



Focusing on the Bible

Mrs. Elaine Smith, fourth grade teacher at St. Thomas More School, along with pupils Genna Ricotta, Michael Eckert, Larry Jones, and Mrs. Eileen Turon, fifth grade teacher, display bibles presented to their pupils at a Prayer Service on Thursday, Oct. 13. The bibles will be a daily companion for the children in their religion classes.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

'Old Maid' A Poor Term

A reader has taken (polite) umbrage with a recent column in which I related how my mother spurred me toward matrimony by pointing out that I was well on my way to being an old maid.

Here is her letter with the name changed.

Dear Sarah:

Just what is an "old maid"? In your mother's eyes, perhaps I would qualify. I am 64 and single. I was a successful career person for many years. A tragic event in my younger years canceled my plans for marriage.

Have you met an "old maid" recently? We score "brownie points" by being available for emergency baby sitting, transporting an ill child to the doctor and occasionally we are a soft touch for the loan of a car and sometimes a cash loan.

Let's recognize single people as caring, happy and normal individuals.

Sincerely, Jennifer J.

Dear Jennifer: The term "old maid" is

derogatory. That's why my mother used it, hoping I would envision myself as someone like Tom Sawyer's Aunt Polly -- round, bespectacled with voluminous, constricting skirts and more than a little vulnerable to the exigencies of life.

No, I don't know any "old maids" except those in literature. I do know a lot of single people, both male and female, most of whom seem to be mateless by choice. One of those, near and dear to me, has turned down three proposals of marriage in the past two years.

My mom was 17 when she married Dad and I was born a year later. Thus, the sight of her 27-year-old, single "career woman" daughter must have struck terror in her heart since our family had always equated happiness for women with motherhood and large families.

Happiness comes in many forms, under many guises. It is a matter of finding one's niche and making the most of the role God has chosen for us. Blessed are those who do so.

Peace, Sarah

Church Must Seek Disarmament, Synod Of Bishops Declares

The Synod

Vatican City (NC) -- The Catholic Church must work tirelessly to promote disarmament and to heal world tensions, said the 1983 world Synod of Bishops in a statement issued Oct. 27.

"The church will work to heal the divisions and tensions of the world," the synod delegates said in a statement drafted by a committee which included Archbishop John Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis.

"We shall be tireless in the search for peace and disarmament and the reduction of tension, particularly between East and West. We have no political power but we can voice to the leaders of states the anxious longing of their people for a safer, more peaceful world," said the Latin-language statement, called a nuntius.

The bishops criticized deprivations of human rights, obstacles to religious freedom, racial discrimination, warlike actions, violence, terrorism, the building up of conventional and nuclear arsenals, and an economic system whereby the rich become richer and the poor become poorer.

The synod said that, in a society marked by such abuses, the mission of the church is "to create a civilization of love by healing, reconciling and making whole a divided and broken world."

Synod delegates pointed out that the church itself "has to be an effective sign of God's mercy" and said that "it is in the sacrament of reconciliation, especially, that we celebrate and receive God's forgiveness and know his healing love. The sacrament restores and deepens personal friendship with God and frees us for his service."

The synod also said that prayer, fasting and almsgiving are necessary for growth in personal holiness. The synod called for greater harmony within the Catholic Church and urged Catholics to work with others "for the good of humanity."

Cardinal Timothy Manning of Los Angeles said that

the heavy emphasis on social evils, referred to at the synod as structural sin, reflected the concerns of Third World bishops who spoke strongly during the synod about injustices.

This does not remove responsibility for sin from individuals, because "structures do not commit sins, people do," said Cardinal Manning, who was appointed a synod co-president by Pope John Paul II.

Cardinal Manning spoke at a press conference also attended by the two other synod co-presidents, Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro of Karachi, Pakistan, and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Cardinal Cordeiro ap-

pealed for reconciliation in a world "threatened by great dangers and torn by divisions of many kinds, social, political, ideological and economic."

He said that the synod's call for penance and self-denial "is directed in the light of a consumerism which is spreading throughout the world and which almost automatically leads to selfish attitudes."

Cardinal Cordeiro added that the synod has prepared a list of propositions on three themes: the reconciling mission of the church, the meaning for the church of the contemporary situation, and the renewal of the practice of reconciliation and penance.

"The need for reconciliation and penance is for all people," Cardinal Cordeiro

said. "And the call for the renewal is inspired largely by a realization of the loss of the sense of sin in the world of today. But this loss of the sense of sin is itself due to a loss of the sense of God, his presence and his activity in the world and in the hearts of men and women."

Cardinal Cordeiro added that "for the church, undoubtedly this renewal must be basically sacramental."

"Sacramental penance and forgiveness are at the root of conversion," he said. "That is why the synod fathers have pondered much on this awareness of sin, both in individual and communitarian aspects, while emphasizing that these two aspects are part and parcel of every sin."

Nuclear Force Leader: A 'Command of Peace' Gen. Davis Urges Catholics To Read 'Challenge of Peace'

Omaha, Neb. (NC) -- Gen. Bennie L. Davis, who commands the United States' major nuclear force, says his Catholic faith has made him a better leader.

Gen. Davis, 55, commander in chief of the Strategic Air Command at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, told The Catholic Voice, Omaha archdiocesan newspaper, that Catholicism has given him what persons in leadership roles need -- compassion.

"My faith is the single most important factor in my becoming a compassionate person," he said.

Davis, who also serves as director of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff, which coordinates U.S. nuclear war plans, describes the Strategic Air Command's intercontinental ballistic missiles, 120,000 military personnel, tankers and reconnaissance aircraft, as "a command of peace."

"We have preserved the peace for nearly 40 years," he said.

The U.S. bishops' pastoral on war and peace "requires very careful reading," he said, noting that he had read the pastoral in its final version and drafts.

"Catholics serving in the military should be very proud of the section on those of us in the military," he said.

"The section on people in the military serving as peacemakers is a very significant section," he said, and encouraged all Catholics, especially if they are in the military, to read the pastoral.

Davis said, however, that media coverage surrounding the pastoral letter led to some confusion within military ranks, but the "problem went away" after the document was read.

A strong nuclear deterrent is necessary before permanent arms reduction negotiations can be successful, he said.

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