

# Marriage Wrecked By Wife Who Drags Up Husband's Past

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How do you deal with a woman who has no sense of fair play? Every time we get into an argument, my wife avoids facing the real issues by dredging up the worst of our past and blaming it all on me — even mistakes we made during courtship are all my fault. She says I never confide in her, but how can I when I know that everything becomes grist for her mill when she's out to hurt me in a quarrel? Now there's so little to talk about between us that I look for excuses not to go home after work. This isn't good for the family, yet what else can a man do under the circumstances?

Perhaps the most hopeful thing about your situation, Lester, is the fact that you realize your marriage is in very bad shape. Men in particular are usually slow to recognize the symptoms of serious marital discord and equally reluctant to admit the troubled situation won't right itself if given sufficient time.

This is probably owing to the fact that men's work takes them away from the home a good deal of the time and consequently provides them some escape from tense domestic situations, though it may also be related to the different marital expectations shared by men and women in our society.

I don't think I have to remind you that your present solution is no solution at all. Your wife is bound to resent your staying away from home and will react accordingly, while you yourself are likely to establish friendships or fall into habits that will prove harmful to your marriage.

THE BEST advice I can give you under the circumstances is to seek a competent marriage counselor at once. When serious marriage problems remain long unsolved, both partners tend to accumulate such a backlog of resentment, hurt feelings and mistrust that usually an objective outsider is needed to restore the broken lines of communication.

Hence the following remarks are meant to serve only as a kind of commentary on what I regard as the more or less typical aspects of the situation as you describe it. I have counseled a considerable number of marriages with similar difficulties, and though each marriage was in some ways unique, the basic elements in their problems were quite alike.

In the first place, as your account reveals very clearly, the husbands and wives involved in these cases tended to differ a great deal in the way they proceeded in an argument. It is widely assumed that women are more prone than men to approach controversial issues from a highly



personal point of view and consequently to interpret opposing opinions as implicit rejections of themselves. The wives in question go one step farther using each argument as an occasion for humiliating their partners.

As in your marriage, Lester, these wives tend to have good memories, storing up all past sufferings and woes, imagined or real, and exciting them like a litany every time there is trouble. In this connection there are two points worth noting.

First, in the incidents as recalled, the wives think they are always the patient victim of the selfishness or thoughtlessness of their husbands. Second, the primary purpose of the recital seems to be self-justification, suggesting that these wives have a personal need to prove their husbands guilty and themselves innocent.

Although you didn't recognize it, you revealed an important clue to the psychological state prompting their conduct when you mentioned the recall of mistakes made during courtship. Because most women in our culture refuse to acknowledge their sexuality and manage to conceal it under the guise of a search for affection, your wife and many others try to avoid facing the humiliating fact of their premarital sexual indiscretions by telling themselves that they were exploited, forced to cooperate, acted against their will, and so forth.

In order to preserve this false self-image they not only must keep their partners'

faults constantly in mind, but can afford to admit no shortcomings in themselves.

This attitude also explains their desire to hurt — what you called their lack of a "sense of fair play." They are really angry and dissatisfied with themselves, but since they can't afford to face their own share in their past sexual failures, they define their husbands as the sole source of their problem and thus feel justified in punishing them by any means available.

There can be little improvement in such marriages until these wives can honestly admit their past to themselves and accept themselves as they are. In other words, they have to give up the convenient feminine pretense that sex "was something done to them," and having acknowledged their equal participation in the humbling weaknesses of human nature, make no claim to special privileges in an argument.

Above all they must recognize that nothing is more destructive of marital unity than to use knowledge of confidence in loving trust to hurt one's partner in a quarrel.

These observations are not meant to imply, Lester, that you played no role in causing the difficulties. The quality of marital relationships is always the cumulative product of mutual action and reaction. Since the problem you face is not to avoid communication but to work for its restoration, however, it will help in doing this to have some understanding of the basic factors contributing to your difficulties in the first place.

# World Population Study Neglected

Washington — (NC) — Catholics have "lagged behind" in the field of population studies, Father John F. Cronin, S.S., said here. Father Cronin, assistant director of the Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, said, "We have been so preoccupied with moral issues in this field that we have not produced our share of competent demographers."

In the pursuit of truth, this oversight should be remedied, he told the American Catholic Sociological Society in a sermon preached at a Mass offered (Sept. 2) during its 24th annual convention.

Father Cronin listed population studies as one of "three practical problems" of special importance to the Catholic social scientist today. The others, he said, are delinquency and the phenomenon referred to by Pope John XXIII in his social encyclical *Mater et Magistra* as "socialization."

In dealing with delinquency, he said, "scientists have often overemphasized statistical research and have neglected the more subtle truths that can be acquired only by personal observation and trained intuition."

In stressing "environmental factors" as causes of delinquency, Father Cronin declared, "social scientists may have overlooked another major factor — the quality of the home and especially the absence of real love in the lives of those who became embittered and antisocial."

As for "socialization," he continued, in his encyclical, Pope John "calls our attention to the ethical implications of the complex society of our day."

FATHER CRONIN said the Pope's message was that "what man constructs can guide morally."

To help in these moral decisions, social scientists must provide the most accurate studies of the nature of modern society and "its influence on the individual and the home," he said.

## His First Mass In Factory

Savona, Italy — (NC) — A man who waited almost 40 years to become a priest celebrated his first Mass in the factory where he had been employed.

Father Luigi Bogliaccino, S.S.P., 52, celebrated Mass for 400 of his former coworkers here (August 21). As a child he had entered the seminary but had to leave at the age of 13 to help support his family.

Six years ago he was able to pick up the thread of his vocation once again. He resigned from his job, closed his home and gave the keys to the parish priest.

With only the clothes he had on his back, Bogliaccino went to Rome where he entered the Pious Society of St. Paul. He was ordained recently in Rome and insisted on returning to the site of his old job to celebrate his first Mass.



Washington — (RNS) — Large smiles cover the faces of President Kennedy and Maronite Patriarch Paul Pierre Meouchi after a conference at the White House. Paying a courtesy call on the President, the Patriarch was accompanied by Ambassador Ibrahim Al-Ahdib of Lebanon, and by a delegation of Maronite Rite clergy. He wore the colorful red vestments of his office as spiritual leader of the world's nearly 800,000 Maronite Rite Catholics. After chatting with Mr. Kennedy, he told reporters with a smile, "You have a wonderful President. God bless him."

## Eastern Rite Prelate Visits JFK, Parishes

Washington — (RNS) — The world's nearly 800,000 Maronite Catholics, chatted amiably with the President and when he emerged told reporters with a smile, "You have a wonderful President; God bless him."

He was introduced to the President by the Rt. Rev. Joseph Eid, bishop and pastor of St. Anthony of the Desert church, Fall River, Mass., who is an old friend of Mr. Kennedy.

It was the first time a Patriarch of the Maronite Rite, one of the 14 Oriental Rites of the Catholic Church, had visited the United States. The Maronites use Syriac-Aramaic in their liturgy, the language in which Christ is believed to have spoken to his disciples at the Last Supper.

## Mary Legion Progresses

Calcutta — (RNS) — An envoy of the Legion of Mary headquarters in Dublin declared here that the Legion is making good progress in India, but that it needs to be stabilized.

Brother Gerard Reynolds is in India in the course of a three-year tour of the East to give advice to Legion chapters and to establish new ones.

The Legion of Mary is one of the most widespread and active branches of the Catholic lay apostolate in India. Since the first Legion chapter was established in India in 1931, the lay group has expanded to almost all of the dioceses of the country. At present, there are more than 2,500 chapters with a total active membership of 36,000.

## Youth's Challenge

# Old Lethargy In New World

Rensselaer — (RNS) — "The greatest problem in the world is not communism. It is ignorance, indifference and selfishness — it is not to be occupied with the problems of the ever new world in which we live."

This was the observation of Msgr. Joseph Cardijn of Belgium, the energetic 80-year-old founder and international chaplain-general of the Young Christian Workers (Jocist) Movement.

Addressing some 350 delegates to the 10th annual study week of the Young Christian Workers at St. Joseph's College here, Msgr. Cardijn declared:

"WE MUST transform the world for it is a world in which there are countries where people are born on the street, live on the street and die there. It is a world in which 20,000,000 young people leave school for work every year and meet with the depersonalizing influence of a materialistic society. It is a world in which education is needed to prepare young people for their responsibilities."

Msgr. Cardijn, who is in his 50th year of youth work, has

been visiting the U.S. to meet with American leaders of his organization. His visit to the study week here was the climax of his month-long tour.

The Belgium priest urged the delegates to spread the ideals of the YCW, a movement in which young people can discuss their environment and the problems which contradict the dignity of other young people and a movement through which they act to bring about Christian solutions.

"In the Young Christian Workers," he pointed out, "you are united with young people in 50,000 local groups in the strongest international movement of working youth in the world. You are united in your efforts and convictions and you in the United States, of the 90 countries in which the YCW exists, have the greatest responsibility, because other countries look up to the United States and because you can do more good."

## 'Dead On Our Feet' Says Priest

Davenport — (RNS) — A call for Roman Catholics to adhere to the Church's social teachings was sounded here by Father Louis M. Colonnese, general chairman of the third annual Study Week of the Apostolate sponsored by the Davenport diocese at St. Ambrose College.

"Total conformity has become so prized an ingredient in social, political and religious life today that we no longer have our little bands of willful men to speak out on (social problems)," he told the opening session of the Study Week.

Instead, Father Colonnese said, there is a silence "that mocks our claim to be the most open society on earth and the country which proudly possesses such a vast Catholic educational system."

The problem, he stressed, lies with Catholics who are "dead on our feet because we are fearful, frustrated and overcome by our failure in our tasks as Christian leaders."

"We must come alive to the truth," he continued. "If in our thinking, our conversation, and especially our Catholic school classrooms, we ignore the social teaching of the Church, then we are guilty of high treason not only because of Catholic social doctrine's place in Christian living, but . . . because of the critical situation facing all of humanity . . ."

More than 800 students, priests, religious and lay leaders from various parts of the U.S., Canada, Mexico and New Zealand, attended the week-long meeting here. The Study Week was under the direction of the Office of the Lay Apostolate in the Davenport diocese.

Enrollment Reported New York, Aug. 30 — (NC) — An enrollment of 367,555 students is expected when the New York archdiocesan elementary and secondary schools open Sept. 10.

## Indulgences Granted For Daily Sufferings

Vatican City — (NC) — Pope XXIII has authorized new indulgences to be gained by those who offer their sufferings to God. The authorization was reported in the current issue of the official Vatican publication, *Acts of the Holy See*.

The publication stated that a plenary indulgence may be gained under the usual conditions by those who in the morning have offered their sufferings of body or soul to God with whatever prayer they may choose. A partial indulgence of 500 days may be gained by those who on occasion, with a contrite heart, devotedly offer to the Lord their sufferings by a pious ejaculation.



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