

# Saint Condemns Incest

By FR. WALTER ABBOTT

If you will read chapters 5 and 6 in Paul's First Letter to the Christians in Corinth, you will see how Paul handles three moral problems which were obviously what we would call "hot" topics of conversation among the people: a case of incest, the matter of Christians suing other Christians in court, and the arguments of a group favoring more liberal views on sexual activity than Paul would permit.

The case of incest would have been a remarkable thing even in loose-living Corinth, and certainly was considered abominable by Greeks and Romans.

What seems to have happened was that a Jew who had become a Christian went through a marriage ceremony with his widowed stepmother. Paul was furious because the Corinthian Christians seem to have let the man get away with it. Since he says nothing against the woman, we conclude that she was not a Christian.

The majority of Jewish scholars at that time seem to have held that one who accepted Judaism and circumcision could marry his father's widow since circumcision made him a new creature. Apparently this man argued that he could do the same on the grounds that baptism, making him a new creature, was certainly as efficacious as circumcision.

In his letter to the Galatians, written four or five years before this one to the Corinthians, Paul had taught that through faith and baptism the Christian was freed from the bondage of sin and from what he even went so far as to call the bondage of the Mosaic Law. Now, in Corinth, some were pushing it to permit sexual activity beyond that of the legitimate marriage union. You can regard 6:12-20 as a follow-up on

that case of incest, which Paul handles in 5:1-13. However, most commentators take 6:12-20 as the handling of something much broader than the case of incest. I think they are right in saying that Paul takes on a group advocating freedom in sexual activity to the extent of managing it the same way one manages the matter of eating.

Paul tells the Corinthians that there are some limits to

Christian freedom in sexual matters. He writes that he has excommunicated the man who is living with his step-mother, and he orders the Christian community to promulgate the excommunication. It is the first case of excommunication in the New Testament.

Excommunication is an action taken to protect the community against the erosion of an intolerable scandal.

## KNOW YOUR FAITH

### Q. and A.

By FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

**Q.** How authoritative are the documents of the Second Vatican Council? I understand that they are not intended to be infallible. Does this mean that the average Catholic can take them or leave them, depending upon his personal whims?

**A.** It is true that the Second Vatican Council never invoked the gift of infallibility in promulgating its various constitutions, decrees, and declarations. It is not true that the documents lack all ecclesiastical authority.

If this were the case, Catholics would only have to take seriously infallible statements of the Church. And such statements are decidedly few in number.

At their most authoritative level, the documents of Vatican II are in the category of "Catholic doctrine." They represent the teaching of the Church's magisterium in such ways that a Catholic must have good and solid reasons for disagreeing with such teaching.

## B. J. Thomas: No Love at All

By THE MISSION SINGERS

B.J. Thomas has come up with a real powerhouse of a song, one that gets you tapping your feet and humming the tune even after the record's over. Another good thing is that the lyrics offer challenging questions.

Is it really true that "even a bad love is better than no love, and any kind of love is better than no love at all?" Should we agree with this song? Or is it wrong to be satisfied with so little, with such a small part of what's really possible?

Two friends of ours listened to this record recently and their reactions to it were completely different. One said, "That's terrible. No one should come out with a message like that. You can't squeeze love into a measuring cup. A song like this encourages mediocrity."

Our second friend felt like this: "I don't think the purpose of the song is to chant the praises of 'a little bit of love.' It's not trying to say that this is the ideal, but it is saying that no love at all is the most disastrous thing that can happen to anyone. Anything is better than no love at all."

We agree with our second friend. No love at all is death.

We know a 12-year-old girl named Pamela, who has a very poor family life. It's always been that way for her, but she is just getting old enough to realize that her family is giving her no love at all.

We introduced her to a woman who could be her "big sister," a friend she could talk to and trust. The two of them got along like long-lost relatives, and now there's a good possibility that the woman might be able to adopt Pam.

The woman said to us recent-

## THE MUSIC BAG

NO LOVE AT ALL

Read in the paper nearly every day, people breaking up And just walking away from love, and that's wrong, that's so wrong. A happy little home comes up for sale because two people Have tried and failed to get along, and you know that's wrong. A man hurts a woman and a woman hurts a man when neither One of them wanna love and understand; I take it with a grain of salt.

O now I believe that A little bit of love is better than no love. Even a bad love is better than no love. And even a sad love is better than no love at all. A little bit of love is better than no love. Even a bad love is better than no love. And any kind of love is better than no love at all. No love at all is a poor man standing on the corner With his hat in his hand and no place to go, he's feeling low. No love at all is the child in the street dodging traffic, And begging to eat on a tenement row, and that's a rough row to hoe. No love at all is a troubled girl standing on the bridge At the end of the world, and it's a pretty short fall. (Copyright 1971 by Ron Bridge/Press Music)

ly: "Whenever I see Pam she looks so happy. She simply bubbles with enthusiasm and joy. I remember the first time I met her, though. Her eyes were so suspicious; she looked so lost.

"I only feel bad that I can't spend as much time with her as I'd like to. Once a week really isn't enough. Imagine how much love she would feel if only I had more time with her."

What she says is true, and it's toward that goal that she's working. But still, it's important to realize that even now Pam is a changed person. The little bit of love she's getting now has given her a big lift. It's a start at least.

No Love At All is a song that pinpoints the value of compromise. So often, people with strong ideals condemn compromise as a cop-out. And true enough, compromise is often

just that: the selling of a principle.

But other times, compromise is the only way to sustain a principle. The woman we talked about is not satisfied with the limited attention she can give her "little sister," Pam.

She knows that it is a compromise of her final goal, adoption. But she also realizes that her present relationship with Pam is better than nothing at all, and also that it is an essential first step toward her ultimate goal. So for the moment, she accepts the compromise.

No Love At All is a plea of sorts. It pleads with people to be more pragmatic and down-to-earth about helping that poor old man, that child in the street, that troubled young girl. To stop at just a little bit of love would be terrible; never to stop at all would be worse.



CULVER RIDGE PLAZA  
Phone 467-4240  
Open Mon. thru Sat  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**20% OFF**  
**OF COMPLETE INVENTORY**  
All Tricycles & Other  
Wheel Goods. Pennies  
Above Cost!

### Is there a mystery about funeral costs?

Not here at Hedges Memorial Chapel. Each casket in our spacious showroom is plainly marked. You may make your selection without the presence of one of our staff, if that is what you prefer. You will know the exact cost of the complete service after you have made your selection. There are no extra charges. . . . And you may depend completely on the thoughtfulness, honesty, and attention to every detail that has made Hedges Memorial Chapel the most respected name in funeral service for over 100 years.

**HEDGES MEMORIAL CHAPEL**



Rufus Hedges Herbert W. Rech Albert W. Coon Clarence J. Jeffery  
770 East Main at Alexander • Dial 454-7070

## FABRIC CITY LOW - LOW PRICES!

**VALUABLE COUPON**

Get Acquainted Offer  
**\$1.00 THIS COUPON \$1.00 IS WORTH**

No Need to Purchase More Than the Value of This Coupon

**THIS IS NO GIMMICK**

This is done to get you acquainted with our Fabulous Selection of Drapery and Slip Cover materials. Dress Goods - Dress Patterns - Upholstery and Large Selection of Foam Rubber.  
(One Coupon per Customer)

Good March 24th thru March 31

**VALUABLE COUPON**

**FABRIC CITY**  
1731 CLINTON AVE. N.  
(Next to Keeler Street Expressway)  
open 10 to 5:30 . . . Thurs. & Fri. 'til 9 P.M.  
266-1220