

Opinion

Pre-Cana Explained

Editor:

I have just read an article in the Courier-Journal, Oct. 6, concerning

virtues of the Christian husband. In Mrs. O'Connor's letter, she made a derogatory comment concerning what she labeled "Cana" conferences. First of all, Cana conferences as such are not at this time operating in the Rochester area. I believe she was referring to Pre-Cana conferences which are a

series of seminars for engaged couples to be married in the Catholic Church, sponsored by the Office of Family Life.

She stated that the conferences show "sixth grade biological sex films" and went on to say how we neglected to cover the "deep emotional and psychological differences between a man and a woman." Let me say that each team (and there are approximately 27 operating in the diocese now) is composed of a team priest, five or six married couples and a doctor or other qualified person to speak on the subject of sex. We are extremely fortunate to have as a member of our team, Dr. Jack McIntyre, a member of the psychiatric teaching staff at the University of Rochester Medical School, as well as a practicing psychiatrist, and his wife Ann, who is a psychologist, as members of our team. Dr. McIntyre covers the emotional, physical and psychological aspects of the subject without the aid of "sixth grade biological sex films." Our team priest, Fr. Otto Vogt, speaks on the "Sacrament of Marriage" and how ironical that he quotes almost verbatim Mrs. O'Connor's thoughts "to teach them how to love their wives as Christ loved the Church." Added to this, we have one of the team couples at each conference relate their personal views and experiences in layman's terms.

We as a team, like other teams, are constantly trying to update. My husband and I are an interfaith marriage (I am Episcopalian) and it is interesting to note that at our last conference last week, almost half of the couples were interfaith. We have never neglected to stress the importance of Christianity in all phases of married life. My husband is a Christian and the best husband and father in every sense of the word, not because of duty or obligation but because of his love for me as a Christian.

I resent that Mrs. O'Connor took the words of a "young relative" to be gospel truth without learning first hand exactly what a Pre-Cana conference has to offer.

Perhaps rather than take the word of her "young relative," Mrs. O'Connor would like to accept an invitation to our next Pre-Cana Conference and see first hand what an enlightening experience it can be.

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McNeil Book Available

Editor:

Surely college students are old enough to read Time magazine



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Editorial

A Time to Reap?

"We ask you, Lord, to continue to bless and enrich your Church with the gifts of your vocations. We pray that many may be willing to listen to your voice and may continue to give joy to the Church with generosity and faithfulness of their response."

Thus goes the prayer offered by Pope Paul VI as we approach the diocesan prayer campaign for vocations, both to the priesthood and to the Religious life.

Such prayers from on high have been joined by many others from Catholics in all walks of life as prayer has become increasingly a tactic in securing more vocations — this is the fourth such annual campaign in this diocese.

But none of them has more a touch of mystery than the one said by Jesus Christ Himself:

"The harvest is rich but the laborers are few, so ask the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers to His harvest."

This marks the only time in the Gospels that Jesus Christ has offered an intention for our prayers.

So while seminarians take over many of our pulpits next weekend to bring their message to us and while the Readings and homilies will beseech our prayers, it is well to remember that it is our Savior Himself who is asking our assistance.

And though verbal entreaty is, of course, beneficial there is another form of prayer that may be even more effective. That is the conducive atmosphere that will be produced if home, parish and community join in the common purpose of promoting vocations — among our friends, among our family.

"A positive attitude is needed," says Father Gerald Connor, diocesan director of vocations. "And with that, vocations to the priesthood and the Religious life will grow."

"We are not asking that pledges of prayers and sacrifice be written this year," Father Connor said. "We have done that for three years and it has served its purpose." The written pledges helped to formulate a general and positive attitude toward vocations as well as providing tangible encouragement for those already in religious training.

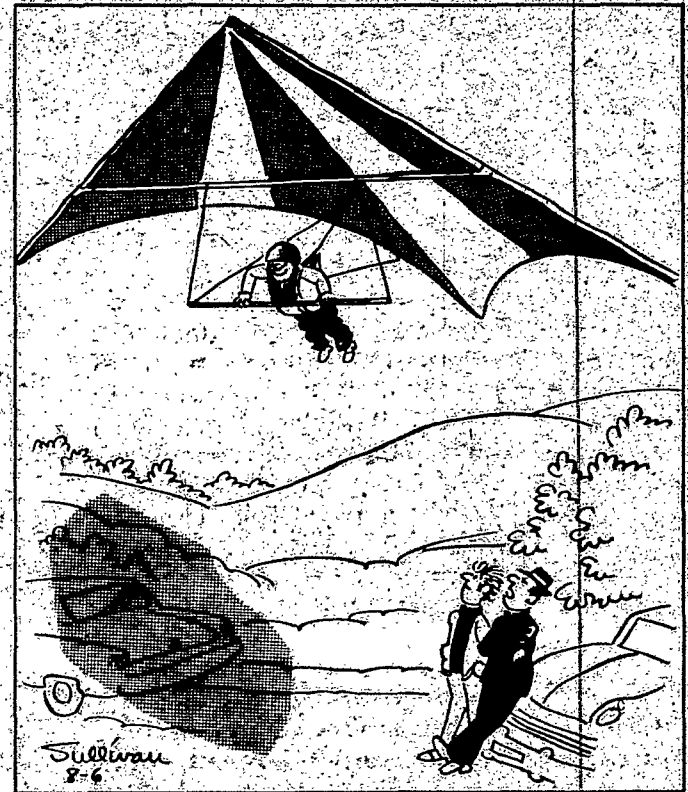
"This year we are still asking everyone to pledge their prayers and sacrifice to the same goal, but silently," said Father Connor.

Father Connor reports that there has been a gradual upswing in the numbers entering religious training, both in the Rochester diocese and across the nation. But such encouragement is balanced by the fact that retirements will offset any such gains.

For instance in the next two years, 13 new priests will come out of our seminary but 16 will retire. Such trends, in the light of the great number of vocations in the past, will likely persist. True, the laity has been able to perform much of the work formerly done by priests, sisters and brothers. But it should be equally obvious that lay men and women will not be able to fill the gap, particularly in the spiritual and theological realm created by dwindling number of religious vocations — Christ's spiritual professionals, if you will.

Pray that the need be fulfilled. Make it commonplace to discuss vocations as a possible and worthwhile career for your loved ones and friends. And keep in mind that it is Jesus Himself who needs the help.

There is indeed much labor ahead and not enough hands.



IF THERE WAS A CHAPLAINCY OPEN IN AN AMUSEMENT PARK, I THINK LOU WOULD TAKE IT!!

the source of the review of a Jesuit theologian's book recently reprinted in the Oswego Newman Community's Sunday Bulletin.

Courier-Journal readers might like to decide for themselves as to the appropriateness of the material under discussion. The book, published with ecclesiastical approbation, is titled, The Church and the Homosexual by John J. McNeil, S.J., and can be purchased in any Catholic bookstore.

Rev. J. Murray Elwood
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Editor's Note: Father Elwood refers to Father Cuddy's column of Oct. 13 which was critical of the Newman bulletin.

Married Priests? No!

Editor:

The "Call to Action" conference, mentioned in the Oct. 27 issue of the Courier-Journal, passed a proposal that priests be allowed to marry. I'm totally against this proposal.

Who wants the commotion and odor of family problems in the priesthood? A priest's quarreling family or selfish wife would give the priesthood some image.

A priest must be a rough and ready man, ever ready to hit the trail for Christ. He must not be encumbered with the baggage of a wife and family. In order to be expert, a priest must practice his trade at all times. There is no time to be spent on family life.

I believe a wedded priest would be unduly influenced by his family in Church matters. What if a priest's wife were anti-Catholic?

Married priestly life means mediocre priestly spirituality. A married priest would be half a priest. Not much priestly commitment involved here. Any priest who needs to be married isn't toughened much for skirmishes with the forces of evil.

A married priesthood would be a Trojan horse in the Church. Worldliness and other evils, which wouldn't enter otherwise, would enter the very operations center of the Church through a married priesthood and be in a great position to gravely damage the Church.

I believe that God would be a loser with a married priesthood at this time.

The right thing for priests to do regarding women is to keep their distance.

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Voter Digest Not Endorsement

Editor:

This is in reply to Mr. Gutman's letter of Oct. 6, critical of the Voter Information Digest prepared by the Rochester Area Right to Life Committee.

Right to Life has never in any way said, or implied that the life of any human being "is less valuable than the life of an unborn child." (from Mr. Gutman's letter).

We have concern for all life and have spoken out when life is threatened whether by abortion or euthanasia of the elderly, and/or the handicapped.

We have spoken very loudly against abortion, because the unborn have no voice of their own, and, because legislation and Supreme Court decisions have taken away the unborn's Right to Life.

The Voter Information Digest does not state, or imply that a candidate should be selected because of his pro-life position.

In fact, the information digest clearly states that it is educative only, and does not endorse any candidate. The purpose of this survey is only to inform concerned people of the candidates' positions on legalized abortion. We recognize that this issue of abortion is so susceptible to political double-talk that a clear statement is extremely important in order for the people to make an informed decision. If Mr. Gutman truly believes that "abortion is a serious moral problem that should be dealt with," it is difficult to understand why the clarification of a candidate's position on abortion should be so highly offensive to his sensibilities.

George C. Wiedemer
Co-Chairman
Rochester Area Right To Life Committee

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.