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Painless Discipleship -- Fact or Fiction?

If we were to take a popularity poll of the liturgical seasons of the year, Lent would be a perpetual loser. I have yet to meet a sizeable number of people who look forward with eagerness to the beginning of the annual penitential season.

The reason seems quite obvious because Lent focuses our attention on the Cross of Christ and the price that Redemption costs. This is not a challenge we readily accept, because our weak nature recoils from a program of self-discipline. More attractive to it because of the gravitational pull of the earth are paths of least resistance.

The question, then, posed by my title for this Lenten meditation is purely rhetorical. Our flesh would have us hope that painless discipleship is a fact. But our better self—our spirit—reminds us that there is no easy road that leads to Christ. He has made it quite clear that redemption is achieved only in the pain of self-denial: "If anyone will come

after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." And again, "He who does not take up his cross and follow Me, cannot be My disciple."

St. Paul reminds us of this inner tension which we all experience. He describes it as a warfare between the flesh and the spirit and assures us that the triumph of the spirit offers us the only hope of personal integrity.

What will forever be the common struggle between our lower and higher nature becomes accentuated in the age in which we live. Our day has sided with the flesh against the spirit and cheers and applauds its choice. The banners of its favorite read: "The good life"—"La Vita Dolce." Witness the force of the advertising campaigns promoting personal comfort, painless existence, instant success, effortless housekeeping, wonder drugs which bypass the traditional asceticism required for good physical condi-

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Sister Ramona, here to promote student action for passage of the Speno-Lerner bill, confers with the heads of student councils from diocesan Catholic high schools: (l.-r.) Rita Leschander, St. Joseph's Business High School; Dan Ciurell, Cardinal Mooney; John Herbers, Bishop Kearney; Brenda Edwards, Nazareth Academy; Joyce Kaminski, Our Lady of Mercy; Mary Whitehair, St. Agnes. Seated on the floor, from left are: Rick McGrath, McQuaid; Dave Naegele, DeSales, Rudy Valentino, Aquinas. Story on Page 19.

Bishop Reinstates Pupil Transfer Ban

- Mandated services check arrives. Page 2.
- Rockefeller makes switch. Page 4.
- Speno-Lerner and Albany. Page 18.

Catholic schools in the city of Rochester will not accept transfer pupils from the public schools, the diocesan General Education Division announced this week.

Stating policy enunciated by Bishop Hogan, Father Daniel Brent explained that the reorganization of city high schools set for September and the possible future extension of elementary school restructuring, had prompted restatement of the diocesan ruling.

Bishop Hogan said: "On Feb. 11, 1970, I took the position that the Catholic schools of Rochester should not be used to inhibit the reorganization efforts of the public schools. At that time I forbade the acceptance

of transfer students. That continues to be my position.

"Since the Rochester School Board has now directed a reorganization of secondary schools and is considering the extension of elementary school reorganization, I am restating the ban on transfers.

"This will be our policy: No transfer students from the Rochester public schools involved in reorganization will be accepted in grades 2-8 in Catholic schools, except in cases 1) where a family has newly moved into the parish; or 2) where the transfer is made for educational reasons after con-

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Lenten Thoughts

WHY THE AGONY?

By MSGR. PATRICK J. FLYNN
The pain and plight of our world is reflected in the opening scene of Christ's Passion—

This is the first in a series of Lenten messages written for Courier-Journal readers by pastors from throughout the diocese. Msgr. Patrick J. Flynn is pastor at St. Helen's Church in Gates.

His strange agony in the Garden of Gethsemani.

On the eve of his death on the Cross, Christ, with his apostles, enters the Garden. Falling prostrate on the ground, He is seized and shaken by a strange paroxysm of terror. So severe and acute is Christ's agony, his sweat becomes as drops of blood falling to the ground. "Fa-



ther," He prays, "take this cup from me!" There is great mystery in this scene. What a contrast is this Christ in agony to the Christ once transfigured on Mount Tabor. There his humanity seemed lost in the shining glory of his divinity. Here

in Gethsemani, his divinity seems to have deserted him, abandoned him to the weakness of his humanity.

God in Agony! But, why? Like a lightning flash illuminating the darkness of Gethsemani, is the comment of Thomas Aquinas on this scene. Looking on the prostrate Master, Aquinas says that at this moment Christ "was tempted to hate his neighbor."

Christ is tempted to hate you and me! This is the meaning to the blood, sweat and pain of Christ in the Garden.

Satan who had once tempted Christ with lies returns at this eleventh hour to tempt Him with the truth—the truth about us. "You fool, O Christ!" Satan taunts Him, "why will you die on the cross for them? They will only repay you with in-

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Lay Committee Formed To Press for Parent-aid

A lay committee has been organized in the diocese to promote the passage of the Speno-Lerner Parent Aid Bill in the State Legislature.

Purpose of the committee is to organize a massive letter, telegram, telephone campaign to impress state executive and legislative members with the popular support for the bill.

The organization, the Legislative Action Committee—Parent Aid, mainly is composed of parish school board members

and will direct its thrust through parish school boards, teachers, parents and students. The bill is in committee in both houses. The action group hopes to move state leaders to use their influence to get the bill out of committee and to vote favorably for its passage at this session.

The committee was formed at a meeting which heard Father Daniel Brent, diocesan superintendent of schools, and

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