

Husband, Wife In Conflict Find Themselves Involved In Cold War

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After twenty-five fairly happy years together our marriage is starting to fall apart. My wife and I still love each other, but we've become so irritable and impatient that almost anything seems to lead to an outburst between us. I know her age has something to do with it, and she's probably correct in saying that I've become self-centered and unsocial. How can we break the tension between us and regain a sense of warmth and unity? Since we remain constantly on edge, I feel the situation is rapidly getting worse, yet what can I do?

As you are well aware, Ted, every couple represents a unique combination of personalities, family backgrounds and connections, shared experiences, intellectual, moral and spiritual development, social status and so on. Hence the basis of the limited knowledge presented in your letter I can do no more than offer you a few general directives and indicate some considerations that have proved helpful in similar cases.

If a competent marriage counselor is available, you should consult him at once. You and your wife have apparently become involved in a kind of cold war, with negotiations for peace paralyzed at dead center.

When such situations occur within the intimacy of the family circle, it generally requires the help of a competent neutral outsider to break the deadlock, for both partners are too personally involved to view their difficulties objectively, and since they are in conflict, neither is inclined to make any concessions directly to the other.

Although your wife has probably consulted her doctor concerning the changes she is apparently undergoing, I suggest that you have a thorough physical examination unless this has recently been done. The irritability and impatience you report may be due in part to physical fatigue or nervous exhaustion, and simple remedies may be available for both.

Further, you and your wife would do well to make a closed retreat, either separately or as a couple, if facilities for the latter are available. You may protest that you are both devout Catholics, but it is easy for couples to fall into a spiritual rut, marked by such routine and monotony that supernatural viewpoints and motives cease to be operative in their daily lives. Moreover, it will be excellent therapy to withdraw for a few days from the tense situation in which you are now involved. Don't say you haven't the time or money. What is the success of your marriage worth to you?

NOW LET US turn to a few considerations that may prove helpful. Although you suggest that you quarrel over almost everything, are there any specific areas such as the use of money, personal habits, relatives, friends and so on, that have long been a bone of contention and consistently cause arguments? In dealing with similar cases I have discovered that several such major areas usually exist and have been the focus of quarrels for years because no constructive plan for dealing with them had ever been developed.

Everything was left at loose ends. Nothing was ever resolved, so that each successive quarrel followed the pattern of the last. For example, couples will quarrel over the use of money for years, yet never keep a budget or item-



ized account of how their money is actually spent. In such cases, a counselor is bound to suspect that either money is not the real issue or one of the partners is in bad faith.

Is it possible that your irritability stems from frustration or dissatisfaction with your work? Once the modern American male passes the half-century mark he knows fairly well how far he is likely to go in his chosen work, and if he is dissatisfied with his prospects, he usually feels too insecure to shift to another job or make a fresh start, for he knows that the American system places a high premium on youth.

SOME MEN become hard to live with when they suddenly realize that they have passed this point of no return and must spend the rest of their working years at a job that no longer offers them any challenge. If they are prudent, this is the time for them to enlarge their scope of interests or concerns, and to develop more shared activities with their wives and families, yet on the pretext of fatigue many merely turn to television, and this sterile tranquilizer further dulls their initiative.

Do you and your wife share any activities as a couple? Some couples have no social life and do not even attend church services together. Is it surprising that they enjoy no sense of unity?

Finally, have you seriously tried to analyze your own outlooks, motives, and feelings, comparing them with the Christian ideals toward which you must strive? Partners in conflict frequently compare themselves only with each other rather than with their Model, Christ. As a result, they get caught in a vicious circle of mutual recriminations, suspicion, and petty, mean acts of retaliation in which they attempt to justify on the grounds that "the other started it." But remember, the Model on which you will be judged is Christ, not your partner!



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Relief Appeal Set for March

New York — (NC) — The 16th annual appeal of the Catholic Bishops' Relief Fund, which supports the worldwide efforts of Catholic Relief Services—National Catholic Welfare Conference, will begin next March 25 and end April 1.

The closing day of the appeal is Laetare Sunday, in the middle of Lent, and on that day a special collection for the fund will be taken up in churches throughout the country.

A minimum goal of \$5 million has been set for the 1962 appeal, it was announced at CRS—NCWC headquarters here.

Announcement of the appeal was made in a letter to the U.S. Bishops by Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle of Washington, chairman of the NCWC Administrative Board.

In conjunction with the Bishops' Relief Fund appeal, a special 40-day Lenten campaign will be conducted among children in Catholic grade and high schools, beginning March 7, Ash Wednesday. Last year the Catholic school children of the U.S. gave the relief fund more than \$1 million to help destitute children in foreign countries.

Archbishop O'Boyle pointed out in his letter that "as a result of the basic support provided by the Bishops' Relief Fund, Catholic Relief Services... was able to maintain last year a program that had a value of \$125,118,000."

He said CRS—NCWC shipped food, clothing and medicine to 67 countries and benefited more than 28 million persons overseas.

In 1961 for the fifth consecutive year the overseas relief shipments of CRS—NCWC totaled more than one billion pounds of food, clothing and medicines for free distribution to the needy, regardless of race, color or creed.

In addition, CRS—NCWC recently set up a socio-economic department to implement projects for housing, rural development, cooperatives, training schools, hospitals and dispensaries in areas of need throughout the world.



Blessing From Pope John

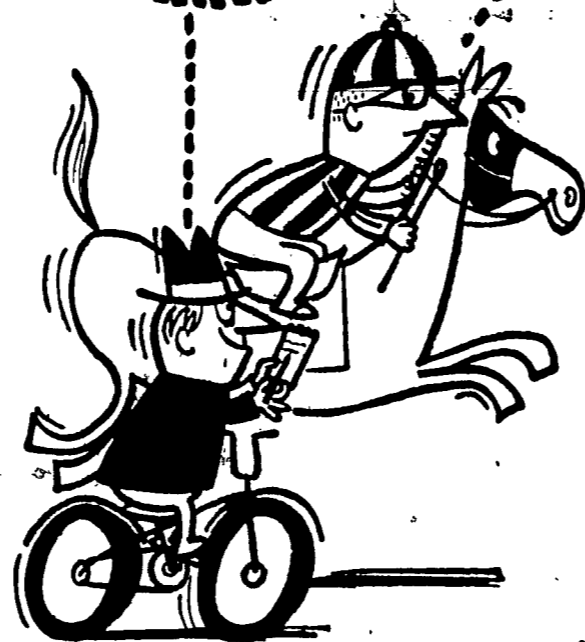
Lino Bevilacqua presents a blessing from Pope John XXIII to Mr. and Mrs. Walter R. Ring. Mr. Ring is manager of the Richford Hotel, Rochester, where Mr. Bevilacqua resides. Mr. Bevilacqua wears a cross given him by Church officials in Italy for his services in behalf of the faith there.



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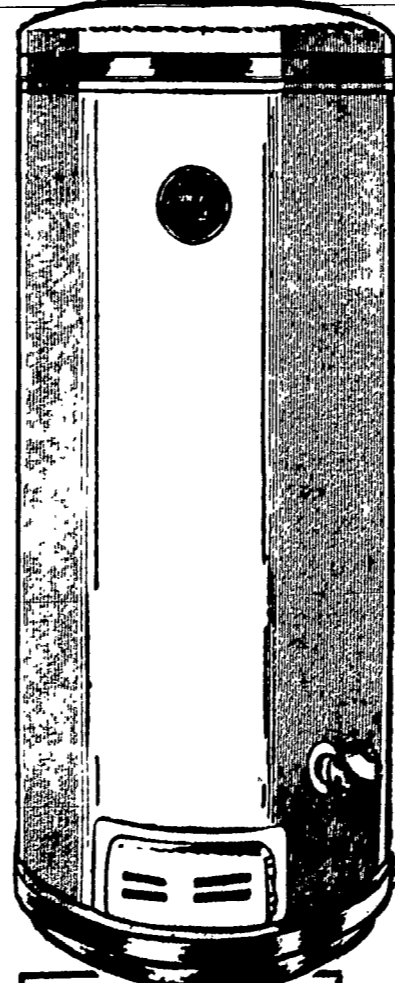
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Hope Seen For Relief To Poland

Milwaukee — (NC) — Efforts are being made by the worldwide relief organization of U.S. Catholics to reestablish a full scale program to aid the Church and needy of Poland.

The disclosure was made here by Auxiliary Bishop Aloysius J. Wycislo of Chicago, who served for 166 years as assistant executive director of Catholic Relief Services—National Catholic Welfare Conference.

The prelate told the Polish American Historical Association convention here that the CRS—NCWC relief program in Poland was discontinued in 1956 after the communist regime of Poland reneged on its promise to allow duty-free relief supplies to enter the country.

The Red regime slapped "a 60 per cent tax on the free will offerings" of U.S. Catholics, the Bishop said.