

An Open Letter To Our Graduates

My dear young friends:

It is my pleasure each year at the end of school to be personally present at Commencement exercises and there to offer you my congratulations and best wishes as you venture forth into a new challenge of additional schooling or of a life's commitment. Since it is obviously impossible for me to deliver my message in person at all graduation ceremonies, I have chosen to contact you by this letter expressing my hopes and wishes for you.

You are challenged by your Baptism in Christ and your Confirmation in His Spirit to renew the face of this earth—to make this a better world by your presence. That the world of the 70's is in need of renewal no one would dare deny. Its evils reflect those of every age—the imperfection of human justice, the inadequacy of human compassion, the defectiveness of our sensibility towards the sufferings of man, the limit of our



ability to use our knowledge for the well-being of others.

We rely on youth to remedy the situation. Youth belongs to the young and to the old. It is not an attribute which is a monopoly of those who are chronologically young.

It is an attribute, a state of mind — rather than a time of life. It is a condition of the heart and a resolve of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease.

During your school days you have been submitted to a battery of tests designed to measure your abilities, your performance and your stability. I. Q. tests gave school authorities some indication of what could reasonably be expected of you academically. Achievement tests indicated rather accurately how you conformed to your intellectual potential. Personality profiles revealed to a degree your emotional stability.

But the most important test could not be given because the results are immeasurable. I prefer to call it the 'Quest-Quotient'. It is your desire, your will to achieve. It is what is in your heart.

The evils of today are never going to yield to slogans or to a vague wish that they will vanish. They will give way to a corporate determination of young hearts. Each of us can work to change a small portion of events and in the totality of individual efforts will be written the history of this generation. Each time you stand up for an ideal, or act to improve the lot of others, or strike out against injustice, you send forth into this world a tiny ripple of hope.

One of the most inspiring graduates I have met this year has been a victim of Cerebral Palsy all of his life. He has achieved despite the label of 'handicapped' society has given him. A wise father and mother never infected him with fatal self-pity. His "Quest-Quotient" must be rated superior. I hope and pray that all of you will adopt his philosophy: "I never let paralysis touch my heart!"

Today is the first day of the rest of your lives. Be of good heart as you accept this challenge.

Guest Columnist

The Greatest Cop-Out of Them All

By Father Joseph M. Egan

In our times we have looked in vain for the theologians to offer some persuasive explanation of the Catholic attitude toward

contraception. Pope Paul's voice cries in a desert: few theologians have jumped to the defense of Humanae Vitae. In their silence, we are witnessing the greatest cop-out in the history of the Church. I guess nobody really wants to fight the unbeatable foe.

At times, detachment can lend perspective. Often, an outsider can grasp the overall picture, while the specialist, scrutinizing the trees, is unaware of the forest. We amateur searchers, abandoned by the experts and professionals, must content ourselves with sketched outlines of what must be genuine Christian thought.

For starters we must realize that when God forbids something by natural law (and contraception is claimed to be this type of activity), it is no arbitrary taboo, no petulant whim of the Creator for which there can be no rational accounting. The God who forbids contraception is the God of love. He does so because — at least in the long run — contra-

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ception is harmful to humanity. His "stop-sign" is there to stop us from hurting ourselves.

This doesn't necessarily mean physical harm to the user. In many instances the pill or the loop may be physically harmful, but contraception is not forbidden because it is unhealthy. It is not a violation of the Fifth Commandment, but of the Sixth, and the Sixth is concerned, not with the survival and well-being of the individual, but the life and good of mankind.

Our search is complicated by the fact that God's law does not absolutely and universally forbid all human control of conception. This puzzles the man in the pew. As he sees things, our teaching comes down to this: the easy and effective way of controlling conception is outlawed, and the difficult and problematical way of controlling conception is permitted. This puzzles the man in the pew, for he is conditioned to go for the easy and sure solution to his problems.

It is precisely the ease with which one

may fall into the contraceptive habit that makes it morally suspect.

At the moment, over-population is the great bugaboo, a conversation-piece in affluent and indolent circles. But for the long run of history, depopulation is probably a more threatening dragon. Particularly in the kind of social structure we have built, falling birth-rates are a harbinger of general decline. Insurance and pension-programs, social security and subsidized health-care will become empty promises without a wide population-base to maintain them.

A marriage which relies on the use of contraceptives becomes more and more pleasure-centered, less and less responsible. The virtue of chastity (the voluntary control of the expression of the sexual appetite) has no place in such a marriage, at the top level of such a home. The single cannot but wonder why only the married can claim the right to use contraceptives. Indeed, logic being what it is, there is no effective barrier left against other forms of sexual immorality.

When chastity goes from life, lust comes in, and with it a company of other capital vices, which have less pleasant masks. There is an interconnection of the virtues, and of the vices as well. Ancient history, and modern Popes, have said it clearly enough.

Editorial

No Sunday Shopping at Illegal Supermarkets

Nearly every major food-store in Rochester was open and bustling with trade last Sunday. In clear and deliberate violation of the Sunday Sales Law the big groceries claim that they have to be open for business because the lucrative Sunday trade will go to their competitors if they keep the law and stay closed. One grocery executive, protesting that his company really did not want to compete in a seven day week said: "Staying closed is similar to driving 40 miles an hour in a 40 mile zone when everybody else is going 60 — you can get killed. And our stores will get killed unless we keep up."

State law prohibits the sale on Sunday of all but essential items. But its terms are confusing and difficult to police. It needs to be reviewed, strengthened and made enforceable. As written, the law's purpose is to "provide periods of rest for the well-being, moral and physical, of the people."

It sets a general policy prohibiting all labor "except works of necessity and of charity" and then establishes specific items which are exempt from the sales prohibition. It is legal, for example, to sell bread, milk, eggs and fruit; drugs, candy, tobacco and newspapers; gasoline, tires, cemetery monuments and souvenirs.

We believe there are several good reasons for demanding the Sunday Sales Law in our community. This can be done by urging the large stores universally to close down and requesting the general public not to shop on Sunday.

a—There is no evidence of a general public need for this additional day of selling by the larger food stores. The casual Sunday trip to the small Mom-and-Pop grocery or the drugstore for necessity or emergency items will still cover our needs.

b—If Sunday selling continues in the

supermarkets, the small grocery will be tragically squeezed. The little merchants in the individually owned and operated stores will be compelled to enter the seven day week. Even if now open on Sunday, such small stores which have found Sunday-selling their best income, can be competitively destroyed by a price-war with the big markets.

c—The disappearance of the weekend for family sharing will be generally harmful if hundreds of families are forced to accept the Sunday absence of a father or mother or teenager who is obliged to be on the job every Sunday in a 7-day food-store.

Christians who deplore the slow erosion of Sunday by commercialization can make an effective sign of protest. Stay away from the big food stores on Sundays; refuse to buy on Sunday so that the merchants will learn the impracticality of breaking the law.