

**SERMONETTE****TEMPTATION!**

by the Rev. Richard Madden, O.C.D.

Running home from school and screaming, "Look, Mom, no temptation!" is sort of ridiculous. But "Look, Mom, no cavities" makes sense. Because it is possible to have no cavities. To have no temptations, well, really this is a little too much to take. If you don't have any temptations, you're in the wrong place. You belong on a slab. If you don't have any temptations, then for heaven's sake, lie down. You're dead.

Temptations are a part of life, like T.V. commercials. They're there, and they aren't a thing you can do about it. No station, no place, no program, except. Neither, is any individual, in any family, as there is death and taxes, as there is the problem of temptation.

People had them back in the second century, they had them in the tenth. Saints as well as sinners felt their measure. The butcher, the baker, the candle stick maker — but not the cow, that jumped over the moon. Temptations are reserved for human beings. So when they come, if it's any consolation, you can at least be comforted that you are human.

Therefore, you young people who must grow up in a positively pagan atmosphere should never be taken back over the fact of temptation in your life. They don't make you any less god. According to a Harvard sociologist, you are exposed to some threat to your purity every seven minutes of your waking day. And that's tough.

Actually, youth today can't be much worse than they were a hundred years ago, or even a generation ago. It is only that being good today is a lot harder than it was then.

When I was a kid, there weren't any Drive-in Theatres. That means in my youth there was one less problem to face. Living four-cornered square for Christ was just that much easier. As a teenager, there wasn't any suggestion coming into my living room through a T.V. screen. One less threat. Nor did we have cars for dating (and I think that most people realize that cars are being used for purposes other than mere transportation.)

So here there is the problem. Temptations are part and parcel of our lives. And there are twice as many around these days, than we just have to be twice as good.

**Must We Be Poor  
To Be Christian**

Devout Christians in comfortable America more and more are asking themselves, "How can our life of luxury jibe with Christ's clear warning about the dangers of riches?"

There is also the disconcerting statement of the Saviour to the rich young man, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:26)

Our Lord then advised this fellow, "Go; sell what ever thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me." (Mark 10:21)

Compared to the poverty which haunts a major portion of the world, and compared even with the wealth of kings and nobles of past ages, we in America today enjoy a standard of living richer by far than those others would dream.

Are we expected to abandon our retirement insurance, let go our securities, move out of our nice homes, turn in our car and wander in poverty as St. Francis of Assisi did, at the early Christians did as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles?

Or will we cling to our crucifix with one hand and our bank book with the other and hope somehow we can eventually squeeze through that eye of the needle?

The seeming conflict between Christ's clear counsel and the common-sense providing for "a rainy day" stems from a basic misunderstanding of the Saviour's intent.

Our Lord came to restore the original balance in our daily relations with God and our fellow men.

All that God made on earth He made for man's use, as the Bible's very first book, Genesis, dramatically describes. Man, in turn, attains his greatest stature by the right use of these material elements to attain spiritual achievements, ultimately the knowledge and intimate union of God.

Inasmuch as we are fellow travelers on this ark of the earth, we obviously have a mutual concern for one another's welfare. This out-going attitude climaxes in the Christian's greatest virtue, charity, rooted in God, manifested to our neighbor.

History bears vivid witness to the sorry chaos that both preceded, and followed the Saviour's coming. Greed, theft, complicity with a score of attendant additional evils characterized the human race.

This flat contradiction to Christian ideals has inspired heroic saints through the ages to thrust aside any vestige of wealth and throw themselves totally on the providence of God.

Such a path is hardly open to a husband and father who knows he has another responsibility — to care for his family, and not merely be a dramatic example of Christian courage for subsequent readers of saint's biographies to admire.

That is why the modern popes especially have insisted on "social justice" — an adequate wage for an honest day's pay and reasonable opportunity to enjoy leisure and the "nicer things" in life.

**THE TWO ATTITUDES** — heroic poverty and common sense family life — are not contradictory.

The two are equally Christian, one taking its stand in reaction to the world's mad craze for merely material pleasures, the other taking the view that man is not only an individual, not just a hermit, but a member of a community — family, city, nation — and must reveal in his daily life that divine balance of using the wealth God offers him to serve those God has placed in his custody.

This all-embracing sympathy for two seeming opposite reactions to the Saviour's message has always proved puzzling to people who insist on issues being either black or white.

In His life, Christ was accused of both worldliness and unworldliness. He loved the poor, but did not rebuke the hospitality of the rich. The Church in the subsequent centuries has adopted the same attitude and uncounted the same accusations.

**Catholic Press — Weapon of Truth, Love**

Underlining the Pope's admonition that secular and religious journalists should use their media as "weapons of truth," Bishop Albert E. Zuroewski, rector of the N.C.W.C. Press Department, has issued the following statement for the annual observance of February as Catholic Press Month.

By BISHOP ZUROEWSKI

Of Belleville, Ill.

The Catholic Press in observing February as Catholic Press Month offers thanks to all who have aided the press apostolate during the past year. It was a year that brought new and serious problems and at the same time, many blessings.

We are especially grateful to the present gloriously reigning Holy Father who, from the beginning of his pontificate, has evidenced an exceptional interest in the press, both secular and religious, and has encouraged all Catholic journalists to use their media, the weapons of truth, weapons of love, toward elevating the minds, edifying what is good and radiating virtue in souls.

Since his accession to the papal throne, the eyes and ear of the world have been turned and tuned to the Vatican. From this tower of truth have gone forth words of wisdom and charity which have enlightened the minds and strengthened the souls of men. His admonitions have been received with admiration by peoples of all nations and walks of life and they have accepted with reverence the pure fragrance from the noble heart of His Holiness Pope John XXIII.

AWARE THAT the press would be responsible for transmitting his words to the entire world, His Holiness frequently spoke to representatives of the press and reminded them of their grave duties and responsibilities. Shortly after his conception he granted an audience to press representatives who had covered the concilium and thanked them for their exact reporting while gently chiding those who had published stories not founded on fact.

On many occasions during the past year he exhorted representatives of the Catholic and secular press to maintain high standards in their field and impressed upon them the responsibility which weighs on their consciences.

The apostolate of the Catholic press is to keep the reader informed and to assist him in forming a right conscience in all questions and disputes that relate to the mission of the Church — the salvation of all men.

Today the Catholic press exists, above all, to exert an active presence and testimony founded upon truth which has its origins in the American Hierarchy. "Papalism or Backbiting," issued last November received much attention from both the Catholic and secular press. However, the editorial comment and interpretation of the statement were frequently "slanted" by secular journalists. In a few instances was the complete text published and carelessly often falsified to do justice to the position of the Church.

In the words of Pope John: "The Catholic journalist does not follow the changing caprices of public opinion and even less-oriented them according to his pleasure, but he feels the duty to serve truth, remembering the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Let thy light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven' (Matt. 5:16). Address to staff of 'Catholic Daily in Bologna.'

This past year the record of the Catholic press has been resplendent. Catholic editors

have spread Christ's teaching in the pages of their newspapers.

Important question. The Bishops were repeating the traditional teaching of the Church against sin to a world that has eradicated this "ugly" word from its vocabulary.

It was a needed exposition of the Catholic doctrine on a question that was being discussed, by many who were misinterpreting the Church.

The body debated, "Population Explosion," a striking example of the value and importance of the Catholic press.

The statement of the American Hierarchy, "Population or Backbiting," issued last December, on this occasion His Holiness spoke of the "Freedom of the Press in the Juridical Order." He condemned the evils and the irresponsible press and urged the just and law-abiding citizens.

Immediately some editions carried headlines and editorials inferring that the Pope requested limitation in freedom of the press which was untrue. Again the Catholic press arose to the defense of the Papal Teaching and in strict accordance with the Pope's statement.

I salute my fellow workers in the apostolate of the Catholic press and assure them that the Church in the United States and throughout the world is grateful for their fidelity to duty and loyalty to truth.

May I conclude this annual statement with the words of Pope John XXIII to Frank J. Murphy, director of the Press Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, when he was given in audience this past summer: "Ah, the Catholic Press and what it does for the Church! It is a work that is not only important but necessary. Its activities in the United States are vast and varied. It works very hard, but I must say, work, work, work, for the Church needs all the devoted things you do."

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