

Word of God

By REV. LEO J. TASEK

Would it be too personal a question to ask, "How long is it since you have opened a copy of the Bible for the purpose of reading it?"

Many of us honor the Bible more by lip service than by devout use. In thousands of Catholic homes there reposes a large "Family Bible" which is a tribute to the pulling power of an advertisement or the skill of a door-to-door salesman. The volume is much too bulky to hold comfortably in one's hands; and so it lies in its appointed place, respected but unused. A much more credible witness to our biblical devotion would be a Bible of normal book size, with covers worn and pages well thumbed.

It is unfortunate that the Bible is so widely neglected by Catholics. It is the primary source of our knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. But it is much more than a mere book of knowledge. It is a point of actual personal contact with God and with Christ. The ancient Fathers of the Church have compared the Holy Scriptures with the Incarnation. By the Incarnation, they point out, the Word of God was enshrined in human flesh. In the Bible the Word of God has been enshrined in written words.

SPIRITUAL WRITERS also have compared Bible reading to Holy Communion. In Holy Communion we unite ourselves to the Word of God by the physical act of eating His Body. In reading the Bible, we unite ourselves to the Word of God by taking Him spiritually into our mind and heart. We can be sure, too, that Jesus will not fail to confer grace upon one who comes to Him, with love, where He has enveloped Himself in the written word.

When we read the Bible with faith and with reverence, we are directly "tuned in" to God. We are in an intimate personal relationship with Him. He illumines our understanding and speaks to us through the words which we are reading. For each of us who reads in a spirit of reverent faith, the Bible is an individual letter from heaven.

We must never forget that God is the real author of the Bible. Whatever appears in the holy book is there because He willed it there. Unseen and unfelt by the human writers, God caused them to put down the events and the truths which He wished recorded.

God's revelation of Himself was limited, of course, by the particular talents of His human agents and by the literary styles and modes of expression of the various eras in which the Bible was written. That is why, in the Bible, sublime truths are not always sublimely expressed. But, however pedestrian or obscure the verbal structure, it always is God Who speaks.

The whole Bible is the revelation of God through His Son, the Word. The Old Testament is a preparatory revelation, looking forward to God's final and definitive manifestation of Himself as Jesus. The New Testament is the actualization of all that the Old Testament foreshadowed.

In reading the Bible, most persons find it easier to begin with the New Testament, especially the Gospels. It is here that we most quickly and intimately establish communion with Jesus. When we do turn to the Old Testament, we find it more intelligible because of the light cast upon it by the New.

For the beginner, even the New Testament can seem, in many places, difficult and obscure. For this reason the reader will find of great help the New Testament Reading Guides, published by the Liturgical Press of Collegeville, Minnesota. These are booklets which contain, with explanatory commentary, one or more of the books of the New Testament.

Similarly helpful for the Old Testament is the Pamphlet Bible Series published by the Paulist Press of New York. Each pamphlet contains a book of the Old Testament, preceded

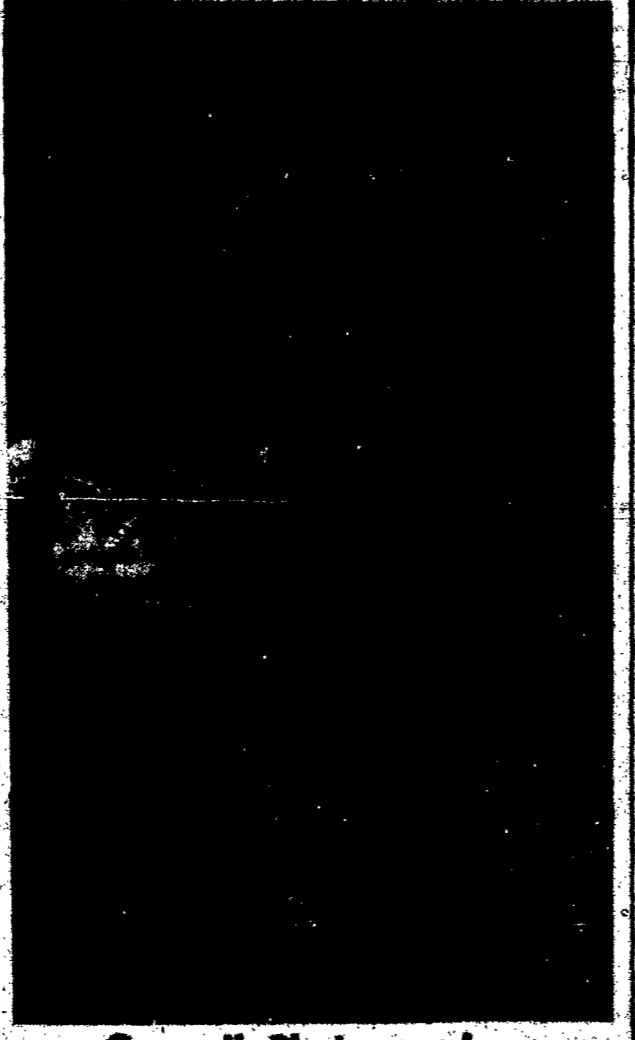
Top Anglers Listed In Whole Contest

The judges of the Louis A. White Fishing Contest released the names of winners of the August segment. The contest commented upon the increasing interest of teenagers in the sport. This was shown by the large number of entries from youngsters under twenty and the number of prize winners among them.

In the Rock Bass division for instance, nineteen year old Eugene Carr, 40 Provench St., Canalogue, won first prize with a 2 lb. 7 oz. "rockie," followed by a three-way tie at one pound each, from anglers by 15 year old Robert Cooper of Bolleville, 13 year old Joseph Nolan of Geneva, and 9 year old Frank Woodward of Cape Vincent.

In the Perch class, 10 year old Miss Ellen Bleckling of Elmira won second place, while 15 year old Larry Maus of Wolcott won third. Top prize went to James Sullivan, 207 Morgan Rd., Syracuse for his 1 lb. 8 oz. entry.

Area winners in August included: Wall eye Pike—Frank C. Judge, 349 Harwick Rd., Rochester; Pickeral—Edward Bursak, 171 Willowbrook Rd., Rochester; Brown Trout—Bert Foss, 477 E. River Rd., West Henrietta; and Salivators—Frank J. Brandt, 14 Mason Ave., Hornell; Rainbow Trout—C. C. Carver, 408 Carson Ave., Rochester.



Council Photographer

Vatican City — (RNS) — A bishop gets a good shot of proceedings at the opening of the Vatican Council's third session — unaware that he, too, is being photographed.

'Chill' Reported In Ecumenics

Notre Dame — (RNS) — A Catholic magazine said here that "there seems to be no point in denying that there was a little chill in the ecumenical spirit as the third session of Vatican II began."

Ave Maria, national weekly published by the Holy Cross Fathers, in an editorial, "Suddenly, A Chill," noted a generally unfavorable reaction by Protestants and Jews following the first encyclical of Pope Paul VI and a Council decision to amend the schema on ecumenism.

"It ranges from cautious disappointment to fairly sharp criticism," said Ave Maria, "but it is clearly different from the blast brought by Pope John, which drew all men closer together and made them more reasonable toward one another."

The editorial said the "Protestant chill" apparently stems from a feeling that "the Church now appears to be sitting back, solemnly prepared to teach them and (she) keep in, instead of striving for understanding in earnest dialogue."

Jews, it added, feel that a softening of the statement "acquitting them of 'deicide'" and an emphasis on conversion of Jews produced something "quite different" from what they expected.

The Jewish issue seems most severe of the two, the magazine said. "We can ask what the intention of the Council is. If it is really to strive to overcome anti-Semitism, we think the schema is a little less than adequate."

"Occasionally we have heard that there are men in the Church who don't want to take too strong a stand in this area, for fear of offending Moslems. All we can say to that is that it seems to us that we can maintain

age to love both groups, and should, and that too, sort our expression of love for one or the other, as the other seems less than fully Christian."

"Of the Protestant reaction, it said: 'As Catholics, we can't be expected to do anything but hope for unity in what we believe to be the one, true Church of Christ, our own.'

"But we can understand, respect and even fight for the freedom of those outside the Church to see things a little differently. If we can find areas of common concern and mutual understanding with them, and join with them in a pure desire to move closer to God, we can have conversations without betraying our own faith in the least."

"This has led to love, we want it to continue. We pray that it will continue. We beg the Council Fathers to do everything possible to make it continue, all over the world."

Workshop, Classes Listed for Catechists

New materials and techniques in religious instruction programs will be explained at the Assumption School of Religion, Fairport, Saturday, Sept. 26, at 2 p.m.

Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart will conduct the workshop for catechists. Nuns and lay teachers are invited.

Also scheduled to get underway this month is a series of Monday evening catechist preparation courses beginning Sept. 28 — one at the Fairport school and an identical series at the Gates-Chill School of Religion. Another series for graduate catechists will begin Tuesday, Oct. 20, at Mercy High School and Wednesday, Oct. 21, at Cardinal Mooney High School.

Information and reservations may be made with Father Leonard Kelly, pastor of Assumption Church, Fairport.

Campus Religion Test for Church

New York — (RNS) — The Christian indoctrination of the increasing number of Catholic students on secular college campuses presents a challenge to the Roman Catholic Church that must be met if Catholicism is to remain a major force in world events.

This was the warning sounded in a statistical study, "Catholics in Higher Education," appearing in the Sept. 10 issue of America, national Catholic weekly. It was written by Richard J. Clifford, S.J., and William E. Callahan, S.J., both students of theology at Weston (Mass.) College.

Clifford statistics to show that by 1965 some 2.5 million Catholics are expected to be enrolled in higher education, the authors said. That 2.4 million — or more than 80 per cent — will be in secular colleges and universities, the article said.

"The fact is inescapable that Catholics with secular college backgrounds will soon vastly outnumber the graduates of Catholic institutions. The effect will thus be strongly felt on the leadership of the Church, an opportunity that is increasing swiftly, both in scope and importance."

"The result students pointed out that the increasing number of Catholics on secular campuses offers one of the greatest opportunities of the modern Church to bring Christ's teaching and example to men."

"The influence of university education is expanding rapidly in America and throughout the world," they said. "And this ex-

pects of those Catholic laymen will play a key role in determining Christ's place in the environment of higher education."

According to present statistics, the article said, the ratio of full-time priests on secular campuses is about one for every 3,100 Catholics, while Catholic campuses have a ratio of one priest or religious to every 55 students.

It asserted that to "continue the present delinquent ministry to Catholics on secular campuses is to condemn the college and university milieu to a steadily decreasing Christian influence."

To remedy this situation, the authors urged a step-up in the apostolate to Catholic students not attending Church-related colleges. They said that the intellectual training of priests in religious orders devoted to high education makes them "particularly apt for this apostolate."

Since these orders, principally the Jesuits, Franciscans, Benedictines and Holy Cross Fathers, have priests with backgrounds most suited for such a ministry, the article continued, "it seems that with these orders should be a major responsibility to provide priests for work on secular campuses."

'Honeymoon' Said Over

Dublin — (RNS) — The Anglican Church of Ireland Gazette has suggested that the "honeymoon period" of ecumenical relations, which followed the election of Pope John XXIII, is over "and we are now going to have to face up to some of the hard truths and the practical problems."

There may be some, the paper stated, "who feel that at the outset of our real desire for unity we should be prepared to take unilateral action and repudiate all or some of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Anglican belief in the hope that the Roman Church for her part might be encouraged to modify some of her dogmas to make them more acceptable to us."

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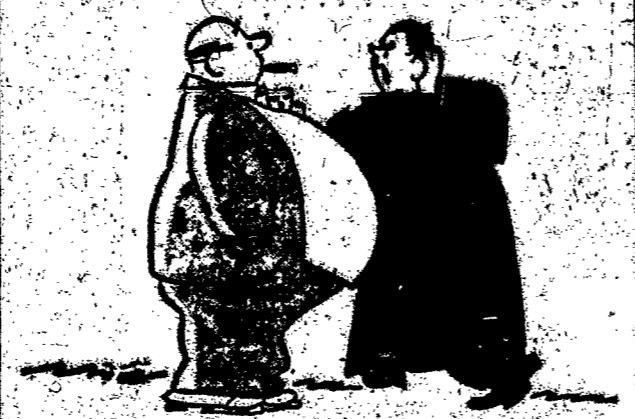
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The Catholic COURIER Journal

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE



25 Years Ago

(From the files of Catholic Courier, Sept. 25, 1939)

A diocesan-wide Mission Novena under auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith was announced by Rev. John S. Randall, diocesan director, speakers for a public novena at Sacred Heart Pro-Cathedral. Listed were Archbishop Lewis Mathias and Monsignor Thomas Pothacumary of Madras, India; Fathers James Gillis, C.S.P. and Joseph Cassidy, M.M.

Bishop Kearney told 10,000 persons at Blessing of Graves in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery of their "deep responsibility in praying constantly for the suffering souls in Purgatory."

Mission Sunday October 18th

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