

All Brothers, Sisters Obligated To Provide Widowed Mom's Needs

By FATHER THOMAS, S.J.

When my father died several years ago, mother couldn't keep up the home either financially or physically. I was the only one of the four married children who offered to take her in. Mother's no financial problem, but she's a helpless, passive woman with great emotional needs. My sisters and brother seldom call here and never invite her to visit them, yet she defends them and expects my home and family to be at her disposal. Please spell out the moral principles that should guide all of us in this matter.



To begin with, Ed, I want to compliment you on your fine sense of generous loyalty and consideration. In the not uncommon family situation that your letter describes, it is very easy for married children to find that they lack room, their partner won't stand for it, or their children will resent it.

What they are really saying, of course, is that they do not want to be disturbed. If somebody else will bear the burden, they are quite relieved and promptly proceed to forget all about their own obligations in the matter.

It should be obvious that individual circumstances may be such that all the children in a family will not be able to contribute equally, but this should not be used as an excuse to avoid all responsibility.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that an investigation of any organized human group — community, parish, school, voluntary association, family, and so on, — reveals that only a relatively limited number of persons are willing to assume responsibility or take on work that is not strictly required. The majority sit back and wait for the next fellow to step up and take the job.

In all such groups, most of the work is done by a cooperative, generous few. And it is generally the same few — others always manage to find excuses! Wouldn't it be a tremendous break-through education if we could discover how to make people generous?

Your letter also points up another interesting feature, commented upon in the family literature of all cultures. When one child generally assumes total responsibility for a needy parent, the parent tends to take such services for granted and lavishes affection and attention on the other children and their families.

This inconsistent attitude is not easily explained, but since it appears so universally, I'm inclined to think it indicates the parent's unconscious attempt to disguise the painful fact that she is neglected by the others and consequently makes a desperate bid to gain their affection. She is sure of the one, and though she dare not face it squarely, she fears the others no longer care for her.

What principles should guide you, your sisters and brother, and your mother? Well, Ed, in the first place you are married; you have a wife and children of your own, and they have rights that must be recognized. Your family life should not be built around your mother.

though she is now definitely a part of your family.

By this I mean that all must recognize and accept that your wife is in charge of the home, that the discipline of the children, the social life of the family, the unique climate or atmosphere of the home, must be established by you and your wife.

Because your mother has been accustomed to running a home of her own, she may find this difficult to accept, yet she must recognize that though she is welcome, she is not in charge; nor can she expect your family activities to be ruled by her likes or dislikes.

Your sisters and brother have a serious obligation to help you provide for her emotional needs. They know she tends to be passive, dependent, and lacking in initiative, and they consequently must share the burden of keeping her reasonably content by visiting her frequently and by inviting her to stay with them, so that your family may experience some freedom and relief.

According to your letter, they have been guilty of selfish, disgraceful neglect, and though she seems to take their part, you must make it plain to them that they are acting like pagans and must answer to God for it.

Parents who must live-in with their children also have obligations. They have a right to expect support, respect, and affection, but they must also be cooperative in adjusting and adapting to their new situation. There is no inherent reason why older people must become inflexible, critical of the new, childishly self-centered and disinterested in people, events and ideas. Many never do, and it is a privilege to live with them.

Your problem calls for firm handling, Ed. Do not be disturbed by false criticism. Your sisters and brother must learn that they have obligations, and your mother must learn that your family has rights. There may be a few tears shed in the adjustment, but whom is the present situation really benefiting?

Carmelites Win Entry Permit In Sweden

Stockholm — (NC)—Sweden is to receive its first cloistered convent in almost four centuries.

The Carmelite nuns from Ghent in Belgium who came here five years ago have received formal permission from the Swedish government to establish their house in the southern village of Glumslöv as an enclosed convent according to canon law.

After five months' delay and hesitation, Sweden's Parliament approved a government recommendation that the convent be given legal recognition.

THE NINE Carmelites were the first to apply for legal recognition of their convent under Sweden's 10-year-old Freedom of Religion Act, which abolished practically all restrictions on Catholics. The single exception is that monasteries and convents cannot establish themselves without formal government permission.

The practical effect of approval is that the Carmelites

community may grow to 21 nuns. At present the community consists of the six Belgian nuns who came to Sweden in 1956 and three Swedish nuns who have since entered. No immediate expansion of the community is anticipated.

Stipulations laid down by the Swedish government concerning the convent agree in principle with canon law and the constitutions of the Carmelite Order. These concern inspection of the premises, supervision of the community's activities, the age (at least 24) at which members may make permanent vows, circumstances of possible release from such vows and protection of the members' civil rights and obligations.

Farm Boys

Havana — (NC)—The Soviet ship that brought 300 Soviet students to Cuba is scheduled to sail back to the U.S.S.R. with 1,000 Cuban farm boys on board for indoctrination in the Soviet Union.

New Floodlights at Vatican

Vatican City — (RNS) — The fountains and the dome of St. Peter's Basilica are now lighted at night, giving this unusual effect. Note the statues of saints lining the basilica above St. Peter's Square.

Spain's Labor Turmoil

By JAIME FONSECA (N.C.W.C. News Service)

A long smoldering conflict between Catholic workers' organizations in Spain and the government trade union monopoly is flaring up over the issue of representation in elections.

The Young Christian Workers organization (JOC) and the Workers' Guilds (HOAC) — both Catholic Action groups — have filed several protests since last September, the latest in May, against the way union elections are run and against the lack of real freedom and representation for the workers.

The Church groups have no trade union standing. Spain's sole legal political party, the Falange, and its National Movement control all aspects of industry and labor relations. But the influence of the Catholic groups as independent social action centers for some 100,000 young and adult Catholic workers is growing.

The conflict is only part of a dangerously explosive labor situation in Spain today, where more and more workers, deprived of freedom and representation through normal channels, are taking recourse to agitation and subversion. Government repression through the police or the military is quick to follow.

"They are afraid of the worker for two reasons: social injustice in Spain is still an open wound, and the worker has not changed his bitterness," a foreign correspondent told me.

Spain's "Organization Sindical" or trade union organization is not only what experts call a "vertical" system embracing management, technicians and labor in the same union; but it is also deeply committed to the political line of the government.

Of the 12 million employed Spaniards, there are eight million workers and 2.5 million management representatives in the trade unions. The top leaders for each of the 23 confederations grouped in the main trades and services are appointed by the government. There are about 300,000 elective posts in the local and factory boards.

"The whole thing is run in an authoritarian way, from top to bottom," Marcelino Robles, a blacksmith at Oviedo, said, while his forge warmed up. He doesn't belong to the union, but his relatives do. "There are some mediation councils, and

many work all right; but that isn't enough," he went on.

To the instances of unfair practices he mentioned, I can add these:

• The fishing industry in most of southern Spain is controlled by big labor bosses. They make the independent fisherman's life impossible by blocking his access to free markets and forcing him to sell to their own combines. Middle-sized and small fishing fleets are deep in debt and their equipment is defective. Those working for the big fleets have their wages tied to the amount of the catch. But the owners never tell the real weight. Besides, the ship owners pad their expenses, which the fishermen must also share. In one instance a group of fishermen, after three months' work at sea, should have received some 12,000 pesetas or about \$200. They were paid only \$100 each.

• At Murcia, two apprentices after more than five years in a furniture factory earn 25 cents a day, although they have been given jobs as skilled workers. At Barcelona, about 200 youths were working without the apprenticeship contracts required from the owners.

• The economic measures taken by the government early in 1960 to stop inflation and give the peseta international stability (at 60 to a dollar) also provoked a decline of 7 per cent in the per capita income of the Spanish people and hit the lower classes hardest.

• Workers can do little to change the situation. Agricultural production went down 8.32 per cent from 1959 to 1960, and less food in the market means higher prices. At the same time industrial output went down 3.3 per cent and there were cuts in overtime and extra pay. Unemployment went up.

"The whole stabilization program has rested on the shoulders of the poor," an economist in industrial northern Spain told me. "If any one comes up with a good social measure, chances are the rich react quickly and snip it off."

"Trade unions? Fog me they do little," one of the "victims" of the fishing cartel told me. "They are good to collect fees, and that's it. You are done if you complain, too. You will never find a job around here again, nor credit, nor a chance to put out to sea."

Despite all this bitterness, the Franco regime has over the years improved the lot of millions of workers.

Actually, it is more the fault of the whole social and economic structure in Spain that no further strides can be made. Yet some trade union officials are convinced things have to improve, and fast.

The unions are unquestionably a political tool of the regime — somehow regimented through fear of a return to the chaotic and communistic forces of the past. But the regime has granted workers a substantial number of fringe benefits.

In a recent exchange of letters with the Spanish Bishops' Minister of Labor and national head of the Falange, Jose Solis Ruiz, listed the benefits—thousands of workers homes, 2.5 million new jobs in two decades, vocational training schools, thousands of acres opened to agriculture by irrigation, new factories established by the National Institute of Industries (now employing about 120,000 persons), social security, maternity and health insurance, and family subsidies.

But still Marcelino, the Oviedo blacksmith, is right. It isn't enough. The present system offers no real bargaining power for workers, although an attempt was made to give it to them in 1959. Wages are kept to a minimum in all industries, averaging 60 cents a day. As the Catholic workers complain, there cannot be a strong voice for labor in the way unions are now conducted.

Furthermore, an over-protected industry, a strongly entrenched capitalistic and selfish upper class, and the connivance of some government officials — in spite of some socialistic trends — all work against the underdog of Spanish economy: the worker.

A document widely circulated in May by HOAC and JOC summarizing the workers' grievances was addressed to Mr. Solis. It was never answered.

In the Catholic groups protested against the fact that 10 weeks before last September's trade union elections, the government decided to shorten from 10 to three days the time allowed to publicize the list of candidates. The government also made it difficult to present independent candidates. There were other irregularities.

"The political line supersedes at every level the social representation of the workers' votes," they wrote. "More and more workers, so deceived, will lose whatever faith they had in the trade unions," the JOC and HOAC charged.

Peace Corps In Canada

Montreal — (NC) — Canada has set up its counterpart of President Kennedy's Peace Corps.

It is the Canadian University Service Overseas. Its first chairman is Msgr. H. J. Somers, president of St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N.S.

The CUSO is a nationwide agency to co-ordinate existing programs which are offering technical and intellectual assistance to underprivileged countries. It is an expansion of seven volunteer services composed of Canadian students for overseas work. It was established here (June 6) by representatives of the various universities and their student bodies.

Pilgrims Climb Hill

Belfast — (NC) — Twenty thousand pilgrims climbed the slopes of County Antrim's holy hill of Slemish, traditional pasture of Patrick the slave boy herdsman, to honor the 1500th anniversary of the death of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland.

Seven bishops and hundreds of priests and nuns were among the pilgrims at a mountain-side Mass which opened Patrician Year celebrations in Down and County Wick.

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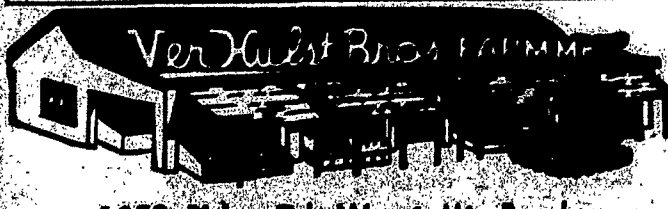
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Senate Approves Control Bill

Washington—The Senate has passed a bill to establish a federal commission to investigate the obscenity problem.

The measure is cosponsored by Sens. Karl E. Mundt of South Dakota and Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, along with 22 other senators.

Bills for the same purpose are pending in the House of Representatives.

THE MEASURE would establish a 17-member group to be

known as the Commission on Noxious and Obscene Matters and Materials.

It would be made up of members of Congress, Federal officials, clergymen, representatives of the publishing and entertainment industries, and state and local law enforcement officials.

The Senate passed a similar bill in the last session of Congress, but the House did not take final action on it.

The proposed commission would study the obscenity problem and report back its findings and recommendations to Congress and the President.

The Senate Government Operations Committee, in a favorable report on the bill last month, said the proposed commission "could then recommend steps to be taken both by legislative bodies and by private groups and citizens to meet the threat."

Liturgy Day Aids Families

Pueblo — (NC) — Bishop Charles A. Buswell of Pueblo said he is elated over the success of two "Days of Christian Living" programs conducted here and in Grand Junction.

Designed to strengthen liturgical life in each family of every parish in the diocese, the programs were staged after weeks of preparation.

Unite For Prayer Day

Sydney — (NC) — Catholic university societies of Australia will unite for the first time with Non-Catholic university groups in praying for the Christian students of the world.

At the same time (June 23) that a Mass is being celebrated in St. Mary's cathedral by Norman Thomas Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney, the Non-Catholic Australian Student Christian Movement will hold services on the Sydney University campus.

Advertisement for galv-a-grip paint, featuring a can of paint and text: 'READY-TO-USE galv-a-grip NEW! PROTECTS PAINTS BEAUTIFUL...'

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