

Thou Shalt Not Speed

Highway Toll A Moral Issue

The approach of the July 4 holiday — which last year saw 650 persons killed in automobile accidents — focuses attention on the increasingly active support religious leaders are giving to highway safety campaigns, especially by underscoring the moral factors involved in reckless and negligent driving.

The same situation is found in other countries — notably Germany, France, Holland, Italy, Australia and New Zealand — where church authorities have become openly alarmed over mounting fatality rates.

Emphasis in this country on what some churchmen have called the "eleventh commandment" — thou shalt not speed — is prompted by the grim knowledge that roadway deaths have risen from 32,259 in 1948 to 44,700 last year, with a corresponding increase in the toll of injured and crippled.

These figures are supplied by the National Safety Council which embraces a church activities committee through which Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Jewish clergymen regularly cooperate in the organization's efforts to keep the highways safe.

Meanwhile, other church groups and individual clergymen around the country are pushing a moral as well as physical drive to cut the nation's accident score.

Last week, clergymen of the four faiths took part in the Third Annual Regional Traffic Court Conference at Fordham University in New York at which one participant — Rabbi Maurice J. Bloom of Tremont Temple in New York — described traffic accidents as a kind of "capital punishment" that the American public practices on itself.

Father John S. Banahan, of the Chicago Catholic archdiocese, said traffic court judges must ask themselves if they are serious in putting traffic law on the basis of morality. If they are, he declared, there must be a concerted effort by attorneys and religious leaders to make the driving public aware of the fact.

That religious leaders are taking special pains to make drivers aware of the moral responsibility they assume when they get behind the wheel is evident from the actions and statements of many of them over the past year or so.

Cardinal Cushing of Boston recently cautioned that safe driving is "no mere matter of civic pride or community cooperation," but "something which reaches deeply into every man's personal relations with his Creator."

"We are bound by God's laws never to take unnecessary risks with our own lives or with those of our fellow human beings. When we do so, we are violating the Fifth Commandment, even though we may be fortunate enough to avoid the hideous reality of murder," he said.

In other parts of the world equally insistent reminders of the moral responsibilities of drivers have been made by religious leaders both Protestant and Catholic.

Last month, Pope John XXIII, in an address to members of the Italian Automobile Club, declared that traffic laws are "respected by everybody with common sense, courtesy, patience and watchfulness."

Earlier he told thousands of Rome motorists gathered in St. Peter's Square that the demand for speed in a motorized age should not cause drivers to forget the need for "safeguarding human life and serenity." He urged them to "watch out that while hurrying toward terrestrial aims, you do not lose your eternal health."

In Paris last week, Assumptionist Father Francis Bernard, appearing on a special TV program for drivers, noted that the French hierarchy had sent a letter to the clergy advising them that Catholics must confess as a sin any motoring accidents they may have caused.

Previously it was announced that the French hierarchy is considering revision of the Catholic catechism to add careless driving to the list of grave sins.

In Bonn, West Germany, appeals were issued meanwhile by Protestant and Catholic leaders for support of a nationwide traffic safety drive. In special articles about the drive, church papers recalled that 11,639 persons were killed and 350,679 seriously injured in traffic accidents throughout West Germany in 1958.



Phoenix, Ariz. — (RNS) — Approach of the July 4 holiday — which last year saw 650 persons killed in automobile accidents — focuses attention on the increasingly active support religious leaders are giving to highway safety campaigns, especially by underscoring the moral factors involved in reckless and negligent driving. Serving as a grim reminder of the nation's high traffic death toll are these sixteen white crosses which mark the spot near Phoenix, Ariz., where 16 Mexican farm laborers lost their lives.



World Attention Focused On Refugee Year

United Nations — (RNS) — The symbol of the World Refugee Year, a refugee protected by sheltering hands surrounded by the laurel wreath of the United Nations insignia, rests on a backdrop of some of the 124,000 homeless and displaced persons who will be helped by the observance. One of the major purposes of the Year, which starts in June, is to stimulate the

interest of governments, religious bodies and the community in general in meeting what promises to be a pressing issue for many long years to come. The Year was proclaimed under a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly last December. It is estimated that there are 2,500,000 refugees throughout Europe, North Africa, the Middle and Far East.

Rosy Optimism

Americans Grow Soft, Run From Reality

River Forest — (NCY) — A theologian warned here that contemporary U.S. culture is in danger of losing its dynamism and sense of purpose.

With the decline of the puritan spirit as an influence on American society, said Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., the question which faces the contemporary American is whether he can bring back a puritanical drive to his national life, or at least find some push just as strong.

Father Weigel, a member of the faculty at Woodstock (Md.) College, was a principal speaker at a symposium on American culture, held at Rosary College here under the co-sponsorship of the school's library, science department and the Thomas More Association.

In the U.S. today, the speaker said, "well being is an intoxicant and it produces euphoria (a sense of buoyancy). In such a mood all things seem possible. There is a rosy optimism which raises the expectation that things will continue as they are, or even better.

"The darker aspects of reality are ignored and honest struggling with difficult problems gives way to a confident trust that things will work out well by themselves."

The "flight from puritanism," he added, "renders us collectively incapable of the rigors of training. The modern concern for dieting is a strange phenomenon in a world where almost two-thirds of mankind are underfed."

"And in our dieting we all look for a regime which will work without will power, and we want to become slim not because it will make us stronger for work and endurance, but for esthetic reasons. We diet but we do not fast."

Father Weigel asserted that Americans have become victims of the increasing complexity of life. "As a result," he said, "we must turn over our problems to trained experts, and because of it we are more than ready to let George do it."

"We have lost the sense of responsibility for government and lost the belief that we can efficaciously influence it."

Father Weigel declared that for most Americans religion has become "the only realm of concern where their freedom is ample. They cannot do much to the immense machine of government which so few understand. They cannot produce things in their own way because production is highly rationalized and organized. They cannot play in their own way because sports and entertainment have been standardized by rules and conventions. Only in man's approach to God is man unhampered."

"Our retreat from puritanism," Father Weigel said, "has made moralization, abnegation and self-denial unattractive concepts. With an infantile conception of freedom we think we are freest when we

let ourselves go in any direction toward which whim or uncontrolled instinct moves us. Surely this is not freedom in an ethical sense, but sheer irresponsibility."

He added: "What is called for is the training of our children in the ways of asceticism. This is the necessary task."

Father Weigel called on American churches to "produce figures like John the Baptist, who in camel skin and hunger called the world to repentance."

"Perhaps," he said, "that figure is too hard for our time but Francis of Assisi in winsome fashion accomplished much in the 13th century. No man can decide on his own initiative to be St. Francis. He must be called by God. One thing Christians can do is pray the Lord to raise up not St. Francis at Assisi, but St. Tom, Dick or Harry of Chicago."

Strange But True . . .



Vocation In A Foxhole

Joliet — (NCY) — A dream of better days that began in a foxhole under German mortar fire will be realized here on June 21, with the celebration of a Solemn High Mass.

AS RIFLEMEN for 19 months in Europe, Pfc. Leo A. Decman, of Joliet, and Private John J. McGovern, of Upper Black Eddy, Pa., shared many harrowing experiences against German forces in western France.

Their outfit, the U.S. 68th Division, took part in a mop-up operation against remnants of some 125,000 German troops left in pockets along the coast of Brittany.

During one shelling by German mortars in 1945, the two soldiers, huddled together in a foxhole, promised to "do something useful" with their lives after the war.

Separated after the final surrender of the Germans, the two buddies were sent back to the U.S. and discharged from the Army. Both then went on to earn college degrees under the GI Bill.

In February, 1949, after graduating from Marquette University, Milwaukee, John McGovern entered the Maryknoll Fathers' seminary in Maryknoll, N.Y., to study for the priesthood. Ordained in 1954, he was sent to Rome for three years of advanced study in Sacred Scripture. Upon his return to this country he joined the Maryknoll faculty.

Meanwhile, in June 1950, Leo Decman was graduated from the University of Illinois and after working a year for Caterpillar Tractor Company, decided to enter Maryknoll.

To his surprise, his teacher in Scripture at the seminary turned out to be his old foxhole buddy, Jack McGovern, now Father John McGovern, M.M.

On June 21, Leo Decman was ordained to the priesthood at Maryknoll. The following day, he received his official assignment to the Maryknoll missions of Korea.



Is A 16-Year-Old A Child Or An Adult?

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S.J.
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Please write something about the meaning of maturity. Although in the strictest sense, the word still has no precise connotation. One minute people say, "Grow up!" "Act your age!" "Don't be a child!" and the next minute they turn around and treat you like a child. It seems maturity is some mysterious quality teen-agers ought to have, but nobody is sure what it is.

Your problem puzzles many teen-agers. The chief source of confusion is the tendency to consider maturity as a simple trait rather than as a compound of many different qualities that can develop at different stages and consequently exist separately.

We're complex creatures. A teen-ager can be mature in some ways and immature in others. It all depends upon which aspect of his developing personality we are considering.

Everyone likes to think that he's mature — at least for his age. Let's see what this term may imply.

Considered in itself, maturity stands for the quality of completeness in growth and development. The quality of being fully grown. Hence you can become mature in many different ways as you can grow and develop. Because you are a complex creature, a unity of body and soul, you are capable of many types of maturity.

Take your physical growth, for example. You'll become fully mature physically only in your early twenties, though most of this growth will be completed by the time you finish high school.

Since you are still immature in this regard, you owe it to yourself to avoid harmful habits like drinking and smoking, while you should make sure that you get sufficient sleep, food, and exercise.

Another form of maturity is related to the development of your reproductive faculties. Roughly between the ages of eleven and fifteen teen-agers experience — the changes in their bodies that signify they are approaching sexual maturity. If, that is, they become capable of sexual stimulation and the reproductive act. Of course you're not fully mature in this regard until several years later at least, but these early changes indicate the beginning of the final stage of development.

This physical development is not the same as sexual maturity, however. You soon discover that the possession of this new power must be accompanied by growth in self-knowledge and self-control. For many of the things that you do or say or think may cause you to be sexually stimulated.

Hence you become sexually mature not when you are capable of reproduction, but when you have learned to regulate and control your sexual impulses and drives according to the norms of the moral law.

Because you live in society, you are also capable of social growth. Social maturity implies, first, that you have learned the customs, norms, and standards recognized as proper in dealing with others, and second, that you are capable of taking your place in the community as an independent adult. Growth toward social maturity is a gradual experience — in dealing with others in different social situations.

Since you still depend upon your family for support and have much to learn about dealing with people, you are in no position to reject parental authority or to demand the rights and freedom associated with full social maturity.

When people speak of maturity, they frequently mean

emotional maturity. Although this term is difficult to define, it means that you have learned to face your emotional problems squarely.

In other words, you don't have temper tantrums when things go wrong, you have learned to take "no" for an answer, you don't constantly blame your failure on others or on bad breaks, and you feel secure enough to stand up for your own convictions, though you also know how to cooperate and be a "good sport" when your moral ideals are not at stake. I suppose most people show some signs of emotional maturity at times. However, if you acquire the habit of facing up to your problems honestly when they arise, you'll be well on your way to maturity in this respect.

There is another form of maturity that teen-agers are frequently accused of not possessing. We might call it prudence or good judgment. This means you learn to think before you act. Thinking here implies that you judge the moral quality of the act in terms of pertinent principles and also consider the possible consequences of your action.

Since this requires experience, teen-agers may be immature though all of us are probably thoughtful at times.

Well, have I cleared up your confusion? At any rate, we've pointed out some of the sources.

'Good' Catholic OK For President

Milwaukee — (RNS) — There is no question whether the Roman Catholic should be stopped from seeking the Presidency of the United States, according to The Living Church, a leading Protestant-Episcopal weekly published here.

Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, June 21 — Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (green), Gloria, 2nd prayer of St. Aloysius, Creed, Trinity Preface.

Monday, June 22 — St. John Fisher (red), Gloria, 2nd prayer of St. Paulinus.

Tuesday, June 23 — Vigil of St. John's Birthday (purple), VR.

Wednesday, June 24 — Birthday of St. John the Baptist (white), Gloria, Creed.

Thursday, June 25 — St. William (white), Gloria.

Friday, June 26 — St. John and St. Paul martyrs (red), Gloria.

Saturday, June 27 — Mass in honor of our Lady (white), Gloria, Preface of the Blessed Virgin Mary; VR.

VR — Votive of Requiem permitted.

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