

## Vatican Backs Bible Research

Vatican City—(RNS)—The Vatican has given \$25,000 to a Bible translation project involving Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars.

It is the first official Catholic financial support to the work, which goes back several years. The Vatican sum matches that raised by the United Bible Societies from Protestant Churches.

A total outlay of \$50,000 is expected to keep the project going for the next five years.

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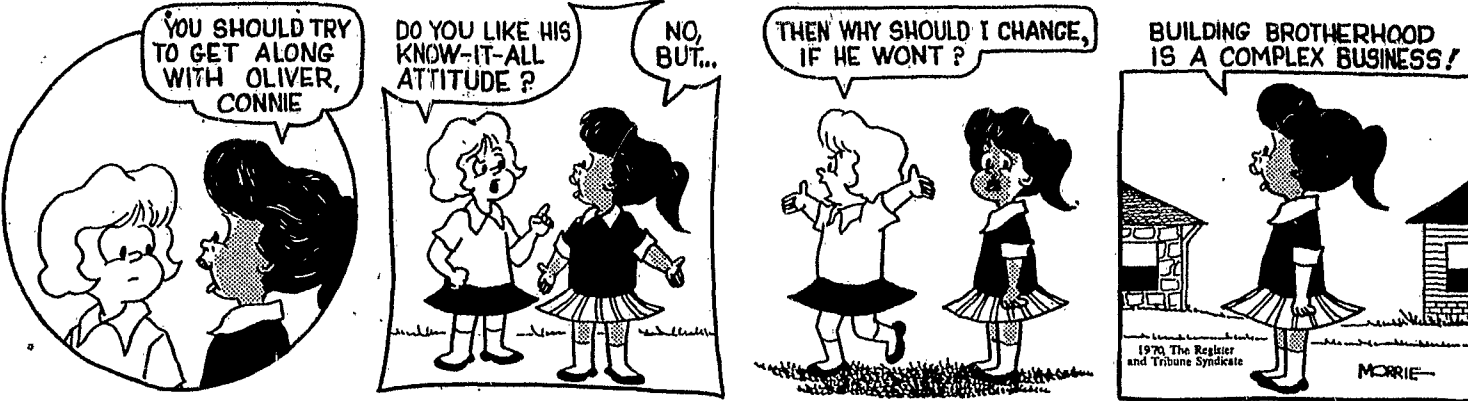
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## WEE PALS



## TEENAGERS WANT TO KNOW

By FATHER MARTIN

Dear Father,  
I am 18 and my boy friend is a year older. Both of us are Catholic. For a short period it seemed that all we thought about was sex. We did just about everything. It was almost as if we were obsessed by sex.

After a while, we woke up to our wrongdoing. We had a very frank discussion and we both went to confession to a wonderful priest. Since then, Father, I can honestly tell you we've been very prudent and we have done nothing to misuse sex in any way.

Father, we have made some terrible mistakes and we realize that I'm worried that maybe our marriage won't work out because I once read that if a boy indulges in sex with a girl before marriage it means he doesn't really love that girl or he wouldn't have tried anything. Do such mistakes cancel the love a boy and girl might have for each other?

Jenny

Dear Jenny,  
Most general statements are too sweeping. They usually have a grain of truth in them, but they don't cover all cases.

I think it's true to say, however, that once a couple have fallen into sin, it is harder for them to keep their relationship pure and to keep their trust in each other. It's harder, but it certainly isn't impossible.

We know that God draws good out of evil. Your situation can be a case in point.

Now, if you and your boyfriend have learned this, I see no reason why your relationship now cannot be truly good and truly Christian.

Dear Father,  
I am 16 years old and attend Catholic schools.

I was taught that one must confess his sins to a priest in order to be forgiven. However, I was also taught that God is everywhere and we can communicate with Him through prayer at any time, particularly after Communion.

Why, therefore, can we not receive forgiveness for our sins by simply confessing them and expressing our regret for them to God through prayer? Isn't the procedure involving the priest only a formality to make Confession a serious situation to us?

The question of penance, of course, comes up. Can I not do penance for my sins by doing good deeds for others and thus try to improve poor situations for others? After all, saying prayers as penance does not really make one feel truly sorry for his sins. I feel that only through physical acts can one fully express this feeling. Isn't it more profitable for everyone in the long run if one does good deeds for others?  
Patrick

Dear Patrick,  
More and more, people have been asking me the same question you pose in your letter: why confess sins to a man instead of to God directly?

No one would ask that question if he understood the full meaning of the Incarnation.

Confession to a priest accomplishes just what these people

are asking for: it is a direct encounter with God in the only way He has ever communicated with man — through tangible, concrete means.

I hope that you can see that if God is going to speak to us, with our limited capacity for communicating with One who is Spirit (Someone we can't see or hear), He needs to use a voice. We, as God's creatures, ought to be humble enough to admit it, and wise enough to be grateful and rejoice in the fact that God cares that much—that He gives us a human being to assure us that He has shown us mercy and forgiven our sins.

Certainly the few prayers the priest gives us are not enough penance for our sins. But the fact that we freely accept this penance shows that we are willing to make reparation for our sins.

### PEACH TARTS

Spread baked graham cracker crumb shells with softened cream cheese and put a large canned cling peach half in each. Then top with a spoonful of melted currant jelly.

## by Morrie Turner

Courier-Journal—Friday, April 3, 1970

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