

THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. Louis Hohman

I still don't understand what you mean when you say that all sins affect the community, that there is no such thing as a private sin. What about such a sin as masturbation? Isn't that strictly private, known to nobody else, and affecting nobody else?

When you speak of the sin of masturbation being entirely private you are not seeing it in its entirety.

There must have been a reason for the sin. If it proceeded from a native self-centeredness, then the self-centeredness is the real area of sin and needs to be overcome on our part. The act of masturbation would merely be the effect of this. That self-centeredness would inevitably show itself in other ways. The second possibility is that the act of masturbation was primarily the result of negative emotions. It would have come from anxiety, fear, boredom, depression, a sense of failure or other negative feelings. These negative feelings then are the things that need to be rooted out of our lives. In this matter of seeing our sins as relating to the whole community I think we must look at God's world as a symphony which He planned and which He conducts but we must each play our parts. We are instrumentalists in this symphony and when we play sour notes or do not play our part at all then the entire symphony suffers. We may not be first violin in this symphony but only a minor instrument. Nevertheless the total

effect is not the same when our part is missing or inferior.

What would be the reason for going to individual confession [the individual Rite of Reconciliation]? At what times is such an individual confession necessary?

The Rite of Reconciliation on an individual basis with individual confession to a Priest is necessary when we are in the state of serious sin. Theologians today are tending to make a distinction between serious sin and mortal sin but individual confession would be necessary in either case. If one does not have any serious sin then individual confession could be very useful in terms of trying to grow through contact with the healing,

forgiving Christ in the Sacrament of Penance. The penitent could also benefit from the counseling of the Confessor. However, it is not at all necessary that anyone go to individual confession if there is no serious sin involved. Incidentally, that was always true and so there is not really any change in this particular area.

Why are theologians making the distinction between mortal sin and serious sin? What does the distinction mean?

The distinction is based upon something that theologians call fundamental option. It simply means the overall basic direction of a person's life. So a husband and father who wanted to be a good husband and father and was doing his job well, performing all the duties required of him and doing his best to lead a Christian life, might end up in a situation of serious sin but he would not be alienated from Christ because he would still be moving in the direction of the Christian life. This could happen, I think, if on the occasion of a business convention a man might end up committing a serious sexual sin and becoming very drunk even though ordinarily he wouldn't even think of these things. What he did might very well be seriously sinful and yet he as a person would not have changed from the good husband and father that he was. We speak of mortal sin in reference to those who are totally turned away from Christ, who have rejected Him in some major way and whose fundamental option is at a 180 degree angle to Jesus Christ. So for example, a man having an affair and refusing to do

anything about it would probably be in mortal sin. A man who was a compulsive gambler, hurting his family and refusing to do anything about it would also probably be in mortal sin. He would be making money his god, rather than the Lord. So there could very easily be a distinction between these two kinds of sin. I rather like the distinction because it takes away the idea that one could be seriously alienated from Christ through one single act or through a short series of acts.

2 Laymen Write Hymn For Congress

Philadelphia — Two laymen who between them have 65 years of writing and performing church music won the official hymn contest sponsored by the 41st International Eucharistic Congress.

Omer Westendorf, compiler of the first Catholic hymnal after the historic changeover from Latin to English in the Mass, and Robert Kreutz, a composer of more than 150 published works, collaborated by mail across 1,000 miles to create their winning song, "Gift of Finest Wheat."

The official hymn will be sung here at all Congress-sponsored liturgies during Congress Week, Aug. 1-8. A choir of 1,000 voices from throughout the U.S. will sing it at the closing ceremonies.

"We were enheartened that the contest yielded so many excellent hymns for the Christian community. We received more than 200 works from America and abroad," Dr. Peter LaManna, director of music for the congress, said.

Because the hymn was submitted under the non-de-plume "Richard Wing," in compliance with anonymous entry regulations, contest judges knew nothing of the musical background of the composers.

Westendorf, author of the lyrics, is a native resident of Cincinnati, Ohio, and a prolific contributor to Catholic and Protestant hymnals. In Catholic circles he is known as founder of the World Library of Sacred Music and World Library

Publications. He is the sole compiler of the trend-setting "Peoples Mass Book," which introduced many Protestant tunes that are now standard in Catholic Churches. The book also contains 40 lyrics of his own creation, published under such pen names as J. Clifford Evers and Mark Evans.

Westendorf's long-distance collaboration with French Benedictine priest Dom Paul Benoit yielded the now popular "Where Charity and Love Prevail," which is widely accepted among the Presbyterian, Baptist and Evangelical traditions.

With the lyrics written, Westendorf mailed them to his long-time friend Robert Kreutz, of Golden, Colo.

The works of Kreutz, a native of La Crosse, Wis., range from instrumental to vocal and sacred to secular. He has composed seven Latin and nine English Masses, including the "Mass for an American Saint." His most widely known song is "O Lord, We Believe."

Student Art To Be Shown At Nazareth

The first annual Student Art Exhibition of Nazareth College will open with a reception in the Arts Center at 8 p.m. March 26. The multi-media collection of art works will be on display in the upper foyer-gallery of the Arts Center through April 15 featuring paintings, sculpture, prints, jewelry, ceramics, weaving and photography by students of the Nazareth Art Department.

The show was initiated this year as a complementary addition to the annual Senior Art Exhibition to allow freshman, sophomore, and junior art students at Nazareth to participate in a professional exhibition and have their work critically appraised. The faculty chairman for this year's show is Ronald Netsky, instructor of art.

The exhibit hours are weekdays from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and weekends from noon to 6 p.m.

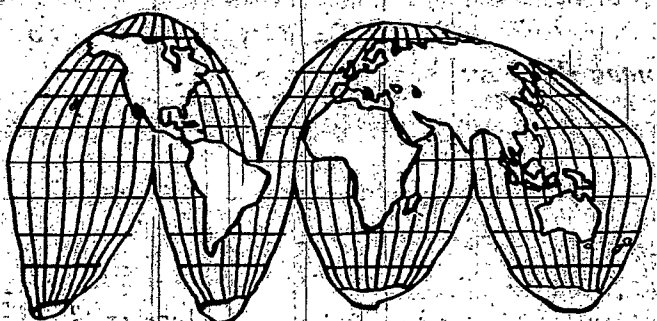
NEWSPAPER

Ithaca — Preparations are now being made at Immaculate Conception for the first edition of a new parish newspaper. It is expected that publication will begin around Easter. Anyone interested in joining the staff should contact the rectory.

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Some people who visit Rome, Pope Paul remarked, recently, "see the dome of St. Peter's, the Swiss guards and say, 'Ah, this is Rome,' and think they know all about us." He had received 250 members of the Foreign Press Club, and was telling them he realized they might find it hard to understand the Vatican. He asked the journalists never to remain silent when they saw dignity and personal honor threatened by violence. Addressing the children of the United States by radio on Ash Wednesday, the pope talked about Operation Rice Bowl. "Do not think that because you can only give a little it will not be important," he said; the sacrifices of millions of American children can do "a great deal of good." Pope Paul spoke with a group of Japanese Shintoist priests March 3, stressing the importance of self-denial in Christian life.

It is an error to think of people opposed to abortion as "right wing," a prominent Lutheran clergyman said last week. The Rev. Richard Neuhaus, pastor of a low-income parish in Brooklyn and editor of Worldview magazine, said his own pro-life stance was eminently consistent with civil rights and anti-war activities that had resulted in his arrest a few years ago. "It is a classic progressive issue to expand the definition of human life," he told an audience at St. Olaf's in Northfield, Minn.

A small black-operated bank in Memphis has received a \$50,000 deposit from the U.S. bishops. The move was seen by bank officials as a confidence-builder for blacks and whites alike, and a spur to growth. The bank is one of seven "minority" banks in the nation in which savings accounts have been opened in the name of the Campaign for Human Development.

A bill to legalize abortion in Italy is "regression toward barbarism," L'Osservatore Romano declared in a recent front-page editorial. The Vatican City newspaper characterized legalized abortion as "part of a chain that leads to gas chambers, sterilization of the mentally handicapped, genocide, the elimination of the old and incurably ill, euthanasia." A similar worded warning came from the Italian Secondary School Teachers in an appeal to legislators to quash the bill. In Washington, meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to a law that lets private hospitals prohibit abortions and sterilizations "on the basis of religious beliefs or moral convictions." Bishop James S. Rausch, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference said he was "gratified" that the court thus supported the constitutionality of the federal law, but noted that the action did not represent "any backing off from its 1973 decisions which legalized virtual abortion on demand."

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