

A Good Decision

The recent decision by the United States Supreme Court in overruling a Connecticut law prohibiting the distribution of birth control materials and the giving of advice about birth control devices should be viewed with a sigh of relief by Catholics. Most of these laws were first introduced by Protestant sects noted for their rigidity in moral matters. The defense of these laws in the mid-twentieth century has been left to Catholics because of a change of attitude on the part of many of the original proponents of this legislation. Artificial birth control is not considered immoral by many Protestants, and these laws were therefore held in disdain and their enforcement was sporadic.

Laws like these for the general public are an attempt to force a code of conduct on people who have not entered into a consensus on the true morality of an issue. The enforcement of such laws is impossible.

A situation exists in North Carolina concerning the regulation of alcoholic beverages which parallels the circumstances in Connecticut. Many people in Tarheelia hold the belief that the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages is immoral. In areas where this sentiment is strong and the sale of intoxicants is legally prohibited, there usually exists a resentment on the part of those who believe that the moderate use of these beverages is not morally wrong. These latter contend that the effect of prohibition laws is usually nullified either through large scale use of illegal whiskey, or traffic over county lines to buy liquor at licensed stores.

It cannot be said that the Protestant in New England (or anywhere else) who practices artificial birth control is a poorer citizen than the Catholic in North Carolina who drives ten, fifteen, or more miles to get his bourbon. In his own conscience, which is formed to a great extent by the precepts of his own religious belief, each one believes that he is doing nothing morally wrong. Civil laws in such instances mean little if anything. In short, the practical effects of civil laws intended to curb moral vices about which there seems to be doubt in the minds of people are negligible.

The Archbishop of Hartford has reiterated the traditional Catholic teaching that "Artificial contraception remains immoral by the law of God." The Church does not need civil laws to impress this teaching on its faithful. A papal commission is now in the process of studying our teachings and until there is a pronouncement from the Pope on the matter, Catholics are duty bound to observe these teachings. However, any attempt to try to regulate the activities of persons who do not believe in the immorality of birth control is useless and injurious to the Church.

The imposition of civil laws regulating acts not considered to be morally wrong by other religious bodies does not aid in the efforts to have the true teaching followed through a genuine belief in the validity of the law in the moral order. It is only through the manifestation of the teachings of the Church to all people, and not through physical or legal compulsion, that the truth will be known and accepted.

The necessity of civil laws in insuring the proper implementation of moral laws is at best a secondary motivation. Laws of this nature in regard to birth control are unwise and unnecessary, as well as unconstitutional. Their passing should not be mourned.

Martin Kildee

I Reckon

—By Earl Heffner

People are funny, so the saying goes, and Art Linkletter usually gets the credit for fathering the line.

Be that as it may, let's take a plunge and offer some evidence in proof.

Some laymen still are complaining about the new liturgy. A fellow said to me not so long ago: "We're getting too much like the Protestants."

He was right. About himself. As a onetime Protestant I can vouch for the fact that when a man says, "I want to worship God my way" he's most generally a Protestant.

And now many Catholics are saying the same thing.

But is this a movement towards unity? Or disunity.

Yes, people are funny.

At a recent KKK meeting, the North Carolina Grand Dragon finally tried a tentative shot at the Catholic Church. (The Klan has been so busy worrying about the Negro that I suspect Catholics and Jews are going to have to organize and bring a charge of discrimination against the KKK.)

The klansman said in an open speech that he saw a Catholic nun wearing high heels.

Somehow or another this is supposed to link Catholic nuns with evil. But I haven't been able to figure it out exactly as yet.

It's sorta like saying, "Members of the klan sometimes don't shave every day."

Yes, people are funny.

* * *

Take the repartee one weekend down at my office.

"I just can't understand South Carolina," said a fellow. "That state seems to be at least 10 years behind the rest of the South."

The squelcher:

"South Carolina doesn't have a speaker-ban law."

Yes, people are funny. But mostly people are good.

The 11-year-old boy I wrote about a few weeks ago wants to say thanks to the many good people who are praying for his mother. His sister and brothers want to say thanks also, for the many expressions and offers of assistance.

But I guess most especially the 11-year-old wants to thank the little fellow in Greensboro who wrote him a letter saying he's praying for the 11-year-old's mother.

And I want to say thanks also. For by the time you read this the 11-year-old's mother should be home again after a hospitalization of more than a month. At least, that's what the doctor promises.

Your prayers did it.

Yes, people are funny.

But mostly people are good.

Especially you.

Doing Our Bit



E. H. Wolf

For A Better World

By Father Cranor F. Graves

These are the days to examine our attitudes.

We cannot imagine a doctor of medicine talking in terms of, "I don't go along with these modern discoveries" or "I don't buy this x-ray bit."

But wouldn't such prejudice on the part of a physician be very much like some of the things we hear in God's Church today?

Don't we hear Catholics asking one another, "How do you like the Council?" or "What do you think of having participation in the Mass?" — almost as if these things were a matter of somebody's whim.

It's almost as if the Council were not Our Lord's way of speaking to us today but rather a political convention.

To accept wholeheartedly whatever the Council decrees is the proof that we love God.

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To accept wholeheartedly the Constitution on the Liturgy is the measure of our desire to serve God well in public worship.

And of course to accept implies that we have read the Constitution on the Liturgy.

Then there's the Constitution on

Then there's the Constitution on the church, produced by the third session of the Council. That, too, all Catholics must read thoroughly.

And then there are the encyclicals of Pope Paul, "His Church" and "The Month of May." All these can be had in pamphlet form by writing to National Catholic Welfare Conference

(NCWC), Washington, D. C. 20005.

We have always talked about loyalty to the Holy See. Now is the time to prove this loyalty by growing with the Church. I cannot call myself a good priest, a good leader of God's People, if I have not a total loyalty to what the Holy Father and the Council are saying to us in these days.

My acceptance of the new Liturgy, of choosing and training well laymen to be commentators, to proclaim the Word of God in the Epistle at Mass — this, for instance, is not a matter of a pastor's taste; it is a pastoral obligation in order to make Sun-

day's public worship a fit expression of the fact that we are indeed a family, a community at worship.

In a recent general audience, Pope Paul specifically appealed to his spiritual children for understanding, for fidelity to the Church today.

"That is what we are asking of you, beloved sons: love for the Holy Catholic Church," the Holy Father said. "Love means praying: pray for the Church. Love means being united: be united with the Church. Love means action; act for the good of the Church."

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