

## The Church 1978

By Father Andrew Greeley

### Moral Theology 'Depressing'

The state of Catholic moral theology continues to be depressing, as the ~~shock from the~~ responses to the recent "test-tube baby case" emphasize. I have three moral theology books sitting on my desk — enough to make one wonder whether



Fr. Greeley

the discipline ought to be abolished.

The first, "Human Existence, Medicine and Ethics" by William E. May (Franciscan Herald Press) is a doggedly conservative book, innocent of sociological and biological information and grimly determined to resist any deviation from the old traditions. Thus May dismisses the Catholic ethical thinkers working with the concept of "the proportionate good" as "consequentialist." I am not qualified to judge the ethics of "proportionate

good" or the "Schuller preference principle." I certainly think that intellectual honesty requires that it be considered with something better than name-calling.

A more moderate book is "Has Sin Changed?" by Sean Fagan, S.M. (Michael Galzler, Inc.). Fagan's moral emphasis is on "person-centered morality," the "whole person" and "Wholeness in growth." This is fair enough, of course, but once a moral theologian begins to talk about wholeness and growth he moves in to the area of social science scholarship, and Father Fagan seems utterly innocent of social science knowledge. Any scholar

who cites James Michener's "The Drifters" and Alvin Toffler's "Future Shock" as evidence of a "culture gap" between generations is simply betraying an irresponsible ignorance of basic social science information. The evidence, for example, that parents are still the principal moral and religious educators of their children is overwhelming. Father Fagan seems unaware of it.

On the liberal side is "Sexual Morality — A Catholic Perspective" by Philip S. Keane, S.S. (Paulist Press). It should be said in Father Keane's defense that not only is there much that is useful in this book for the pastoral worker (as there is in

Father Fagan's), it is by far the best text available in English on Catholic sexual morality — far superior to the Catholic Theological Society of America's report of a year ago. Still, the book is badly hindered by the author's distinction between "ontic" evil and "moral" evil, a distinction which clearly has been devised to effect some sort of compromise with "Humanae Vitae." Contraceptive measures "because of their non-openness to procreation and individual acts . . . are always ontically evil. They always lack the fullness of human possibility that might be associated with sexual intercourse."

I fear that Father Keane falls between two stools

with that distinction. I doubt very much that church authorities will be willing to accept it. Their compromise is to urge pastoral sympathy on confessors. I am also virtually certain that few married couples will accept it either. Father Keane's trying to please everyone pleases no one.

Perhaps moral theology ought to be abolished. There is nothing in any of the three books, all of them dealing in one way or another with sex, which would indicate that the authors are aware of either the poignancy of human problems or of the richness of the research literature in other disciplines which they might have consulted.

## All in the Family

By Sarah Child

### If It Comes In a Can It Must Be OK

I have written before of our children's preference for ersatz foods over the real thing, most notably, for this stuff they call pancake syrup in the stores over honest-to-goodness maple syrup.

According to the kids the pure, unadulterated treat with the delicate flavor and absence of artificial coloring and flavors doesn't have the zing of the manufactured treacle.

As if that were not insult enough to Mother Nature and the chief cook and procurement agent at our house they have indicated over the years that their tastes are worse than plebeian.

The youngest, for example, repeatedly asks why we can not have mushy, instant potatoes instead of the nice mealy ones baked in their skins.

Dehydrated cup of soup which requires one to pour boiling water into a cup filled with little straw-like particles outdraws homemade vegetable any time.

Processed cheese is "better" than aged cheddar; Franco-American adds a dimension that spaghetti made from scratch lacks, and even applesauce out of a jar will occasionally get raves, while the heady aroma of freshly cooked apples delicately flavored with cinnamon goes almost unnoticed.

Bologna and peanut butter are the favorite sandwich ingredients over, say, sliced chicken left from Sunday dinner.

Pudding that comes in miniature cans at exorbitant prices can't hold a candle to that made with fresh milk.

On a recent weekend, I was sauteeing fresh mushrooms in a little butter for what I thought would be a special treat.

"What's that? the oldest wanted to know. I told her.

"Oh, why can't we have the real kind?"

Feeling the urge to pick up the frying pan and doing mayhem I asked superfluously what the "real" kind might be.

Pieces and stems packed in water-filled cans, of course, which is what I usually buy when the fresh ones aren't available.

I blame it all on the Russians, the CIA and Billy Martin — which after all is just about as remarkable as the kids' taste.

## NFP Session In Elmira

A Natural Family Planning session is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 11 at 8 p.m. at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira.

open to the public at no charge. More information may be obtained by contacting NFP instructors Nick and Beryl Iven at 607-594-2380.

An information session, it is

### THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

#### "Attending the Funeral"

By Ed Sulewski

Through our years in the funeral industry, people have confided in us their disappointment that few took the time to attend the funeral of their loved one. We understand their feelings all too well. Who among us doesn't want to think that when we die, our friends will honor us — and our family — by formally recognizing our death. And, if you have experienced the death of a loved one, you realize the comfort drawn from the presence of friends and family during those difficult first days. Few people enjoy attending a funeral — but, for the comfort it brings, a few hours given to commemorate the life of a friend is little to ask.

There are many ways to express your sympathy — and all have value. But your attendance at the funeral is perhaps the most important. The support of your presence, the words of comfort you offer, let the family know your concern and understanding of their loss. Take the time — and realize that although your attendance may not seem very important to you — it does to the family of the deceased.

We can answer your personal questions about attending the funeral, please call at any time.

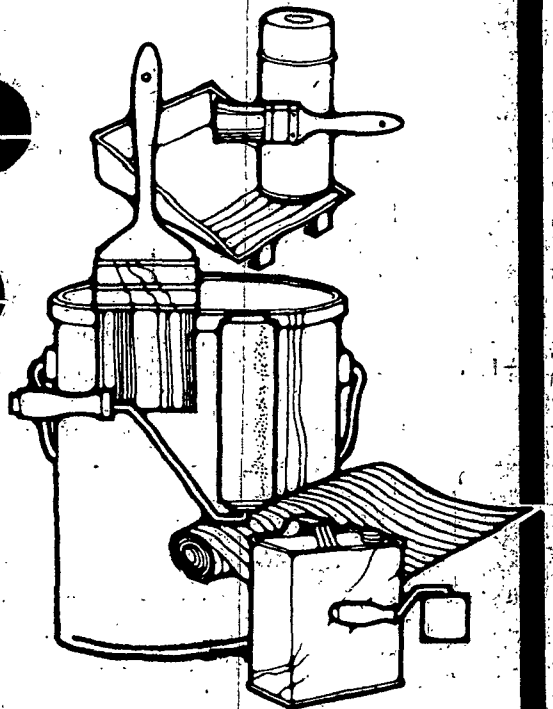
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