

# Lay Commissions Approve Sex Program and Purposes

The Family Life and Religious Education Commissions of the Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen announce their support of the Sex Education Program as presented in the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Rochester. After reviewing the syllabus and specially scrutinizing the expressed "Understandings" and "Attitudes" of the program, we give a vote of confidence to the same. We have shared responsibility for the moral training of our children.

This statement was released to news media on Wednesday, Mar. 19, after some 20 members of the two commissions had reviewed with Sister Ruth Agnes of the Diocesan Education Office the history, objectives and content of the program.

The vote on a resolution in support of the program was unanimous. Many of the members of the commissions are parents of children in schools participating in the program.

Both the existence of the program and its content and conduct received approval. It is probable that the Diocese has no choice but to adopt an educational program of this type in view of the mandate of Vatican II that programs be established for "positive and prudent sexual education."

There can be no real debate, either regarding the need for such programs. Teachers, medical authorities and pastors can present ample evidence that for many and probably most children, the information provided by parents, who still have the primary responsibility in this area, is either inadequate, tardy or both.

It is equally apparent that the diocesan program has been well planned. The "Understandings" and "Attitudes" which are to be developed sequentially in pupils add up to a complete and positive Christian concept of sex and family life, and reflect the utmost care and judgment on the part of the Diocesan Committee on Sex Education.

A unique feature is the fact that the program is conducted, insofar as possible, without specific "sex" classes and without special student text materials. This results from the con-

vicition of the committee that what is needed is "education, not just information." By use of this natural approach to the subject, the information involved is related to other important fields of knowledge such as natural science, literature and theology.

In the hands of skilled teachers, this should result in a degree of understanding and respect for this beautiful feature of God's plan of creation which is impossible to attain when discussions, either at home or in school, are marked by isolation, secrecy and a sense of embarrassment on the part of either the children or their parents and teachers. Provision has been made in the program for the special training of teachers so as to increase their effectiveness.

A strong argument for continuation of this program is the character of the opposition to it which has tended to radiate considerably more heat than light. Even if one ignores the suggestions of conspiracy which surround this opposition, the nature of most of the publicized criticisms of the program can scarcely be taken seriously.

They are inaccurate in their descriptions of the program and its objectives. If they are illustrated at all, it is usually with statements from the teachers' syllabus which are not intended for students' eyes and which are taken out of context. All too often, critics have resorted to impugning the motives and associations of the conscientious educators and doctors who developed the program.

These criticisms ignore the fact that an overwhelming number of the parents of pupils in the ten pilot schools which participated in the program last year registered their approval in a questionnaire sent to them at the end of the school term. As an example, less than six per cent of the 1,849 parents who responded thought that there should be no program of sex education in the Catholic schools.

After considering these arguments, members of the two RACL commissions felt that they had no choice but to approve of the program and recommend its continuation. Parents who have reviewed the syllabus have usually agreed.

—J. E. Koller, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.

# A LAYMAN'S VIEW

By Carmen Viglucci

A certain, wry-humored English teacher has a simple proof of the existence of the devil in the world.

"Accidentally drop a piece of toast from the table and it always lands buttered-side down. That's the devil's work."

Would that his occupation be confined to breakfast tables.

It is no longer fashionable to speak of the devil as a personage and Beelzebub doesn't go around in full Satanic regalia — hooves, horns, sulphur and pitchfork. He doesn't have to. He doesn't wear a uniform with a number on the back and you don't need a scorecard to know he's in the game.

Vatican II has this view:

"A monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man. The battle was joined from the very origins of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested. Caught in this conflict, man is oblig-

ed to wrestle constantly if he is to cling to what is good."

News developments provide ample proof of the existence of such powers of darkness:

The senseless torture of the men of the USS Pueblo. Political reasons do not suffice in trying to understand the extraordinary cruelty that 20th Century men, far from the insanity of the battlefield, inflicted on other men. What evil directs the will of human beings to commit such barbarism? What malice allows their leaders to permit — even order — it?

What unnatural society now judges its victims?

Take the dealers in pornography. This is not to argue the fine points of the law or even to attempt to define obscenity. The fact is that those who deal in such dubious material feel it is pornographic. They wouldn't

regard it as saleable otherwise.

Such men are not concerned about rights, they hire lawyers to worry about that. For money they take the risk of breaking the law; for money, they risk contributing to crime and mental illness; for money, they disregard the possible harm they may be committing. What they do is less important than why. Why do men for worldly comfort disregard moral judgments. When men stop caring, what motivates them?

Add narcotics pushers. Not the weak, ill, misguided unfortunates who are the victims but the men who wouldn't dare touch the stuff who reap fortunes from the misery of their clientele. They do not care.

The list is almost interminable — from slumlords and millionaires with tax dodges right down — or up — to the rest of us smug with our pri-

vate property and little successes. Meantime children die from hunger or, what may be worse, grow up spiritually and intellectually starved.

An Adolph Hitler willfully would perpetrate crimes on his fellow man that no lower class of animal would do in his own order. That he succeeded to a great extent is because there existed a void that good failed to fill — an absence of good. Apathy is the word we use.

And when there is a moral vacuum whether it is the Germany of the 1930s, the Rochester of the 1960s, or in the very heart and mind of any man at any time, evil fills it not with crude, stumbling easily-refuted argumentation but with the clever footstep of long-practiced syllogism; not with its intrinsic stench but with perfumed subtlety; not with the warning signals of horns, hooves and sulphur but with the stupefying, deadening comfort of apathy.

# ON THE RIGHT SIDE

## Television's Lowest Hour

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

TV hit its lowest low on the Johnny Carson Show, Monday, March 20, at 11:30 p.m.

Since seeing a mocking skit on the young Catholic priests and on the Sacrament of Confession two months ago, I have heard that anti-religious scoffing has become part of TV "humor." Even the Holy Father has become a special target of derision. This has alerted me to the subtle bombardment of the minds of Americans, corroding reverence and idealism and ordinary decency.

I like Tom Decker and his news-casts on WROC-TV. On this dreadful Monday night, a movie ran over-time, so the Decker newscast came late, and ended about 11:35 p.m. When he signed off I grunted out of the chair for bed, and curiously turned the TV dial to other channels just to see what else was influencing peoples' minds and souls.

On Channels 2, 3 and 8, I found a black comedian who looked vaguely familiar. (Later I learned he was Mr. Bill Cosby, substituting on the Johnny Carson show.)

Cosby was giving a monologue on his going to Mass with his Catholic wife. It was vicious. This is what I saw and heard at 11:40 p.m.:

1. A mockery of the Latin in the Mass. "What's the priest saying?" as Cosby emitted a lot of gibberish to illustrate the Latin Mass.

A mockery of the ritualistic incense. Now, I've always liked the poetry and drama of many sacramentals. The beauty of the incense has meant much to me because of the Psalm 140: "May our prayers — like sweet smelling incense rise up before the mighty throne of God."

Yet Cosby derided this. "A boy with a smoke pot came and blew smoke at us." The audience roared and applauded.

Now as regrettable as these were, I could stomach them. The "smoke pot" joke is centuries old. Gibberish frequently brings infantile reactions.

3. Finally, Cosby climaxed with a blasphemous description of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Communion. "The priest went into a little box and brought out little pizzas. He gave a little pizza, one to each — without sauce or anything, not even marmalade!" My soul congealed. My stomach turned sick. The scene ended.

I thought: "This is TV's lowest hour." Why do I think so?

1. The most sacred rite of our religion, Holy Mass, was held up for derision to millions.

2. An educated and gifted Negro, who is in a position to bring honor and esteem for our black brothers, perpetrated the horror to the harm of the black cause, and white.



3. The Blessed Sacrament was blasphemed for the entertainment of millions of mindful and mindless Americans.

4. Singer Sewing Machine Co. — the only ad I saw because I turned off the TV in wretched sadness — and other respectable firms paid to present the blasphemy.

Recently a man of perceptive judgment was discussing the phenomenon of married men walking out on their wives and children, and being accepted among their peers despite this desertion. He said: "These men walk into the Elks or Moose or Veterans Clubs and sit with others as if nothing had happened. I think if they got the cold shoulder, they would get the message that a man doesn't just quit his family and his obligations. Others would think twice before they would pull the quitting act."

And I think that as long as TV Networks and their financial sponsors produce immorality, detractions, blasphemies with our indifference or silence, we share in the moral disintegration and corrosion of our souls, and that of the Church and the nation.

Lift up your voices and your pens. Who will tell the networks and the advertisers if you don't?

# COMMENTARY

Courier-Journal—Friday, March 28, 1969

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# CHURCH AND THE CITY

## Identify the Proper Bandits

By Father P. David Finks

The Brothers Berrigan made a brief sortie into the Rochester area over the weekend to visit friends and supporters. Father Dan and Father Phil are both out on bail pending appeals to the Federal courts from sentences incurred last fall in Baltimore, Md.

The Federal court found their group of nine priests and lay people guilty of willful injury to government property (draft files), and willful interference with the administration of the Selective Service Act. The whole business of the "Catonville Nine" seemed to many Catholics a bit bizarre; to some, such activity by Catholic priests was considered scandalous.

The testimony brought out that most of the group had lived and worked for some time among the poor in South America and Africa. They became aware gradually as Father Philip Berrigan explained, that United States' economic and financial power, considered benign at home, was being used to support governments that were blocking modernization and economic development in the Third World nations.

American might, from Guatemala to Viet Nam, they said, continues to be a counter revolutionary force used to protect our economic and industrial assets. The defendants claim that years of protest through diplomatic and legal channels failed to

bring any significant changes in our foreign policy. The only recourse seemed to these men to lie in a dramatic symbolic protest against the U.S. military-industrial conglomerate to awaken the conscience of the American people.

Talking to these men again set me to re-examine my own attitudes on local issues of social justice. I can understand how the 20th Century Good Samaritan after so many bandaging sessions, decides to gather a posse and go after the bandits. The difficult thing in a complicated society, however, is to identify correctly the bandits.

Little can be done with people who habitually pass by the wounded and remain oblivious to the oppressors. Theirs is the "arrogance of innocence" that protests only against the protestors.

The social activists in their zeal have other pitfalls to avoid. Today they are tempted to find the villains among the blue and white-collar workers of the lower middle class. This is a form of myopia which blames the "almost poor" for all the sins against the dispossessed.

A recent study showed that a typical worker in this class raised his yearly wage in ten years from \$7,000 to \$12,000. But rising taxes and inflation have put less than \$2,000 per year in real gain into his pocket.

These lower middle class citizens are the American masses and they are beginning to rumble with discontent. They have fled the central cities to find adequate housing and better education for their children. Mortgaged to the ears, they hear the cries of the poor for more and more. Frightened and angry they begin to attack the visible causes of their distress, the poor, welfare recipients, minority groups.

The Berrigan types are merely telling us that the enemy is the rich and the super rich. It is good for the workers, they say, dormant since the "thirties", to awaken and organize for their own good. As allies working together to bring about a more just distribution of wealth, the poor, the minorities and the "almost poor" masses have the political power to force changes. Tax reform, neighborhood conservation and rehabilitation, reasonable Federal subsidies to develop moderate income housing, more local control of the educational process, uniform and just national welfare legislation—these are attainable goals with sufficient community support.

The alternatives are wasteful struggles between city poor and suburban "poor", teachers and parents, minorities and majorities. Such class struggle allows the rich "minority" who have little social concern to continue to pile up "treasures on earth."



# ST. PAUL AND LENT

## All You Need Is Love

By Peter Schineller, S.J.

(The author of the following article, the sixth in a series of seven Lenten meditations, has taught as a scholastic in New York City high schools, and currently is in second theology at Woodstock.)

"As God's children, try to be like him and love as Christ loved you and gave himself up on your behalf."

—St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, 5, 1-2.

The Beatles recently sang a hit entitled "All You Need Is Love." Strange as it may seem, the apostle Paul would agree with this. For if he were asked to sum up the Christian life in one word, that word would be "love."

In the Scripture verse above, he tells the Christians at Ephesus that the focal point of their lives is on the one hand, God's love for them, manifested in Christ; on the other hand, the focal point is the Christian's love for God and man, imitating and re-

sponding to divine love.

We Christians can love because the love of God has been poured into our hearts. Christ's love, revealed especially in his Passion and Resurrection, assures us, as a theologian recently wrote, that "it is safe to love. The walls of our anxiety, our anguish, our narrowness are broken down, and a wide endless horizon is shown. It is safe to be available because someone told us we stand on solid ground."

In a world where fear, tension, and anxiety surround us, we live with the conviction that God's love is deeper and stronger than the forces of fear, evil and death.

Motivated and vitalized by the Spirit of love, the Christian has the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the principle of his activity, instead of a series of do's and don't's. He has no need of a legal system or a catalogue of virtues, for all norms of individual conduct are summed up under the

notion of love and concern for others. Christ's law of love has replaced the Old Testament laws.

Only in terms of this power to love does the apostle Paul's missionary life make sense. As he wrote to the Corinthians, "It is Christ's love that spurs me on." With this strength he could endure suffering, imprisonment, and even death, for he knew that it would lead to glory and resurrection.

Riding on a train, I recall seeing painted on the side of a half-collapsed brick wall in a city lot these words — "make the odds even." This points to the challenge of love. This is why Christ suffered, died, and rose again. From the power of his love, the Christian offsets the thrust of anger and intolerance, and gives man a fair chance. Offering the poor hope, and the uncertain some horizon, he makes the "odds" of this world, the outsiders, "even" with the rest.



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