



ON THE RIGHT SIDE  
Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

A young priest who is given to bluntness was called from supper to the phone. An excited caller wanted him to arbitrate her marriage quarrel. With great calm he said: "You freely chose to burn your butt. Now sit on the blister." He then returned to supper.

It may seem harsh, but I suppose he felt: "He who chooses an action chooses the consequences." How many patients choose to disregard their doctor's orders, and suffer the consequences.

At the 1972 meeting of the Canon Law Society in Washington Father T.J. Lynch wrote on Teen Age Marriages and Diocesan Norms. He records: "One out of four marriages in the U.S. ends in divorce. According to the National Center of Health Statistics, 56 per cent of all divorces occur before the parties involved reach the age of 24. Thirty-three per cent of all divorced couples are teenagers

"Family Life Directors conclude that one third of teen age marriages will end in divorce. The Family Life Division of the USCC puts it closer to 50 per cent failure rate in teen age marriages where no pregnancy is involved; and 90 per cent rate when there is a pregnancy. The factor of premarital pregnancy is much on the increase. It puts extreme pressure on the youngsters to seek marriage as the only 'solution.'

"These facts are understandable. They corroborate the legitimate presumption that teen agers are usually not mature enough, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and financially, to handle the responsibilities and rights of marriage in contemporary society."

Years ago, a couple came beaming cheerfully to arrange for marriage. I asked the boy: "When did you and Lulubelle meet?"

"Last Thursday at a country dance. We like each other and we want you to marry us."

"Well, don't you think you should wait until you become better acquainted? Two days isn't much, and you don't have a job."

Such obstacles they brushed off as nothing. In case you are wondering, they did not marry. A week later the boy came in. "I've decided not to marry Lulubelle after all." But this is the exception. Most teenagers are sure that what they want is perfectly reasonable.

Why doesn't the loving Church act to protect teenagers from entering into marriages they will regret? She does. In April 1971 our Bishop Hogan wrote to all priests regarding marriages of minors:

"At one time or another you probably have been asked to witness a marriage for which you could see little or no possibility of success. . . . In an effort to provide at least the beginning of a solution to the problem, and to do everything possible to assist young people to approach marriage with a maturity sufficient to sustain married life, the following procedure will be mandatory for all men under 21, and for all women under 18."

The bishop's directive is too involved for this article. It can better be treated in the more intimate parish bulletins. However, Msgr. Gerard Krieg, who was matrimonial officialis, wrote to all priests in September 1971:

"Since Bishop Hogan inaugurated the program for the preparation of teen agers for marriage, requiring his permission before any marriage involving a boy under 21 or a girl under 18, it is now time for common sense criticism.

"The program proves effective only when the couples are reminded that no date may be set for the wedding until the Bishop's permission has been given. This necessitates a much earlier preparation for marriage. Certainly an occasional notice in the parish bulletin will be helpful . . ."

To recall the story of Father Blunt: no priest is setting teen agers on the hot seat; and no priest wants any youngsters to sit on a blister of their own making. The Church is concerned. Now, let the teen agers be concerned and responsible. The Church wants the young to be happy; but the young have to be willing to heed the Church.

Loreto Replica to Be Dedicated

On Wednesday, August 22, the feast of the Queenship of Mary, an exact replica of the Holy House of Loreto, Italy, will be dedicated in Washington, N.J. The walls of the shrine are imbedded with stones from Loreto.

Cosme do Amaral of Leiria, Portugal, the diocese where Fatima is located; Bishop George W. Ahr of Trenton; Father Modestus, vicar of the Loretto Holy House, and Brother

Aloysius, founder of the Brothers of the Holy Eucharist.

The national Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima expects members and non-members from all over the country to attend.

A tradition first documented in the 16th Century holds that the Santa Casa di Loreto is the very house in which the Holy Family lived in Nazareth, and that the house was carried to Italy by angels in the year 1291.

On hand to assist in the dedication of "Holy House, U.S.A.," will be Bishop Alberto

Crossword  
Answer

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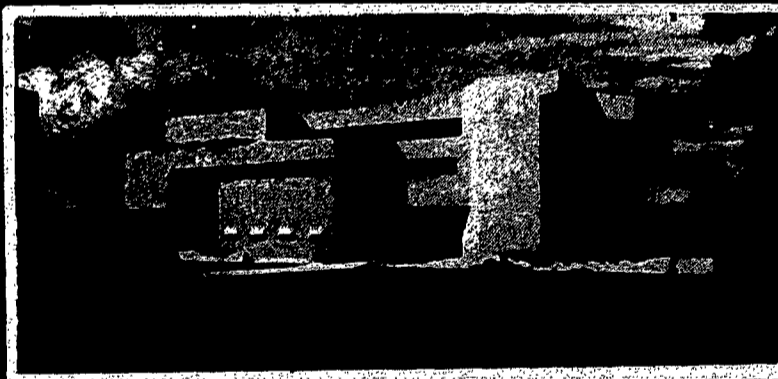
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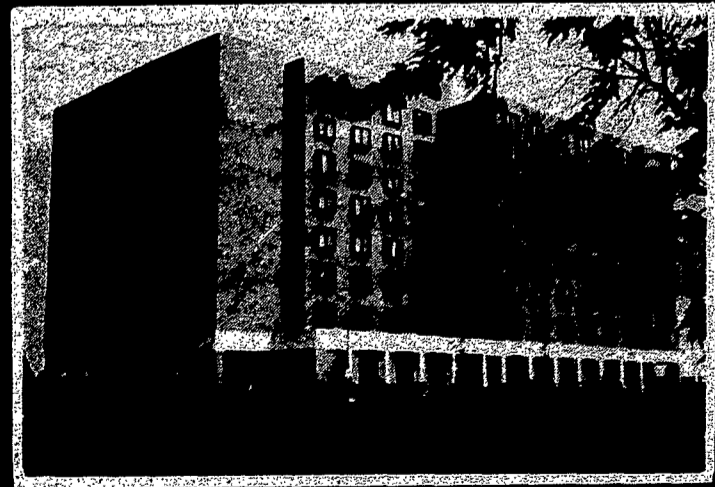
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