

GOD COMES FIRST

PRAY AND LISTEN ROSARY FOR PEACE

P.O. BOX 4300

ROCHESTER, N.Y. 14611

DISPLAY THE ABOVE STICKER ON YOUR WINDOW

GOD COMES FIRST

THE FORGOTTEN COMMANDMENT

by Msgr. Joseph A. Cirrincione

On the nightly Family Rosary Hour, I have been saying at the beginning and at the end of the program: "Remember, GOD COMES FIRST". More recently I have explained that these three words represent a challenging expression of the greatest and first commandment, which, unfortunately, has become the forgotten commandment.

Pope John Paul II has often lamented the exclusion of God from public life. He made one of his strongest statements on this subject on July 3 when he addressed about 100 participants in a course on natural family planning at Rome's Catholic University of the Sacred Heart. Saying that materialism and the absence of an orientation toward God are combining to weaken the values and structure of the family, he labeled this modern mentality "Naturalism" and defined it as "the exclusion of God and transcendental values from human affairs".

This exclusion of God and transcendental values from human affairs is quite general today as a simple test will reveal. Where, in public life, does God come first? In business . . . government . . . the media . . . education . . . the world of entertainment? As an old professor of mine used to say: He is conspicuous by His absence".

Passing from public life to social life, we have the same situation. In what social set that you know of does God come first? You are inviting derision just to ask the question. For we are living in times dubbed glibly as "post christian paganism."

What this means in simple language is that, for all practical purposes, God has been dethroned and "self" enthroned in His place. Society begins today not by asking what does God think of this but what do I think of it. People today don't begin with God, they begin with man. As Christians, we believe that we were made to the image and likeness of God. Actually, however, it is smart today to reduce God to man's image and likeness.

There are exceptions, of course. I like to think that in theory, most Christians would agree that God comes first. But in practice, it is another matter. It is extremely difficult not to be affected by the spirit of the world. I'm sure it is easier to defend one's Christian values in Poland where the opposition is open and visible than it is in the West where there is no formal opposition or persecution; just the subtle opposition of indifference.

As a result, the way is open to a great deal of self-deception on the part of many who consider themselves "good Christians". They attend church services, fulfill their religious obligations more or less faithfully. Yet, it never occurs to them to ask themselves if God comes first in their lives.

Frankly that is the real purpose I have in mind with the GOD COMES FIRST campaign. To challenge people to become aware

of self-deception where it exists. To challenge people first to examine their own consciences and ask: "Does God come first in my life?" Then to look around their little world and see if He comes first there. And finally, to look at the world in general with the same object in view. I would be richly rewarded if just a few would begin to observe, judge and live, guided by the principle that guided Our Lord: GOD COMES FIRST.

In a more facetious vein, I am trying to do what the little child did in Hans Christian Andersen's story of "The Emperor's New Clothes".

Some of you will remember the story of a very vain emperor who never had enough new clothes. And so there was a constant stream of tailors to the palace with new ideas for ever better looking royal robes.

One day two tailors arrived who convinced the emperor that they could make him clothes superior to anything he ever wore before. Indeed, the cloth would be somewhat magical since fools would not be able to see it. But those who were not fools would see the robes in all their brilliant splendor. Their price was high but the emperor saw in their proposal a chance to rid himself of a lot of fools, so he engaged the two tailors.

The so-called tailors were swindlers, of course. They only went through the motions of weaving cloth and measuring and fitting the emperor and sewing busily from morning till night in their workshop. Word got around that fools could not see the cloth and since no one wanted to admit he was a fool, all pretended to see something, from the emperor down. When he began to have some doubts, he sent first his Prime Minister and then the Imperial General to check on how the tailors were coming along. They saw nothing, but not wishing to be called fools, they reported that the garments the tailors were producing were indeed most beautiful.

When the tailors were finished, the emperor decided to wear the new clothes during an imperial procession. And so, on a certain festive day, with the whole town lining the streets, the emperor went through the motions of dressing and then marching out majestically at the end of a long procession. And everyone cheered him and admired his very beautiful clothes till a child cried out: "The emperor has no clothes on". And that brought everybody to their senses. The little child had burst the bubble of mass self-deception.

That is what I hope that the GOD COMES FIRST stickers will do for us. Make us thoughtful enough to heed St. Paul's admonition to the Romans: "Do not be conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind so that you may judge what God's will is; what is good, pleasing, perfect" (Romans 12:2)

JOIN OUR GOD COMES FIRST CAMPAIGN

Order Your Sticker Now — Display It in the Rear Window of your Auto

Join the thousands of listeners and sponsors across New York State who have made this a nightly ritual.

THE FAMILY ROSARY FOR PEACE NETWORK
6:30 P.M. Nightly

WWWG, ROCHESTER (AM 1500)
WXRL, BUFFALO (AM 1300)
WSIV, SYRACUSE (AM 1540)
WOIV, SYRACUSE (FM 105)
WSFW, SENECA FALLS (AM 1110)
WSFW, SENECA FALLS (FM 99)
WXXY, WATKINS GLENN (FM 104)
ON THE CABLE FROM WXXY:

ELMIRA (105.0)—CORNING (95.5)—ITHACA (94.7)
WATKINS GLEN—MONTOUR FALLS—ODESSA (104.9)
HORNELL—CANISTEO—ARKPORT (101.7)

There is no charge for the Auto Rear window sticker. A \$1.00 would be appreciated to help defray mailing costs.

The Family Rosary For Peace	
Box 4300, Rochester, N.Y. 14611	
Please send me _____ Auto Rear window sticker "God Comes 1st"	
Enclosed find my donation of \$ _____	
Name _____	
Address _____	
City or Town _____	
State _____	Zip _____