

# 'I'd Rather Fight Than Play'

By DOLORES CURRAN

Everybody's idea of play is different. That's why it's so hard to plan a successful family vacation. With children distributed over a number of phases, one person's fun is bound to be another person's cross.

I remember the year we rented a mountain cabin for a few days. To Jim and me, it was as near perfect as a short vacation could be with young children. Our cozy cabin was located in a beautiful area next to a spring and far from a highway.

We hiked, fished, saw deer, fed chipmunks, cooked popcorn, and after the kids were in bed, we read long-anticipated books, undisturbed by knock or phone. It was a great change for us.

Curious as to the children's evaluations, we asked on the way home, "What did you like best about vacation?"

Beth replied immediately, "Those little boxes of cereal you bought."

It took our four-year-old a bit longer but his decision was equally shattering. "The night the lights went out and we had to use flashlights."

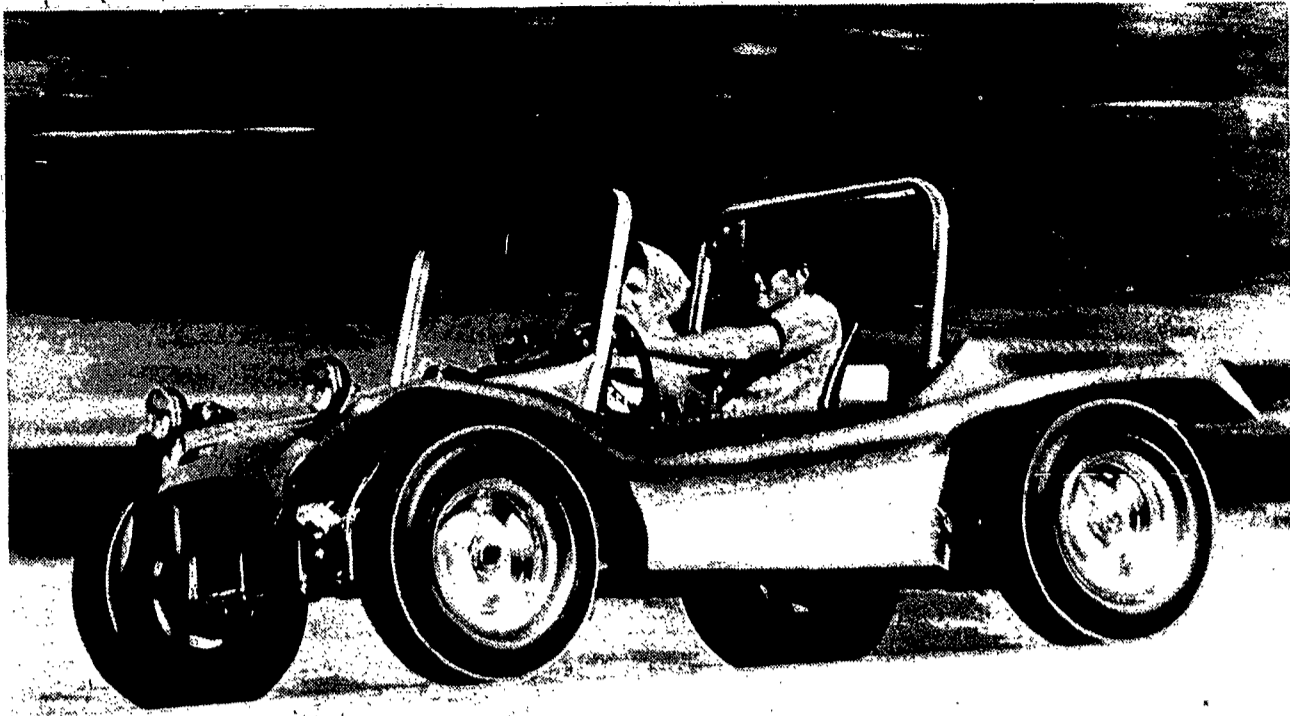
So much for honesty, but we asked for it. Underneath our veneer of objectivity, we were asking the kids to tell us they enjoyed the same things we did to the same degree we did. I'm quite sure that had they asked us the same question, they would have been equally astonished to hear us answer, "Reading a good book without interruption," and "Not having to meet any appointments."

We really aren't very honest regarding play today. In our atmosphere of "educational approval" of toys, games, family activities, and the like, the idea of merely having fun has become submerged.

Instead of doing what we really want to do, we become frenzied in our search for purposeful play. We forget that play doesn't have a purpose other than to amuse ourselves.

We may hate family camping (it's my idea of a personal purgatory) but we smile through gritty teeth and endure it because we're told there's family value in it.

Thousands of men despise the patio bar-b-queing so popular today, but they go through with it because the home and garden



What is fun for one may not be for another. But whatever, fun and play do hold a place in Christianity which neither cynically despises the world nor is consumed by its pleasures. (NC Photo by Bob Smith)

magazines show us it's the way to enjoy ourselves. And we're too weak to dissent.

The lamentable part of this picture is that we aren't satisfying our need for fun, and we really do need fun. We've seen too many men reduced to robots because they long ago stopped trying to find time to fish or read, and life has lost its zest for them. We've seen too many people reared with the idea that fun was a little sinful and they don't know how to enjoy themselves. If they're having fun, they feel a bit uncomfortable about it.

That's why we grasp at toys and trips labelled "educational."

That's why we explain away a vacation as "doctor's orders." That's why conventions in places like Las Vegas and San Francisco have become so phenomenally popular in recent years. These are approved ways of having fun.

In lieu of an honest look at play, these subterfuges are great. Perhaps someday we'll mature to the point where we regard fun — our fun — as a

necessity rather than a luxury. At that time, I hope we're honest enough to enjoy ourselves by doing what we really enjoy.

In the meantime, we have our children to follow as an example. They are honest—brutally honest. They say things like, "I think camping is crummy," and "Fighting is my favorite game," which leaves no room for pretense. But then, children know how to have fun.

## An Adult Catholic Guide For the 1970s

By MSGR.  
JOSIAH G. CHATMAN

### 1. THE GIFT OF FAITH

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is the first installment of "An Adult Catholic Guide for the 1970s." This guide attempts to spell out what Catholics believe in the context of the biblical and historical sources of that belief. It attempts to explain the Catholic Church, its history, its worship and its practices.

After a discussion of faith and prayer, the Old Testament and New Testament will be examined in the light of the insights of current scripture scholarship.

Theology, history, liturgy, inter-faith cooperation and involvement by Christians in the concerns of the world will be treated in a logical sequence.

In effect, the guide will attempt to explain what the Christian's attitude should be towards God and men, and how the Christian should be involved in the work of Christ.

Consultants for this guide are: Scripture, Dr. Eugene H. Maly; Moral Theology, Fr. Richard A. McCormick; Dogmatic Theology, Fr. William J. Sullivan, S.J.

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Jesus said: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him..." (John 6.44).

The Father draws us to Jesus by sending the Holy Spirit to us and attracting us to him as the Son of God and as our Saviour.

This attraction which takes place in the depths of our being is a free gift of God, given to us for our salvation. It is a special grace. This particular grace of the gift of faith is offered to every man, for St. Paul wrote: "... God our Saviour... desires all men to be saved and to come to the



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knowledge of the truth (Timothy 2:34; cf. Vatican II: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, nn. 14-17).

When we are given the gift of faith, as responsible persons we can accept or reject it. If we accept it it means that we begin to believe in Jesus and, as mature persons, try to regulate our lives according to his example and teaching. Faith, in the full, living sense of statements about God.

A full and living faith, in the sense in which the Bible generally uses the term, must be united with trust and love and is complete surrender of oneself to God. A person who has a truly living faith throws himself into the arms of God, our loving Father. This means that a person's entire life is changed.

God gives a person the gift of faith through means which are often undramatic and familiar, such as the example of love of parents and friends. A person often encounters God as mystery in crisis situations such as financial setbacks, death and sickness.

God acts in our lives in countless ways. If we understood this completely, we would see that the real cause of all God's grace is Jesus, who lived and died and was raised from the dead for us by his Father.

It is the risen, glorious Jesus to whom we are drawn

by faith. Jesus and the Father send the Holy Spirit into our lives to transform us, to unite us with Jesus and with all others who are also united with him. This union of people with Jesus, and with one another, is the Church, which we call the Mystical Body of Christ.

All who are united by the Spirit in Jesus must worship the Father with him. They must also share, through the Spirit, in the work of Jesus, which is nothing less than the remaking of all things so that they become a new creation.

The prayer and worship we offer the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, can take many forms. It can take the form of personal, individual prayer. It can take the form of group prayer with one's family or friends. It can take the form of participation in the official prayer of the Church, which is called the liturgy.

In every case, prayer should lead to works of helpfulness and love, which are our participation in bringing about the new creation. Such works, performed in the proper spirit, are themselves a form of prayer.

When you were baptized, God gave you the basic gift of faith, a "rebirth," which communicated to you the effects of Christ's redeeming death and resurrection. You are now called upon to respond to and affirm this gift of faith in a personal way.

## But Not Only The Scriptures

By FR. WALTER  
M. ABBOTT, S.J.

On April 15, 1970, Pope Paul spoke to thousands of pilgrims who had come into St. Peter's Basilica for the weekly general audience.

This is how the Associated Press report read in one New York paper:

Pope Paul said today the Catholic Church was undergoing the same kind of ferment that had triggered the Protestant schism.

"The Protestants," he said, "excluded the teaching authority of the Church and put every follower of Christ in direct contact with the Scriptures alone, leaving to everyone a free examination of it."

He added, "But is this what Christ wanted? Was there not a danger that the Holy Scripture lose their unique significance and be shattered in one thousand various and contrasting interpretations."

I can assure you that the Pope had no intention of contradicting the policy of Vatican II, which is to put every follower of Christ in direct contact with the Scriptures.

He simply wanted to make it clear that he and the other Bishops still have the obligation of making sure the Catholic understanding of Scripture is conveyed to the people, as well as the Scriptures themselves. In other words, the Scriptures, yes, but not only the Scriptures.

It was precisely to help the Pope and the Bishops in this work that the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate has been established. It hopes to provide easy ac-

cess to commentaries, pamphlets that are easy reading guides for the people, courses for clergy and laity, audiovisual aids, etc.—all that is needed for the pastoral follow-up on easy access to the Scriptures themselves.

All this work of teaching and interpreting the Scriptures is, of course, beyond the scope of the Bible Societies, with which we are now cooperating in order that as many people as possible may have good, new translations of the Scriptures. The Bible Societies exist for the sole purpose of providing the wider circulation of the Scriptures themselves. All the pastoral work around the availability of the Scriptures is the work a Church should do, and the WCFBA is going to see to it that the Roman Catholic Church does the work as well as possible. It is a basic policy of the WCFBA that it should cooperate with the Bible Societies wherever possible for the translation, production and distribution of the Scriptures themselves.

The Federation will specialize in assisting the Bishops of each region with the pastoral work connected necessarily with the circulation of the Scriptures, that is, the training of priests and people for teaching the Scriptures, in the production of commentaries and other publications explaining the Scriptures, and in coordinating the output so that the best and most useful materials can be made available throughout the world—I hope at a price people can afford to pay, and, if they really cannot pay anything, then free of charge.