



Another Look at Teens and Music

I received the following letter after I wrote a column about involving teens in music and other activities to keep them so busy they didn't have time for drugs. This mother, who shall remain anonymous, took issue with me, saying the music and drugs are closely related today. I feel her message is an important one to parents and I thank her for sharing her family's pain and love with us.

"Dear Dolores Curran: One of your columns, 'Keep That Teen Involved,' shouted at me with some glaring facts. You said, 'parents need to know what kind of friends their children select.' Our daughter had become so sneaky and secretive that we couldn't know. She didn't allow us to know. She knew the score and was scared of our actions.

"Yes, drugs and alcohol are major concerns of today's parents. Our daughter admits to five years of doing drugs. Today she is involved in a drug rehabilitation program which has never heard of a 'graduate.'

"You said, 'The child who is busy practicing music' — and ours was — 'simply doesn't have time for drugs or alcohol.' How I wish it were true. A child doesn't necessarily become aimless because of her home. Drugs are a major contribution. They are all that matters. Jenny would sing and strum, sometimes alone or with friends.

Dolores Curran

Talks With Parents



She would play ping pong with neighborhood kids and then go to the church youth group meetings.

"Nothing wrong with any of this, right? Wrong. All these occasions provided the opportunity for getting out, meeting the group, and using drugs. We knew the friends she had, but we didn't know until much later the kind of kids who came with them. And nobody ever told us Jenny attended church youth group for five minutes and then left, or that she never quite made it on a given night. We were content . . . she always came home on time!

"But music is what I want to discuss. It is directly tied into the drug culture. Gene Lees, a highly respected music critic, made it very clear that the record industry must accept its share of blame in our society for the growing number of deaths from the use of heroin and other drugs. Music and drugs are closely related. Alfred Aronowitz, a

former music critic, said that 'if we really knew what today's music is saying, especially in the beat itself, we would not merely turn thumbs down on it, but we would ban it, smash it, and arrest those pushing it . . .'

"Please write on this subject. All parents need to know what's going on and you are widely read. Rock stars make ever more records, concerts, TV and radio appearances, and movies. People clamor to hear them. Music is a common obsession for many marijuana smokers when stoned, a fact not lost on the the industry, as cash registers rang up astronomical sales in the 60's and 70's.

"From sad experience, I tell parents to check out the new record reviews in their daily paper, printed at least once weekly. Listen to any one of the rock stations. Learn a lot. Don't wait in ignorance. The songs are also printed in magazines in the local book racks. Read what your child is singing and playing. Check where he or she is really going and with whom. You may offset some of the pain that we suffered later. Thank you for listening to me."

And thank you, Mrs. Anyparent, for sharing with us. Perhaps I was too hasty with my "solutions" to the drug problem. Perhaps all band and choir students aren't wholesome. Certainly their friends and hangers-on can't be taken for granted. I would invite other parents with experiences of drugs, alcohol, and questionable friends to write and share. It is in this way that we can help one another, and our children, too.

A Review of Books on the Sacrament of Anointing

This column will make some observations on the recently reintroduced practice of blessing oil for use by lay people as they pray for sick and hurting persons.

• First, two paperbacks, published by Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, would be helpful for those who wish to study this matter in depth.

Francis MacNutt, a leader in the charismatic preaching and healing ministry, has written "The Power to Heal." In its Appendix II, he treats Pastoral Questions on Anointing for Roman Catholics, including a section on non-sacramental anointing.

Barbara Leahy Shlemon, a nurse, mother of five, teacher and member of a healing ministry team in the United States since 1969, has coauthored with two Jesuits, Fathers Matthew and Dennis Lynn, "To Heal as Jesus Healed." It explains in detail The Rite of Anointing, but an appendix likewise contains a section on Blessing of Oil for Use by Laity.

• Second, the Church in fact has given its approbation to this practice of lay people using oil with prayer for people hurting in various ways. Years ago Philip Weller produced an English translation of the official Roman Ritual which includes, among other rites, blessings for every conceivable item.

In between the blessing of lard and the blessing of oats for animals, but after the blessing of beer and before the blessing of an automobile, is the blessing of oil by a priest or a bishop.

Fr. Joseph M. Champlin

Our Church Family



Some of the phrases in that blessing indicate potential uses for the oil:

"Let it bring health in body and mind to all who use it

"Bless and hallow this creature, oil, which by your power has been pressed from the juice of olives. You have ordained it for anointing the sick, so that, when they are made well, they may give thanks to you, the living and true God . . . Grant that those who use this oil . . . may be delivered from all sufferings, all infirmity, and all the wiles of the enemy. Let it be a means of averting any kind of adversity from man . . ."

Both of the paperbacks noted above print this blessing in case the priest does not possess a copy of Weller's volume.

• Third, this becomes through the blessing a sacramental of our Church. That means it does enjoy a special power, but only to the degree in which one accompanies the oil with faith and prayer, aware that the

universal Church is linked with our efforts as we anoint the afflicted person. The oil does not work automatically nor like magic. Sacramentals have been instituted to help us pray and to integrate our everyday lives into the life of grace within the Church.

• Fourth, we need to avoid confusion between this nonsacramental anointing with oil and the sacrament of anointing for those seriously ill. MacNutt makes an interesting and clarifying comparison here.

"Just as holy water, which is intended for everyday use, is to remind us of the water of Baptism, so also this oil, a sacramental, is to remind us of the sacrament of Anointing."

• Fifth, from a practical, pastoral point of view, to avoid such confusion, to instruct parishioners as to blessed oil's purpose and to raise the consciousness of our people about the value of personal or family prayer employing it, I would suggest blessing the olive extract at a Mass, even on a weekend liturgy after the homily. The preacher could thus take that occasion to talk about healing, the use of oil in the Church, the sacrament of Anointing and this particular sacramental.

The pastor might also, given the recent restoration of the practice and the misunderstandings which could easily result at the start, urge some caution that this oil be employed only in the parish or among people who understand the difference between the sacrament itself and a nonsacramental anointing.

One Egg (Not Necessary)

In a book of handwritten recipes which my mother copied from her mother about 45 years ago when she was first married there is a page devoted to ONE EGG CHOCOLATE CAKE.

Underneath the heading there is a vertical listing of ingredients: flour, sugar, shortening, etc. After the ingredient, "one egg" is the notation in parenthesis (not necessary). The notation is in a different handwriting than my mother's. I recognize it without difficulty. It is my grandmother's.

As a child, as well as in later years, I would thumb through that dog-eared cookbook to dwell on such savories as TOMATO-SALMON CASSEROLE and SEAFOAM FROSTING. Every time I came to ONE EGG CHOCOLATE CAKE and saw my grandmother's notation (not necessary) I would become annoyed — without knowing exactly why.

Born during the Depression, but without any pervading sense of the misery it inflicted on the nation, perhaps I did not like the idea that the addition (or deletion) of one solitary egg could be that important in any economic scheme of things.

This past week a news story quoted a government spokesman as predicting that food costs in the coming year

will probably rise another 10 to 15 percent. This on top of already outrageous prices. I thought about "one egg" (not necessary). It has taken a lot of years to accomplish the change, but, at last I see eye to eye with my frugal grandmother.

At the supper table we talk about what it must have been like back then for our mothers trying to put nourishing, filling meals on the table with very little money to work with. It cannot have been easy.

I do not remember the Thirties, but the early Forties, when things were still not plentiful, are fairly clear. It was the bread, I think, that must have made the difference, then, between a meager meal and one that satisfied.

Sarah Child

All in the Family



Twice a week my mother baked, pulling 10 to 12 loaves of fresh, warm, fragrant bread from the oven to take care of all of us plus a young aunt and uncle who lived with us while going to school.

Sliced thick, spread with butter and slathered with homemade strawberry or blackberry jam, fresh bread was a breakfast-like no other.

On baking days, we were sometimes treated to fried dough, a decided delicacy. From the vast pan of rising dough, my mother would pinch off a handful, pat it out to a circular shape, cook it in a little shortening until golden brown in the cast iron skillet, flipping it once. With the addition of butter, a sprinkle of sugar or maple syrup it was a most satisfying lunch.

Supper, the big meal of the day, was invariably followed by canned fruit brought up from the rows upon rows of gleaming glass jars in the cellar.

Golden peach halves swimming in syrup, snow white pears from the peartree in the front yard, ruby-colored cherries from the one in the back — all were perfect accompaniments to the bread, crusty on the outside, fresh and spongy inside. At our house, quite definitely, the staff of life.