

What Did You Mean About Regulating Family Size?

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S. J.
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In your article in family income and education, I was completely astounded to read that you would tell a mother to take a job so her children could receive a Catholic education. And just what did you mean by that but restricting non-regulating family size? I couldn't believe my eyes. Is this a new doctrine? We have seven children, and after two miscarriages last year when I asked the priest about regulation, he said "God takes care of you." Don't you agree?

The article you mention brought a flood of letters from some sections of the country. I assumed it would be the reaction of indignation and protest to indignation and even crude scorn.

I was told that I was ignorant of Catholic doctrine and the facts of life, that my statements were "close to blasphemy," "ludicrous," "don't sound like a priest," "not in keeping with church's teaching that you have a large family and populate the world," "a serious blow to family life," and "make us ashamed of our Catholic heritage and traditions."

In general the letters were interesting and revealing. It appears this writer would do well to "absent himself from the lofty walls of security, calm and serenity in the university, and meet some 'idealistic Catholics who face problems far removed from the very secure Father Thomas.'" Evidently, I don't get around much, or travel with the wrong people when I do!

One aspect of the reaction distresses me as a Christian. Many of the respondents assumed that because they differed with me, they were not bound by the usual norms of charity and justice. Frankly, I am puzzled by the tone of some of the letters.

Now let us turn to the source of your shock and astonishment. First, there is my answer to the question asking whether a mother might take a job in order to send her children to a Catholic school. Most of the protests to my solution insisted that the children should be sent to a public school.



This is not the issue. If you had read the letter, you will discover that this mother wants her children to get a Catholic education. Her question is, may she get a job to make this possible.

If you had read my answer, you will find that I spelled out rather carefully the conditions under which she might take a job. If the conditions can be met, she is free to make her choice. Securing a Catholic education for her children is a worthy family objective, and she may feel less optimistic than some readers about the long range effects of a secular education.

Also, if you read the article, you will find that I urged parent groups and teachers to avoid the unnecessary, costly practices now current in some schools. A few readers sent itemized accounts of such extra costs.

Some suggested tackling the unjust double tax burden carried by supporters of a re-

ligious school system. Readers interested in this proposal should join Citizens for Educational Freedom (2199 S. Grand Blvd., St. Louis 18, Mo.)

But the greatest emotional reaction was aroused by my suggestion that "young couples might give the need for Catholic education serious thought in regulating the size of their families." My position is clear. Following traditional Catholic doctrines as expressed in canon law, I take it that the primary purpose of marriage is the procreation and education of offspring. Since the maintenance of our society requires an ever increasing period of formal education, and public schools are religiously neutral or negative, Catholic parents have the right and obligation to plan for the religious education of their children.

The added economic burden this currently involves should consequently be taken

into consideration in regulating family size.

Readers who are shocked by the term "regulation" should ponder the words of Pius XII (Morality and Marriage, Nov. 26, 1951), "the Church knows how to cooperate with sympathy and understanding the real difficulties of the married state in our day. Therefore, in our last allocation on conjugal morality, we affirmed the legitimacy and, at the same time, the limits — in truth very wide — of a regulation of offspring which, unlike so-called 'birth control,' is compatible with the law of God. One may even hope (but in this matter the Church naturally leaves the judgment to medical science) that science will succeed in providing this licit method with a sufficiently secure basis. The most recent information seems to confirm such a hope."

Some correspondents insisted that periodic continence (rhythm) is either ineffective or impossible. Reliable studies show that this is simply contrary to fact. Others maintained that a young couple couldn't know what their future economic position might be.

Are we to believe that they are incapable of making a reasonable judgment, so that if they marry young and have several children in rapid succession, they cannot foresee the possible need to start spacing pregnancies?

Finally, I was particularly disturbed by the bitterness of some respondents. They implied they had their children only because they were obliged to do so. People who do not regard parenthood and the service of new life as a noble privilege should not choose the vocation of marriage as their way of serving God.

Highway To Heaven

La Paz, Bolivia — A few days after Willie Herman and his jazz band arrived in this capital city on a recent good will trip, a Chicago Marksmen, Father Bernard F. Ryan, invited the musicians to his sky-high Indian mission in the towering Andes.

While trudging along the winding, rugged mountain trail, a Negro drummer turned to Herman and remarked: "Man, I thought you were visiting a padre — this is more like going to see God!"

Worsening Film Fare Draws Prelates' Protest

(Washington — (NC) — A committee of U.S. bishops has added flashes of lightning to the storm gathering over moral deterioration in Hollywood films.

The five bishops who guide the work of the National Legion of Decency charged Hollywood with "bold departures" from decency and called for "an unmistakable national protest" by the country's 40 million Catholics.

The bishops noted they are not alone in concern over the moral quality of movies today. "We cite the widespread criticism which recent Hollywood films have provoked throughout the entire country," they said.

"The appeal to Catholics to help clean up movies was made by the Bishops Committee for Motion Pictures, Radio and Television little more than a week before the day, Dec. 11, when Catholics renew their pledge of the Legion of Decency."

The bishops charged Hollywood with allowing its own production code to be compromised and boastfully ignored by some filmmakers.

Noting the U.S. hierarchy's support of self-regulation rather than legal action, the prelates called for reform of the code administration.

They also said Hollywood must come up with a system of self-classification to protect youths from material they are not yet mature enough to understand.

The bishops specifically criticized Hollywood for the "subtle and insidious introduction" into movies of "the sensational presentation of religion as well as for its new-found predilection for pornography and perverted subject matter."

The committee urged Catholic pastors to explain the Legion of Decency pledge carefully to parishioners, showing that it means bold support for worthy films and jettison of support for morally bad movies.

Parents were asked to check motion picture listings of films. "Parents must be reminded that they are seriously delinquent in the fulfillment of their parental duties if they permit their children to attend films not approved for them," the bishops said.

They asked Catholics not to support films that fail to seek approval of either the Legion of

Decency or the National Legion of Decency. These films are chiefly independent or foreign-produced movies.

(The Courier Journal indicates such films as "not listed" in the weekly Theater Guide.) The bishops noted that in 1950, the Legion of Decency rated 24.23 per cent of the U.S. films it reviewed as morally objectionable, compared with 14.59 per cent in 1949.

While these percentages alone are distressing, the committee said, "deeper concern must be expressed over the fact that the moral quality, both in theme and treatment, of this year's objectionable film product represents a bold and unprecedented departure by Hollywood from previously accepted and respected standards for a mass medium of entertainment."

It accused Hollywood's "quality films" and not just cheap exploitation films of containing objectionable material. "A large number of Hollywood's 1950 quality films have not only poisoned the entertainment of our public, but have slaughtered the innocence of American youth," it said.

FOUR SUGGESTIONS were made to return "to responsible production and exhibition":

1. Finding a way to protect youth, "a system of self-classification."

Prelate Cites Need For Paid Catechists

Boston — (RNS) — A proposal that trained members of the laity be paid to teach Church doctrine throughout the world will be submitted at the forthcoming Ecumenical Council in Rome by Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston.

The prelate said the Church cannot depend entirely on priests to do the teaching necessary to save the world from Communism. "A priest has no monopoly on the science of theology," Cardinal Cushing declared.

COMMENTING on his recent trip to South America, the cardinal pointed out that one-third of all the Catholics on earth were in South America. Within a generation, he said, the 20 support films that fail to seek approval of either the Legion of

production code or the Legion of Decency cannot be lightly disregarded.

2. Sincere, intelligent application of the code in "adult-oriented production."

3. A "radical reformation of the excesses in exploiting films."

4. Exhibitors must limit the films they show to those which carry the seal of approval of the Hollywood code.

The statement was signed by Bishop James A. McNulty of Paterson, N.J., committee chairman; Bishop John King Musso of Steubenville, Ohio; Auxiliary Bishop Alden J. Bell of Los Angeles; Bishop Lawrence J. Shehan of Bridgeport, Conn.; and Bishop James V. Casey of Lincoln, Neb.

The prelates, in noting that others have been critical recently of Hollywood's film fare, said the increasing emphasis which films are placing upon unhealthy sex and brutal violence has aroused the deep social concern of religious leaders of all faiths, of public officials and of respected critics and journalists in the secular and religious press.

At the same time, the station noted that help from the U.S. is now mostly in money. "Because the Polish Communist authorities have raised custom duties to such a high level that sending parcels is now impracticable."

The cardinal attributed this to "the abysmal ignorance" of 90 per cent of the South American Catholics about their faith.

He said it would require 245,000 priests to educate these people, but noted that there was only one priest to every 7,000 Catholics in South America.

"I can find no other practical way we can reach the multitudes," the cardinal said.

COURIER-JOURNAL
Friday, December 2, 1950

I Hope You Understand

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope John XXIII, at an international audience on his 79th birthday, said he was "always ready to move over to the other shore" whenever God so willed.

In excellent spirits and apparent good health, he made the remark in a talk in 2,000 persons, including 1,000 staff members of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization representing many nations.

The Pope spoke after Norman Wright, FAO deputy director general, had delivered a brief address of good wishes in English.

The Pope, who has been taking English lessons, said he had "sufficiently understood" Mr. Wright's talk and hoped that the FAO group, in turn, would understand what he was saying.

The Pontiff praised the humanitarian work being done by FAO. He exhorted the staff members to "concern themselves, in addition to the distribution of the material daily bread, also with that of spiritual bread."

U.S. Aid To Poland

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Vatican Radio praised Americans of Polish origin for the financial help they are giving to the Roman Catholic Church in Poland.

At the same time, the station noted that help from the U.S. is now mostly in money. "Because the Polish Communist authorities have raised custom duties to such a high level that sending parcels is now impracticable."

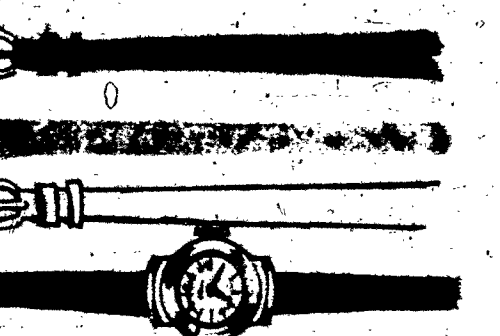
New Rubrics Wait Jan. 1

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Sacred Congregation of Rites has issued a reminder that the new code of rubrics, making changes in the Roman missal and breviary, may not be used until January 1.

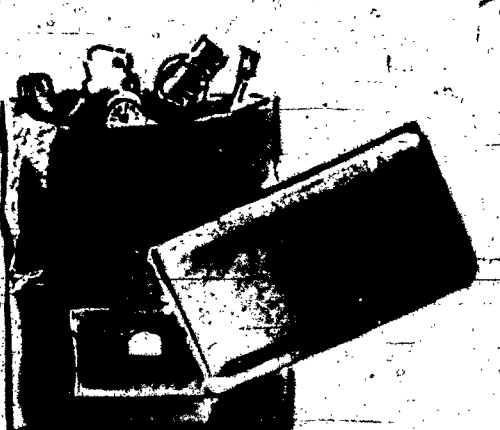
The changes were announced last July 25 by Pope John XXIII. They were published in Vatican City and go into effect January 1.



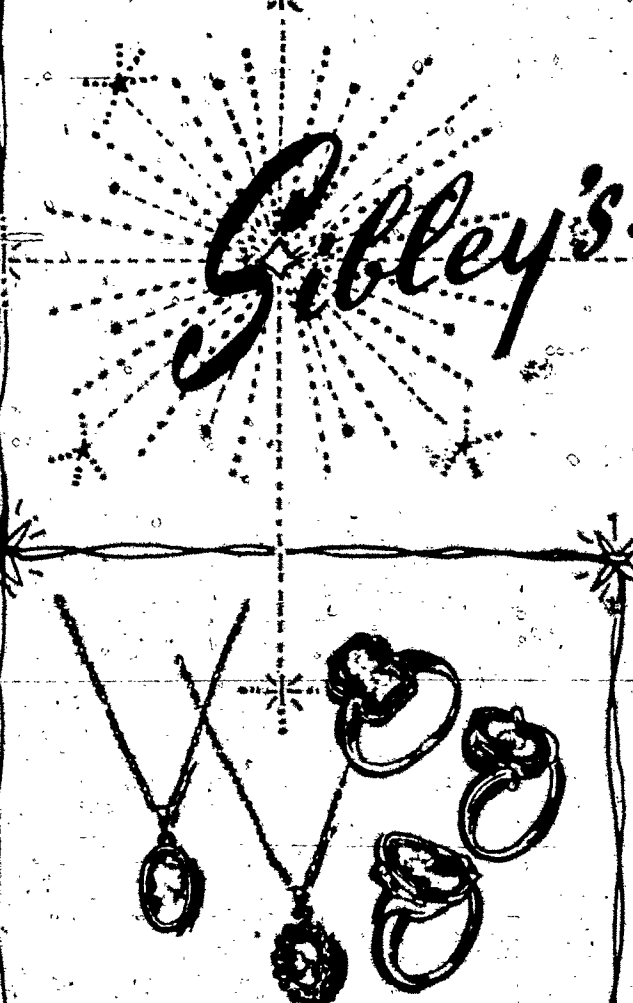
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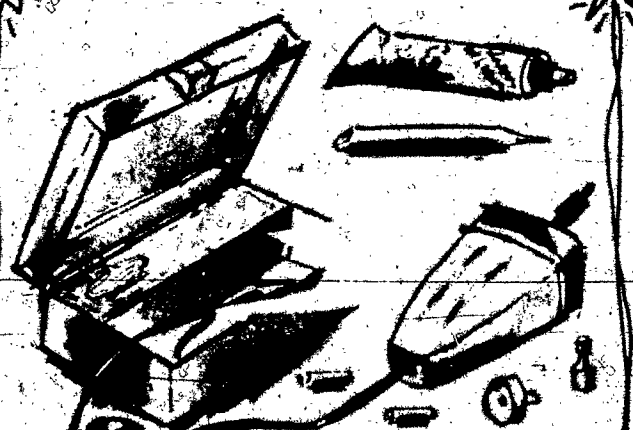
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