



## What Are the Rules I Should Follow To Make Elderly People Happy?

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I believe the Fourth Commandment means what it says, and I have no special difficulty on that score. My problem is that perhaps I don't know enough about aging parents. Mama, who lives with us, is moody and silent much of the time, though a physical check-up proved her to be quite healthy for sixty-eight. When I try to help her, she seems to resent it, yet if I don't she feels I'm not thinking of her. At present I watch over her sort of at a distance. Are there any rules to follow, such as what the elderly fear the most, or perhaps what I might avoid in order to please her?

One of the few safe generalizations we can make about older persons, Cora, is that they are all very different. Although the characteristic changes normally accompanying the later stages of the physical process of aging are fairly uniform, the significant element in aging is the manner in which each individual reacts to these changes, and as experience shows, by the time people become senior citizens their patterns of adjustment tend to be quite predictable because they are consistent with their past conduct in life.

In other words, old age is not a clearly defined, objective event or even a well-delimited stage but a gradual process that each person interprets differently and to which he adjusts accordingly. It is affected by both individual and social factors.

Thus a man who works with his hands may feel "old" at 60, while a man who works with his brain for a living may not consider himself "old" until his seventies.

Women of the upper economic class tend to think they are most "good looking" at 35 and "in their prime" at 40, while their working class sisters think they have reached the peak of their beauty at 25 and their prime at 30.

SOME PEOPLE try to grow old gracefully; others fight

every step of the way. In an industrial society aging holds different implications for husbands than for wives, since wives continue to manage their households as long as they are able, while retirement marks a definite change in their husbands' way of life and may leave them aimlessly "puttering around the garden and muttering around the house."

Granting the wide span of differences found among older people, there are a few general traits or tendencies that all probably share in some degree. Besides the expected lessening of physical endurance, stamina, and resistance of illness, most experience reduced aptitudes in adjusting to strange situations, in establishing satisfactory new relationships with others, and in acquiring new interests. Most also report less ability to endure the noise, constant demands for attention, and restless activity normally associated with young children — "We like children, but they wear us out!"

ARE THERE any rules to follow when dealing with an elderly parent who is "living-in" with one's family? I think there are a few basic ground rules that should be observed, but for the most part, Cora, you will have to "play it by ear" on the basis of what you know about your mother's character and temperament, for she is a unique individual.

Among the basic rules to be observed in such situations, I might mention the following. Your mother should have a separate room or set of rooms that are to be regarded as her private domain which she is to arrange as she prefers and to which she can retire when she likes. If she enjoys listening to the radio or watching television, it would be helpful if she had her own set, since she may enjoy programs that will not appeal to other members of the family.

If there are other persons

her age in the neighborhood, encourage her to associate with them. Parish and community organizations can be helpful in this regard, but any means you can use should be employed to stimulate broader interests and wider social participation. She will probably be reluctant to try anything new at first, but a little praise and encouragement from the family may go a long way.

Since she seems to feel somewhat left out of things around the family circle, see if there isn't something you can give her to do — some definite task to perform or some worthwhile contribution she can make which will enable her to use some of her skills and thus recover her self-assurance and sense of belonging. It is a serious misconception of charity to permit elderly parents to do nothing around the house because one fears taking advantage of them. People who have been active all their lives and are accustomed to doing things become anxious and insecure when they have nothing to do. Your mother does not appear to be the aggressive type who would take over the running of the household if you gave her an opening, so you have nothing to fear on that score.

In general, Cora, anything you can do to make your mother feel that she belongs in your family circle will help — but do not pressure her! She is not used to taking orders, particularly from her daughters, and chances are the reason she resents your trying to help her is that she sees this as a threat to her independence. In order to understand her puzzling reactions, try to put yourself in her place, using your knowledge of her character and past experience, and once you learn how she looks at things, you will be in a better position to help her. Remember her needs for affection, for belonging, for feeling wanted and useful to others are similar to yours — you must try to help her find means to fulfill them.

## United Nations Pledge

# Vatican Fund To Aid Refugees

United Nations—(NC)—The Vatican has announced a token pledge of \$1,000 to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. Announcement of the contribution was made in a letter addressed to the representative of the High Commissioner for Refugees in New York from the Holy See's acting representative, Msgr. Timothy J. Flynn.

"The pledge of \$1,000 to the work of the High Commissioner," the letter stated, "is an expression of the moral and financial support which the Holy See has from the beginning given to the United Nations work for refugees."

THE LETTER congratulated the High Commissioner on having achieved "the almost total solution of the problem of the 'old' refugees of World War II."

The letter expressed concern for the thousands of unsettled "new" refugees in widely separated regions of the world, whose number continues to grow.

THE EXTENT of the Holy See's interest in the problem can better be judged, the letter said, not only by recalling its many contributions to the UN's refugee program — such as its gifts of \$10,000 for Algerian refugees, \$10,000 for refugees in Macao, and \$5,000 for those in Togo — but also the huge sums expended by the Holy See in food, clothing, medicines, social services and financial aid for refugees in widely scattered regions.

The General Assembly has renewed for a new period of five years — until 1968 — the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. The present mandate of the office expires December 31, 1963.

Soviet Clerics To Visit U.S. Louisville — (RNS) — Plans for a group of 20 or more Russian church leaders to visit the United States for three weeks in February and March were announced here at a meeting of the General Board of the National Council of Churches.

Since 1951, the Holy See has served on the 25-member executive committee of the Office of the High Commissioner. Members are elected by the UN Economic and Social Council and approved by the General Assembly.

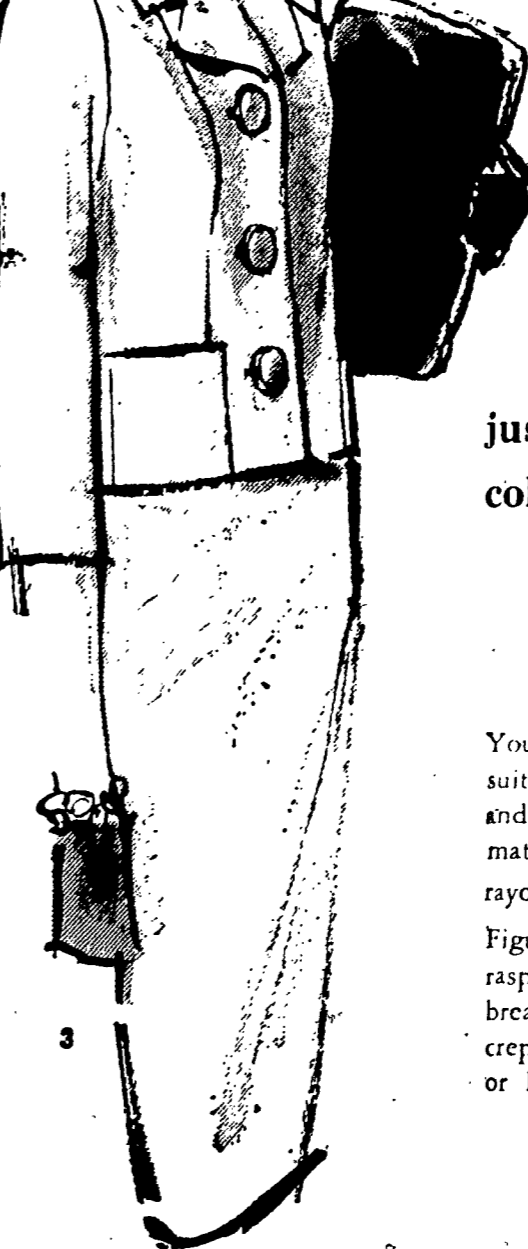
## Vast Congo Food Relief Plan Set

Leopoldville — (NC) — U.S. Catholic charities plan to distribute 11,000 tons of surplus U.S. food to nearly 400,000 of this country's needy in the year ending in July, 1963.

The Catholic Relief Services — National Catholic Welfare Conference office here, directed by Father Roland Bordelon of the Alexandria, La., diocese, reported that the food-distribution plan for fiscal year 1963 (July 1, 1962 to July 1, 1963) includes 274 school children, 29,500 patients in medical institutions, 30,000 needy persons and over 60,000 Baluba refugees from Katanga now living in Kasai province in the center of the Congo.

CRS-NCWC, the U.S. Catholic charities organization, works with the local branch of the International Conference of Catholic Charities, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Emergency Relief Program, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Congo Red Cross, the Congo Protestant Relief Agency and other relief groups.

The fiscal year '63 food program includes flour, cornmeal, beans, vegetable oil and crushed wheat. CRS-NCWC and the International Conference of Catholic Charities have to raise the program's transportation costs, about \$400,000. In past years, the Congolese government has paid about 30 per cent of inland freight costs.



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## Too Much Together

Cullman, Ala. — (NC) — Too much togetherness in the world today makes the role of U.S. church-related colleges more vital now than at any time, a college president asserted here.

Father Brian J. Egan, O.S.B., president of St. Bernard College, made the observation after his election as president of the Conference of Church-Related Colleges in the South. He is reported to be the first Catholic priest to head the conference, which held its recent convention in Dallas, Tex.

The Benedictine educator summed it up this way:

"In a world drawn closer daily by technological advance, in which standardization invites an almost compulsive mass conformism, it is of the highest importance that institutions of higher learning foster independence of thought and action."

"In an age of instant coffee, instant medicine and instant sleep, it becomes very easy to succumb to the lure of the instant opinions on every subject."

## Part of Mosque

Algiers — (NC) — Part of the city of Constantine's Catholic cathedral, which is being turned back into a mosque, is remaining open for Catholic worship, it was learned here.

The government of predominantly Moslem Algeria took over the cathedral here in Algiers on November 1 and the Constantine one several weeks later. The cathedral here was built on the site of a mosque, while that in Constantine was previously a mosque.

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