



Big City Anonymity Smogs Easy Virtue

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What has happened to the Catholic attitude toward infidelity? I'm an air-lines' hostess living in a large city away from home and have been dating a Catholic young man who seemed very serious in his intentions, even to the point of taking me out to have dinner with his Catholic parents. The other day one of our Non-Catholic pilots asked me if I knew that the young man was married and had several children? Why didn't his parents or friends give me this information? Are they indifferent to infidelity, or do they think it's a joke? I don't.

Your letter points up a very serious problem, Catherine, for your experience is not as exceptional as it may appear to some of my readers. Of course, this situation is less likely to occur in small towns or settled communities in which people are well acquainted with each other's backgrounds, but in our highly mobile, urbanized societies it is becoming increasingly easy to maintain convenient anonymity.

Under these circumstances, some young women do not discover the real married status of their acquaintances until they have become deeply involved, with the result that they either cause a divorce, enter an invalid marriage, or suffer a sadly disillusioning experience.

But the real issue your letter raises is the amazingly immoral attitude of Catholics toward such situations. In your case it was the callous indifference of the man's parents and friends.

In another case with which I have had to deal recently, the young woman reported that she had met some twenty married and unmarried friends of the man who had proposed marriage to her, yet none of them had bothered to inform her that he was "happily" married and had three lovely children.

WHAT HAS happened to the Catholic attitude toward infidelity? Have Catholics become merely indifferent, or are they guided by the mistaken belief that what others do in this regard is none of their concern, and consequently that adults who keep company must be mindful of the old marketplace warning, "Caveat emptor" (Let the buyer beware)? I believe that the immoral attitude we are discussing shares in both these traits.

In the first place, there is indifference to the serious sin of infidelity. This is obvious on the part of the shallow Don Juans involved, for they know that they are violating a sacred commitment, sealed by a sacrament and binding for life under all circumstances. But there is also

indifference to sin on the part of parents and friends. They apparently do not regard infidelity as a serious offense, since they cooperate with the offending partner by helping him conceal his marital status. This is a positive act on their part. Normally, parents and friends would mention a man's wife and children, or give some indication that he was married, during the course of a friendly conversation.

Together with this indifference toward sin, there is also a lack of concern for others. The attitude seems to be, "I'm not my brother's keeper. He's old enough to know what he's up to, and the girl should be smart enough not to be taken in with his 'line.'"

This is sheer hypocrisy. For it is their tacit conspiracy of silence that makes it possible for the cheater to get by with his deception, while the innocent party is bound to be misled by their actions. Of course they will argue that they do not want to run the risk of offending this double-dealer. Doesn't this imply that they regard the sin as trivial or acknowledge no concern for the welfare of others?

How do such Catholics "get that way"? Constant, unthinking exposure to a secular climate of opinion that does not recognize man's essential dependence on God and his consequent obligation to live according to God's laws has gradually dulled their Christian sense of sin. They still profess belief in the sovereignty of God, in heaven, hell, and the last judgment, and the individuals' personal responsibility to God for his actions, but these beliefs are no longer operative in their lives. They may dislike infidelity and avoid it themselves, yet modern society has conditioned them to regard it as a kind of clever game rather than a cheap deception and a violation of one's word to God and partner.

The development of such attitude has serious implications for American Catholics. As I have explicated at length when discussing the qualities needed for religious survival in this secular society (The American Catholic Family, Prentice-Hall, 1956), the Catholic minority must not only know their family values and hold them in high esteem, they must also provide group support in living up to them.

Individual Catholics will not long withstand the impact of secular views if Catholics as a group thoughtlessly cooperate with the morally unfaithful in their midst, thus giving the impression that infidelity is a minor offense or a matter of personal option.

Miami Diocese Aids Refugees From Cuba

Miami — (RNS) — Catholic Services, in his most recent relief agencies in Miami have report, said that 6,000 Cubans resettled more than 6,000 Cuban had resettled in other areas refugees in 1961, but their work load continues to increase at his agency's operations. Three the rate of 600 applications per thousand others were waiting week from Cubans who have completion of settlement applied the pro-Communist Castro regime.

The Miami diocese and Catholic Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference cooperate in aiding the exiles. No estimate has been made of the expenditures incurred here in almost two years, but it is believed to be well beyond a million dollars. Hugh McLoone, resettlement director of Catholic Relief

The Miami diocese, already engaged in an extensive building program to handle the great influx of Catholics here, has borne the brunt of handling refugees because the great majority is Catholic. The Spanish Catholic Center it operates here has received some aid from U.S. industry and government agencies.

Brazil

Land for Poor Farmers

Petrolina — (NC) — A Brazilian prelate in this turbulent nation's most agitated area has launched a new land reform movement to prevent a Red uprising and counteract efforts of leftist-led peasant leagues to seize land by force.

Bishop Antonio Campelo de Aragao, S.D.B., of Petrolina said the movement will seek to raise living standards of landless farm workers throughout a See almost twice the size of New Jersey in northeastern Brazil, the country's most underdeveloped and poverty-stricken region.

The Bishop has started his "White" leagues to combat the Red leagues — led by Francisco Juliao, an admirer of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro — with the help of area's ranchers and farm workers. He is buying land for projects to lead the way toward modernizing his diocese's outmoded farming methods and thus relieve the plight of its 208,000 people, of whom 205,000 are Catholics.

HE IS ALSO taking action to combat the flood of Red propaganda, much of which comes from Cuba. To help him in his new effort and care for his See's Catholics, the Bishop has the help of only 15 priests.

Bishop de Aragao has acted during a period of severe crisis in Latin America's largest and most populous country, which came close to civil war following the resignation of former President Janio Quadros in August and still faces the threat of communism. The former chief of state resigned when strong opposition developed to his apparent coddling of communists at home and overtures to Red regimes abroad. It was also claimed he planned to seize dictatorial powers.

This nation of some 70 million people — where 10 per cent of the population owns 60 per cent of the land — is undergoing an economic as well as a political crisis. It is suffering from a wave of strikes



For God and Country

Boston — (RNS) — Cardinal Cushing of Boston celebrates Mass at Boston's Logan International Airport for the U.S. Air Force's 102nd Tactical Fighter Wing (TAG) members and their families. The unit, formerly the Massachusetts National Guard, recently was called up for active service overseas with the U.S. Air Force. The Massachusetts group retains the green shamrock as a symbol of the unit by special exception to an Air Force ruling ordering removal of all such emblems.

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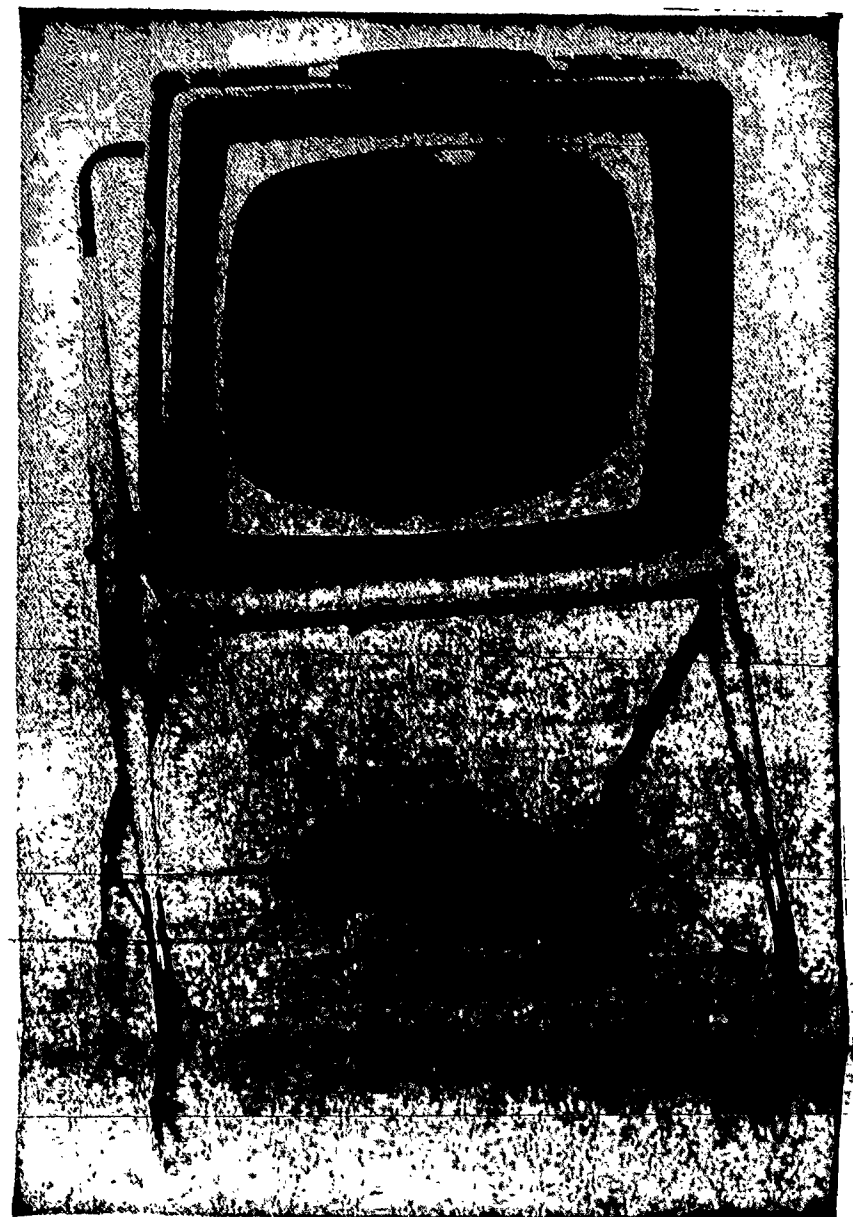
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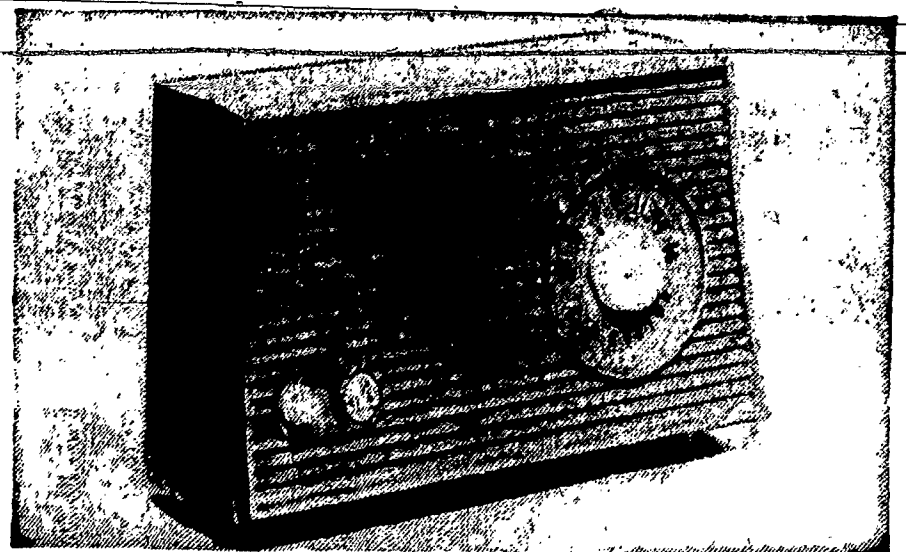
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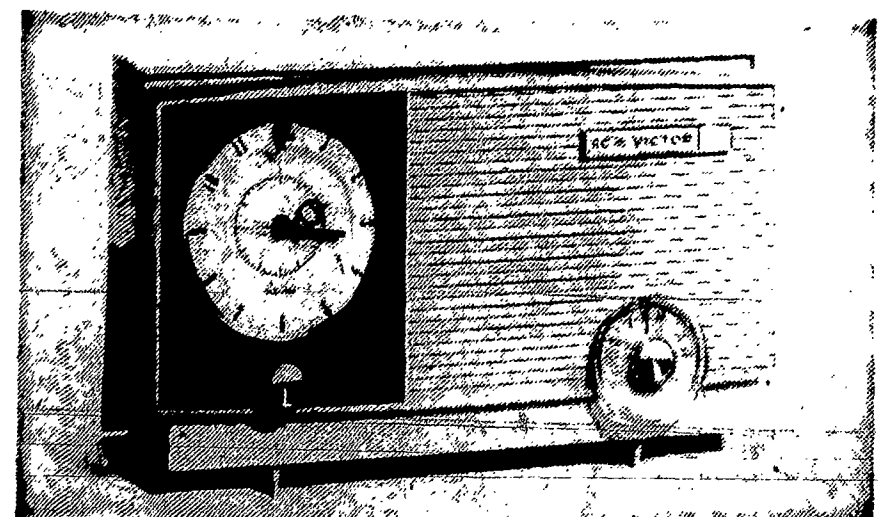
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