

TEENAGERS WANT TO KNOW

By FATHER MARTIN

Dear Father,
I am a girl soon to be 16. My problem is that at times I just cannot see why life is worth living.

My life seems to be one of ups and downs—some days life is so beautiful and then the next minute, I get so depressed and frustrated that I contemplate suicide. Someone is always telling me you can't have everything, but at times it seems that I have nothing.

One time when I thought of committing suicide, I talked to a priest, who has now left our parish, and at that time he helped me realize that it wasn't the answer. But when I get really depressed my mind always thinks about the possibility of suicide as the best way out, disregarding good reasoning.

How can I stop thinking about suicide, for it is very disconcerting and I am afraid that sometime when I'm really depressed, I'll do it.

ANGELA

Dear Angela,

You are not much different from the average teenager with your ups and downs. I know this sounds like too simplistic an answer, but these changing moods are part of the process of growing up. Eventual control of our emotions means that we are maturing. Part of maturity is to control our feelings and to overcome our periods of depression.

One thing that might help you is to mix in more with your friends and acquaintances. Another thing that will help you is to get involved in some charitable project. Go out of your way to help people, the aged, the sick, and so forth. This will help you to get out of yourself, and to center your attention on the needs of others.

I strongly recommend that you consult another priest with your problem. The other priest helped you because he evidently knew you and your problems well enough.

Repeated thoughts about suicide are not exactly normal, and I'm sure discussing the matter with some skilled counselor will be of immense value to you.

May God, bless you.

Dear Father,

My mother returned from a meeting with a group of ladies from our parish the other evening, and told me how disgusted everyone was with the way CCD classes are being handled now that our Catholic grade school has been closed. Her comments support my feelings.

I go with a Lutheran boy that I would like to marry some day, and if that should ever happen, I'm afraid I have to consent to bring our children up in the Lutheran church. However, my terms would be, if the children are to be Lutheran, they will attend services every Sunday. Occasionally, they will attend Mass and other services with my husband and me, and likewise, I will attend their services. My children would get a taste of both sides. At the same time, my husband would have to agree to let them go if they so chose, when they reached their mid-teens.

This may sound terrible, but I pray every day that the Catholic Church will take a good look at our Lutheran brothers and "get with it." Their method of indoctrinating their youth (summer camp, Sunday school, etc.) are very old, but they far surpass the expensive and inefficient methods used in our own schools and CCD organization.

MARCEY

Dear Marcey,

Since you are evidently aware of the pitfalls of a mixed marriage, I will confine my remarks only to your remarks about the CCD program.

Maybe the Lutherans are more with it because their people are more with it. Maybe the lay-Lutherans are more convinced of the necessity of religious teaching in their children's lives than Catholic lay-people are. Instead of blaming the Church, maybe you should start blaming Catholic parents and see what you can do about them "getting with it."

Let me give you one example, some of the priests stationed with me are traveling 55 miles on a Monday night to help a pastor with his CCD classes because he can't get enough people in his parish interested in teaching religion. If the children see their parents so unconcerned about the necessity of religious training, what do you think their attitude is going to be? So many parishes have only one priest. No one can realistically expect him to do all the teaching.

Your mother, at least, was concerned enough to attend a meeting. A lot of parents won't even do that. Teenagers could do a great deal of service to the Church if they would try to make parents realize their responsibility in this matter. Many times a comment coming from the mouths of their own children is much more effective for parents than when it comes from the mouth of a priest. You seem to be very concerned. Can you translate your concern into action? May God bless you.

Dear Father,

Some of my friends sneak into movies and football games without paying the admission price and think they are doing nothing wrong. Isn't this just like stealing?

KEVIN

Dear Kevin,

I doubt if your friends think they are doing nothing wrong. They must realize they are obliged to pay to get into a movie or into a sports attraction.

You are right. Sneaking into a movie house or a sports stadium without paying ad-

mission is definitely wrong and even a sin, because we are depriving someone of something that is lawfully theirs. Ordinarily, it is not a serious sin, but "wrong" none the less, and does not bespeak too highly of a person's honesty.

It's especially unfortunate when kids sneak into a high school game, because most schools have a hard time meeting financial commitments in their sports program, and every admission price they don't collect, makes it that much harder for a school to keep up its sports program. May God bless you.



Father Edward J. Cristoph of Rochester, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Chaplain Corps, receives the Legion of Merit for his work in Vietnam from Maj. Gen. Carl Darnell Jr. at the Presidio of San Francisco. After a year in Vietnam, Father Cristoph has been assigned to the Presidio as deputy chaplain. The priest, a graduate of St. Bernard's Seminary who was ordained in 1951, served as assistant pastor of Annunciation Church, Rochester, and St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls, before entering the Army in June 1955. His assignments have taken him to Japan, Korea and France. He is the son of Mrs. Edward Cristoph of 215 Navarre Road.

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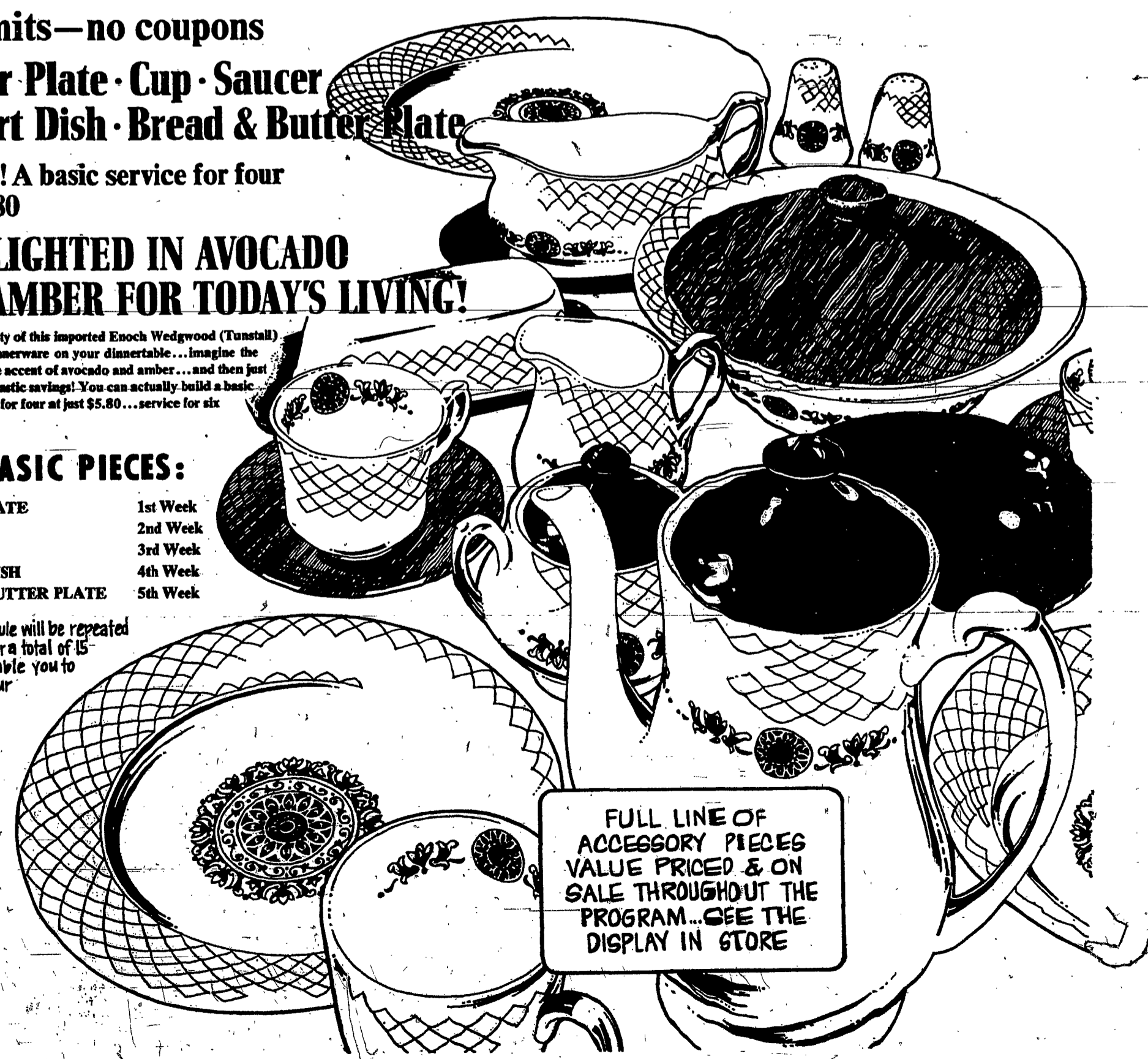
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Students' Concern Draws Priest's Praise

Auburn—Increasing concern of college students in United States foreign policy was praised here Wednesday night, Oct. 22, by Father David W. Connor, Catholic chaplain at Cornell University.

Father Connor addressed the

Newman Club in Auburn Community College.

Mentioning last week's Moratorium Day, he termed it "another great movement with a capital M. Nothing was much different except there were more people."

Referring to college militants, Father Connor said:

"They weren't empty-headed people. They spent their spare time studying U.S. involvement in Vietnam, in other countries, and in our own country. They were able to defend themselves and soon began to earn respect from other students..."

"Stopping the Vietnam War, as urgent as it is, is not the solution. We must radically change our foreign policy."

K. of C. Re-elects John McDevitt

Washington (NC)—John W. McDevitt was elected for a seventh consecutive term as supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus at a meeting here of the board of directors.

The 21 directors of the 12 million-member society of Catholic men also re-elected Charles J. Ducey of Hamden, Conn., deputy supreme knight; Virgil C. Dechant of La Crosse, Kan., supreme secretary; Daniel L. McCormick of Maplewood, N.J., supreme treasurer; Harold J. Lamboley of Monroe, Wis., supreme advocate; and Dr. John H. Griffin of Hughesville, Md., supreme physician.

Hero Cited

"Firefighter of the Year" is Gary C. Welsensel, 26, of 350 Schofield Road, Irondequoit, who received the Chamber of Commerce award last week for his rescue of two persons from a burning building. Welsensel, four years a fireman, is the son of Francis Welsensel, a 30-year veteran, and brother of David, who has been in the department for eight years. He is a member of St. Margaret Mary parish.