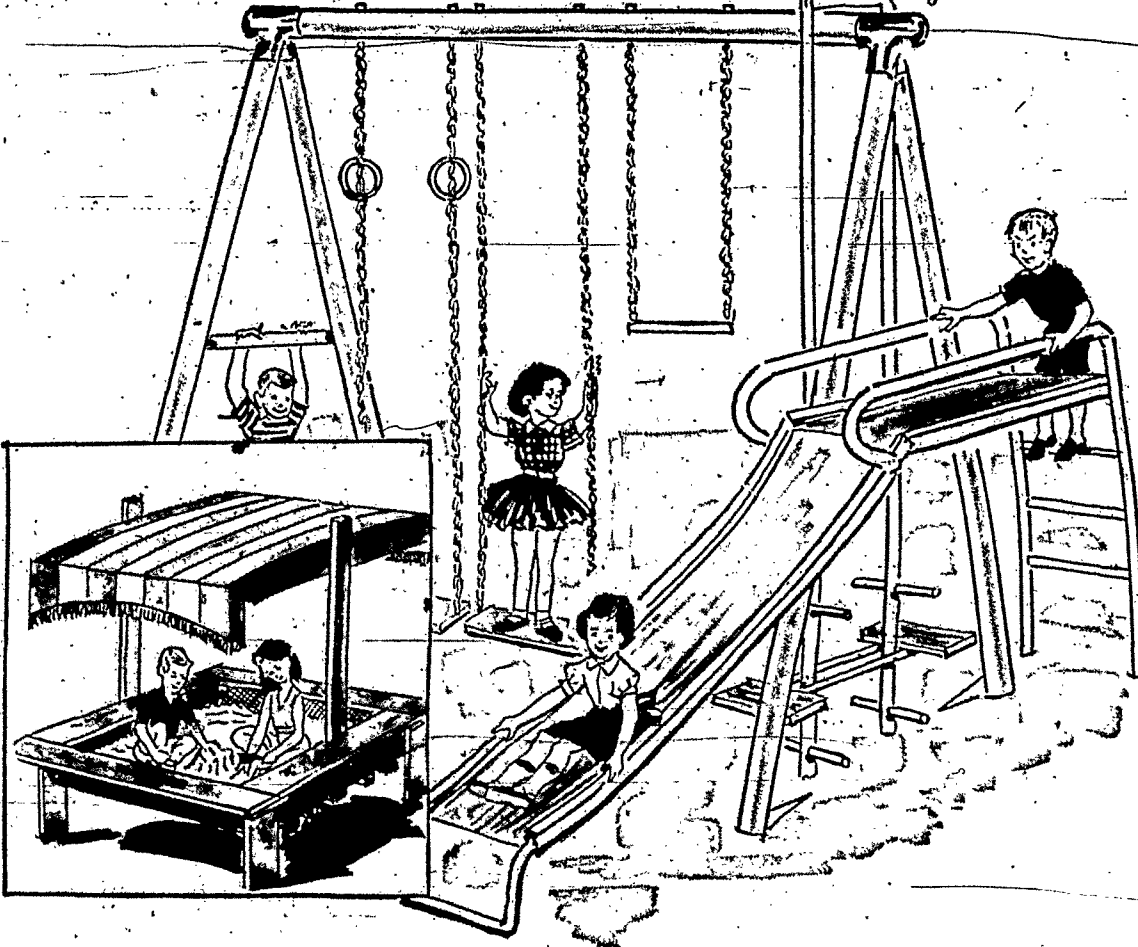
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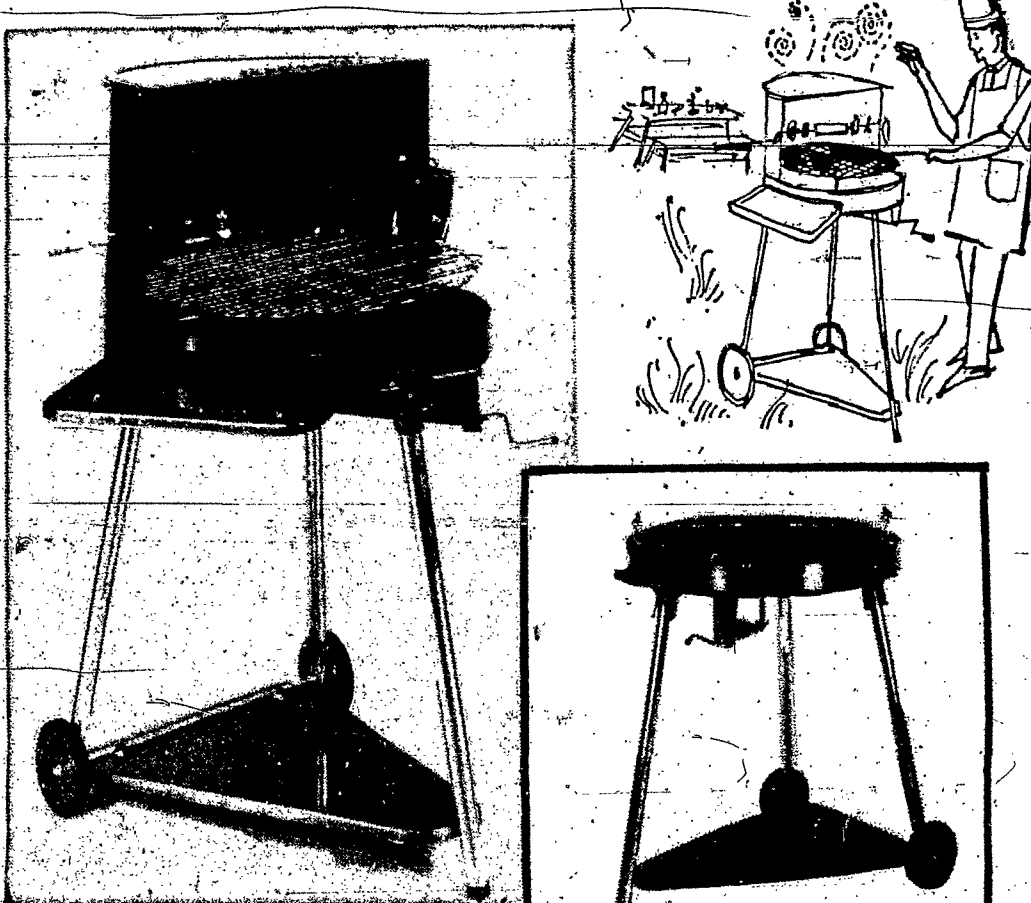
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