

Both Spouses Must Be Willing To Accept Marriage Obligations

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We've been married 14 years and are expecting our fifth child. Beyond bringing home his pay my husband has never accepted one iota of responsibility. I'm banker, maintenance man, gardener, bill-payer, repair man, and so on, plus being wife and mother. When I ask my husband to help, he answers, "I'm just a happy-go-lucky SOB who wants to get through life with a minimum of unpleasantness." With this pregnancy I've reached the end of my strength. Must I go on bearing more children? I can't even pray anymore.



It would be consoling to believe that marriages like yours were exceptional and rare. Unfortunately, Madge, they are all too common.

Of course your first mistake was to marry a perennial adolescent although I readily admit that it's not always easy to ascertain whether the partner you choose has stopped maturing somewhere in the teens.

Young men and women who refuse to grow up have no right to marry. Profusion of the male biological capacity to reproduce, or even ability and willingness to hold a steady job, constitute no adequate grounds for entering Christian marriage.

Because people raised in our society tend to think of marriage in terms of legitimized mating rather than responsible parenthood, all too many young people select their partners on the basis of what they assume to be emotional or affectional compatibility.

They say, "We're in love, and therefore we're ready for marriage." What they really mean is, "We've been going together for some time now and have become so emotionally involved that we wish to live together." Although they realize that living together normally implies children, they give little thought to either their capacity or readiness to assume the many serious, long term commitments associated with Christian parenthood.

When men and women assume the right to procreate as a couple, they also accept the obligation to raise their children as a couple. This obligation is not a matter of choice for either parent; it is implicit in the use of the right to procreate, so that both spouses must be capable and willing to assume this obligation fully if they desire to use their marital rights.

Your problem focuses attention on the very meaning of marriage itself. When Christians marry, they agree to aid each other in fulfilling their essential Christian vocation to love God and neighbor by dedicating themselves to the service of new life, that is, to the procreation and education of children.

Although by its very nature this family enterprise of bearing and rearing children in-

volves a separation of functions and of labor, it definitely demands mutual support and equally shared responsibility.

Neither husband or wife are free to restrict their contribution to limited areas such as bringing home the paycheck or serving as sexual partner. The sincere fulfillment of their vocation demands not only love, companionship, and the sharing of one another's burdens but also a serious cooperation in raising and training the children with which God has blessed their union.

If it is worth repeating, neither husband nor wife has any choice in this matter — their obligations flow directly from the marital contract into which they have freely entered. They had no right to marry if they did not intend to accept these responsibilities toward each other and their children.

But you are married, Madge, and you want to know what you can do with an adolescent husband who obviously regards his sacred obligations as a joke. Must you go on bearing children with him?

Of course not, for he has clearly shown that he is either incapable or unwilling to assume the obligations of fatherhood. Indeed, it would have been more prudent to have a showdown on this matter before you reached the present breaking point.

Children are a sacred trust and a man whose self-confessed philosophy is "to get through life with a minimum of unpleasantness" has no right to claim the privileges of fatherhood.

Although you say you have discussed this problem with him, you obviously have not convinced him that you're serious. He still thinks it's a joke. Hence, you must be firm and clear. Point out that as long as he refuses to accept adult responsibilities, he can make no claim to be specific in regard to what you expect him to do.

If he is willing to change his ways, you may have to start slowly, spelling out in considerable detail the contributions he is expected to make. This may take time, for he has much to learn, but contrary to the old saying, you can teach some old dogs new tricks. It may help to remember that some adolescents mature quickly, once they realize they must.

A final note to young wives who may face the same problem. If you discover you have married an adolescent, don't make the mistake of bearing all the responsibilities for the family merely because you are currently able to do so.



Student Interest in Africa

Notre Dame — (RNS) — The turbulent continent of Africa was the center of interest at the 19th biennial convention of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade at the University of Notre Dame. White Sister Mary Slambins of Metuchen, N. J., whose order concentrates its efforts in the Dark Continent, discusses the African problem with some of the 4,000 youth who attended the convention. The students are (left to right): Donna Carline, Brentwood, N. Y.; Thomas Hartman, Hempstead, N. Y.; Keith Bantz, East Meadow, N. Y.; Maureen Pardee, and Noel Pfingfelder, both of Brentwood.

In Integration

'We Let Leadership Slip'

Louisville — (RNS) — A Catholic interracial leader declared here that his co-religionists had "let the leadership for integration in the South slip out of their fingers."

Mathew Ahmann of Chicago, executive director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, told delegates to the 17th annual congress of the National Federation of Catholic College Students that Catholics were not doing their part to eliminate segregation.

"It takes courage," he said, "but we must see each man the man as he would appear before God, whether he is Negro or white."

Mr. Ahmann said that prior to 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in public schools, the symbol of desegregation in the South were Catholic.

"Now they're Protestant," he declared. "What has happen-

ed? Catholic men, women, and students have lost their fire, their fight, and are losing their spirit of Christ."

The Catholic leader also criticized Northern Catholics for not measuring up to the role that has been given them.

New Homes For Needy

Knoek — (RNS) — Archbishop Mathew Kavukatt of Changanerry, Kerala, India, who has been visiting Ireland, said here that on the occasion of this year of the silver anniversary of his ordination he intends to build 3,000 homes for the needy to help combat Communism in Kerala.

He said in an interview before leaving for home that his plan would go into operation in about six months time and probably would take five years to complete. Each home will consist of two small rooms, a kitchen and a verandah.

Soviets In A Monastery

Friars' Fare Irks Olympic Stars

Rome — (RNS) — A miniature cold war erupted here between Roman Catholic priests and Communists when about 100 Russians in Rome for the Olympic Games were housed as paying guests at the Salesian Fathers' Santa Maria Auxiliatrix institution for boys.

The Russians were indignant of frozen politeness the friars were sent to the institution by and their Red guests found an Italian travel agency, and themselves engaged in ideological arguments sparked by a remark of one of the Russians that Christ was the first Communist. The debate was waged to remove all crucifixes and religious pictures from the walls, the priests being able to speak back them in a box, and hand them to the director of the institution. They refused to listen to his objections.

Another dispute between the Russians wanted black bread; confiscated badges and booklets the priests could only provide the Russians had distributed white bread.

Later, the Salesian Fathers said that the Russians had distributed white bread.

Freethinkers Charge

Flag Pledge A Brainwash

Albany — (RNS) — An appeal was filed here challenging the legality of the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance recited by school children.

Joseph Lewis of North Salem, N.Y., president of the Freethinkers of America, and Alfred L. Klein of Staten Island, N.Y., asked the Appellate Division to overturn a 1957 decision by Supreme Court Justice Isadore Bookstein.

Judge Bookstein's decision denied that the phrase "under God" violated the principle of church-state separation when recited in public schools. The change in the Pledge was authorized by the State Board of Regents, after Congress had approved the new version in 1954.

Mr. Lewis and Mr. Klein contended that the Bookstein ruling authorized compulsory teaching of religion in the public schools.

THEIR BRIEF states: "The regrettable recitation of the phrase becomes a veritable machine for the 'brainwashing' of these youngsters, unlawfully conditioning them to the unconscious acceptance of religious dogma."

"It demonstrates the existence of an intolerable degree of compulsion upon the young children of non-believers," the brief adds, "a pressured force that requires them to listen to, learn and repeat thousands of times a religious concept which they repudiate and abhor."

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