

My Married Brothers and Sisters Won't Help Support Mother

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

I was a good sister until I asked my three married brothers and one married brother to help me support our widowed mother. I had to go to work at 14 because my father drank. Now after 30 years I'm still supporting my mother. The others won't help. They say I'm single, working, living in with mother, and it's my duty to support her. The factory where I worked has moved South and my new job doesn't pay well. What can I do?



Your letter calls attention to a problem that is perhaps as old as the family itself. There are few cases that better illustrate the tendency of seemingly good people to rationalize or justify their basic selfishness. Although each situation may involve some distinctive, incidental characteristics, the essential traits are similar in all.

The problem generally arises as follows. One of the children frequently one of older girls, goes to work to help support the family. Since her help seems so necessary, she postpones the thought of marriage until her sisters and brothers are raised.

By this time her opportunities are greatly limited, and at the same time, her parents may have come to rely on her support to such an extent that her marriage would threaten their security. She seems to have no choice but to continue working.

Meanwhile, her sisters and brothers have started raising families of their own. They are quite content to take the parental situation for granted since it relieves them of all concern. Selfishly forgetting their sister's past dedication and sacrifice, they now assume that she alone has the obligation to take care of their parents.

Of course, they can give many reasons why they can't help. They have their own families to support, their sister isn't married, she doesn't have any responsibilities,

and so on. Hence they and their partners are indignant when it is suggested that they contribute to the support of their parents. Their sister has chosen to remain unmarried and to live at home. It's her job to support her parents. They are married and have their own responsibility to fulfill.

What they are really saying is that their older sister should have been "smarter", that is, adequately selfish when she was younger. If she had used her head and married as they did, the problem would be different. She has only herself to blame for the present situation and she's going to have to live with it. They're just not in position to help, while as an unmarried person, she has no other obligations. In fact, it's her duty.

This line of reasoning apparently soothes many a conscience. As one cynic has remarked, the convenient thing about being a rational creature is that one can find good

reasons for doing about anything one wants to do.

But such specious reasoning doesn't answer moral problems. We must start with definite principles and apply them to the situation at hand.

What moral principles apply here? The relationships between parents and children are the object of one of the Ten Commandments and consequently touch the very foundations of the moral and social life. While they are immature, children owe their parents love, honor, respect and obedience. Obedience ceases when they are grown up, but the other qualities remain. The Commandment obviously requires that children support their aged parents if they are in need.

This obligation, like all the others, is personal, that is, it cannot be delegated or pushed off on one child, although circumstances may be such that one will be in a better position to help than the others.

Hence it should be clear that your sisters and brothers have a serious obligation to help support your mother. The fact that you are unmarried or are living in with your mother does not relieve them of this obligation.

The obligation is personal, and although the extent to which each child may be able to help may vary, there is no way of getting around the essential obligation. There is a divine commandment involved, and each child must answer to God for its fulfillment.

What can you do? Perhaps very little. They have refused your request and further demands may so disturb family relationships that your mother will feel unloved and unwanted. You can only appeal to their consciences.

Remind them that although they now have you in kind of "squeeze play" because you do not wish to hurt your mother, someday God will ask them how they personally "loved their father and mother."

Peace Corps Idea Stirs U.S. Youth

New York—(RNS)—Religious leaders were quick to endorse President Kennedy's creation of a Peace Corps to aid underdeveloped free nations and hailed it as a major asset to their own volunteer global programs for human betterment.

The corps was set up on a "temporary pilot basis" by a Presidential executive order, but Mr. Kennedy indicated he would ask Congress to enact legislation placing the agency on a permanent basis.

No sooner was the corps announced than phones at its temporary headquarters in Washington, D.C., began ringing constantly with young people offering to lend their skills to the cause of world peace and progress.

Even before the corps was created, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups supported the idea and offered to assist government planners in any U.S. efforts to build a peaceful world.

As part of their world relief and missionary efforts religious bodies have been carrying on volunteers-for-peace projects for many years. These include ecumenical work camps of the World Council of Churches and the larger Protestant denominations and various projects of the historic peace churches, like the Quakers, Mennonites and Brethrens.

Catholics have given impetus to assisting underdeveloped nations through their new "Papal Volunteers" program under which trained laymen and laywomen are sent to Latin, Central and South America to serve in social, educational and religious projects.

The Catholic Association for International Peace has seen the corps idea not only as an instrument for world peace but also as an opportunity for humanitarian service and mutual cultural and social enrichment.

In creating the corps, President Kennedy said "we intend to make full use of the resources and talents of private institutions and groups. Universities, voluntary agencies, labor unions and industry will be asked to share in this effort—contributing diverse sources of energy and imagination—making it clear that the responsibility for peace is the responsibility of our entire society."

The President noted that life in the corps "will not be easy," but it will be "rich and satisfying. He said that no salaries will be paid and allowances will be at a level sufficient only to maintain health and meet basic needs.

"Men and women," he said, "will be expected to work and live alongside the nationals of the country in which they are stationed—doing the same work, eating the same food, talking the same language."

Funeral Held For Pastor Of Clyde

(Continued from Page 1)

Monsignors Edward Ball and John Duffy were deacons of honor. Rev. John Dillon was deacon and Rev. Eugene McFarland, subdeacon.

Serving the Mass were the Rev. Fathers Francis Feeney, John Healey, Walter Carron, Raymond Ringwood, Elmer McDonald, Thomas Statt and James Russell.

ATTENDING the Mass were the Rt. Rev. Monsignors Wilfred Craugh, Richard Burns, Leslie Whalen, John Ball, William Naughton, Gerald Lambert, Edward McQuaid, John Randall, James Cuffney, Charles Shay, Dennis Hickey, Thomas Driscoll and the Very Rev. Monsignors Joseph Sullivan and Donald Cleary.

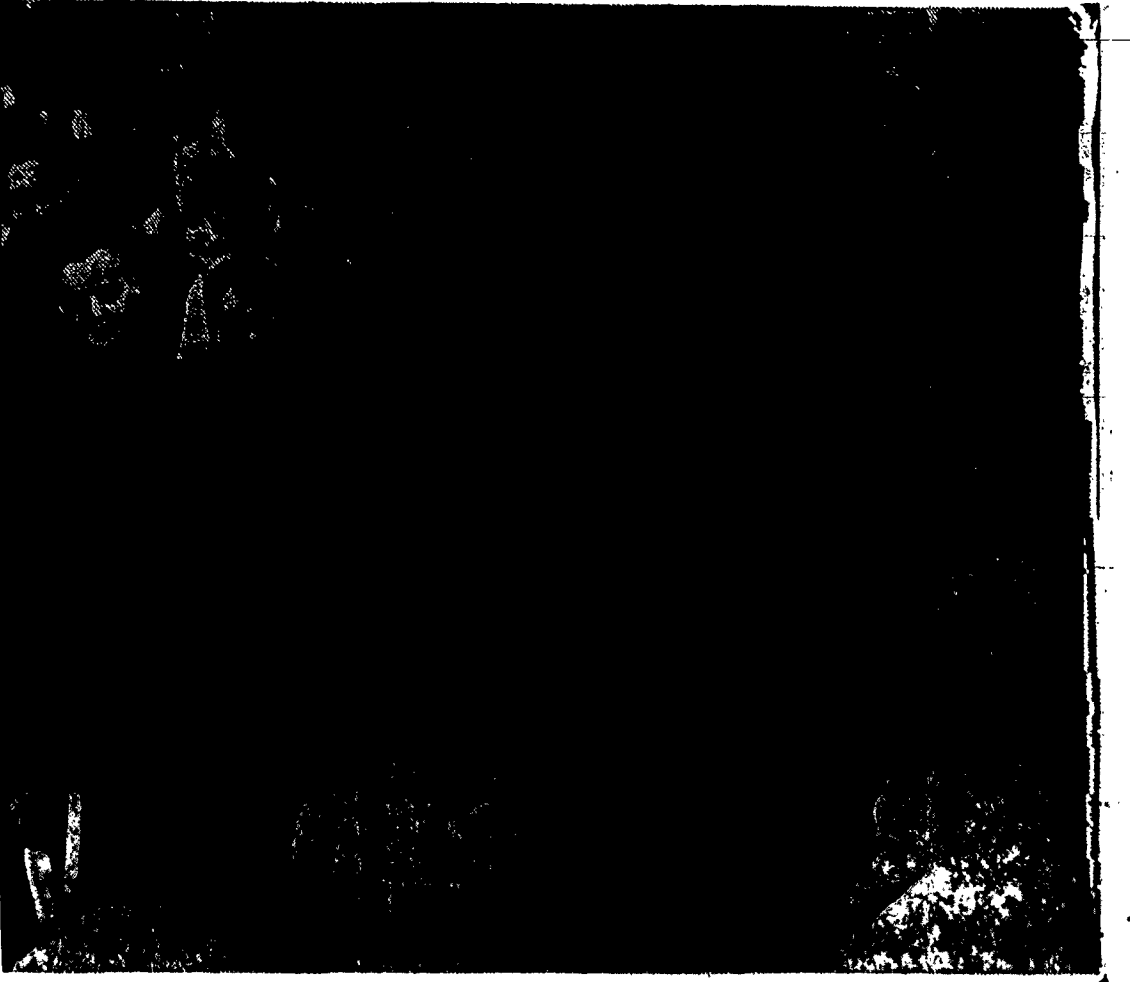
An additional 78 priests joined parishioners in filling St. John's Church for the funeral rites.

\$7 Million For College

Atchison—(RNS)—A ten-year, \$7 million development program designed to add at least five new buildings to existing facilities of St. Benedict's College here was announced by the Rev. Grendon Downey, O.S.B., president of the Catholic institution.



Bishop Kearney speaks to crowds at groundbreaking rite on 'equal rights' for Catholic school children. Below, he digs into dirt at Greece site of new Cardinal Mooney High School.



ITALIAN AND FRENCH PROVINCIAL IN BEAUTIFUL WARM-TONED CHERRY

each group **\$299**



The graceful styling of either group is relaxing to live with — retains its charm throughout the years. Beautifully crafted in solid cherry with a distressed fruitwood finish and accented by antiqued brass hardware and delicately carved details. Construction is of the finest, including such refinements as completely finished drawer interiors. Each group contains double dresser and mirror, chest and bed. Sibley's Furniture, Fifth Floor

Use Sibley's Convenient Budget Account, take months to pay