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Message from the Spiritual Advisor: Symbols in Many Forms

Dino J. Lorenzetti

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organization to lobby for the revision of this Article by a referendum. Initially agreement to support this was secured from the main political parties. We then had a general election, and the campaign began in earnest with a different Government. It was waged with considerable vigor and rancor, both by those in favor and against, even before the actual text of the proposed Amendment to the Constitution was published. Eventually, when this was published, the Government party withdrew its support. We then had many subdivisions, e.g., pro-abortion referendum, pro-referendum pro-abortion in certain cases, etc., etc. Voting took place in September of this year, and by a majority of 3 to 1, but with less than two-thirds of the population voting, the Amendment was passed. It reads as follows: “The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and with due regard to the equal rights of life of the mother guarantees in its laws to respect and as far as is practicable by its laws to defend and vindicate that right.” Thus we are one of the few remaining countries in the world where the right to life of the fetus is equal to that of the mother. Of course we recognize that a proportion of Irish women, mostly those who are unmarried, go abroad to have abortions performed each year, but in fact, these numbers are declining, principally because the attitude of the public to illegitimacy is improving and becoming more understandable. It is certain that those who favor abortion have not given up, but at least they have had a firm setback. We may well find that the law here may be changed to no longer agree with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

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Finally I regret to say that there has been a very great increase in the use of hard drugs in this country, particularly in the capital city, Dublin, and to a lesser extent outside it, in the past five years. We are now quite used to reading that large quantities of heroin and other drugs have been discovered either in ships in port or at the main airports. Recent statistics show that a high proportion of the heroin addicts are very young teenagers. Following a recent outcry in all the media, a campaign is now being mounted to try to counteract this abuse before it is too late. More in my next letter.

— Robert F. O'Donoghue, F.C.C.O. Cork

Symbols in Many Forms

While commercialism offers many modern styles for men and women to imitate so that through the use of cosmetics, stylish clothes, charm and exercises for physical fitness they may be godlike in their appearance, the saints chose completely different means to become more to the image and likeness of God.

When addressing sports-minded Greek citizens, St. Paul spoke of himself as an “athlete.” In order to become popular, to be an ideal symbol of strength so as to win the race and obtain the perishable crown, it was necessary for him to train and deny himself many essentials, including food and rest. Success depended on his motivation to discipline himself for victory. It was living in this image which enabled him to perform heroic acts and apply them in his spiritual life, thus becoming one of the greatest disciples of Christ.

St. Paul explains how Our Lord identified Himself in His relationship to the Father. “Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6).

Slaves were forced to perform acts which were demeaning, and as individuals, they were regarded as being less than human. As Paul saw himself as a slave, he was thus able to endure beatings, exhaustion, shipwreck, starvation and even chains without complaint. Jesus, as a slave, “humbled Himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross! Because of this, God highly exalted Him . . . .”
It is not easy to be humble, to accept a cross and see it as a blessing, as a means of salvation. When the 10 lepers were healed (and surely their leprosy was a cross for them), only one came back to Jesus and fell on his face at His feet giving Him thanks.” It was then that Jesus made this startling statement to the foreigner who was cured: “Arise, go your way, for your faith has saved you.” Who would ever think that a disease such as leprosy could be a blessing, an occasion for salvation?

When Simon of Cyrene was given the cross of Christ, little did he realize that his Calvary journey was related to all of mankind’s redemption. As he witnessed the sufferings, falls, beatings and bleeding of an innocent man in pain, he was then closest to Christ our Redeemer. When listening to the jeers, sneers, curses and insults which were directed at the God-man, he was able, through his presence to buffet the hurts and uplift the painful cross for the God of love, beyond our comprehension, yet true, that “God needed Simon.”

Being close to the Savior, Simon was also next to the women standing nearby who expressed their warmth, sorrow and love to their God. As our Blessed Mother prayed, Simon became the beneficiary of her prayers, for he was the only person who physically relieved her Son on that journey of torture. I wonder if onlookers recalled the words of Jesus, Who said, “Whoever gives a drink of cold water to the least of these My followers, because of Me, will certainly receive his reward” (Matt. 10:40). Who could possibly imagine Simon’s reward?

Doctors, I see you as the athletes, the slaves, the Simon of today. God needs you. You are nearest to Jesus in the sick you serve, in the care you give them, in the cross you carry for them, and in the abuse you often are required to accept for them. How frequently unappreciative family members complain of your not “doing enough.” How difficult the brothers in the legal profession can be in their accusations toward you, and how alone you stand with those who “cry death,” wanting an abortion or mercy killing instead of accepting the cross and salvation.

Like St. Paul, you can rightfully say, “I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me. I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for Me” (Gal. 2:19).

— Msgr. Dino J. Lorenzetti

President’s Page

A New Ethic

In September of 1970, the California Medical Journal editorialized about a new ethic for medicine and society. They took the position that the Judeo-Christian heritage, which was the basis of many of our laws and social mores, had lost its meaning in the face of technological advances and the social atmosphere of the modern world. Consequently the overriding reverence for life which was part of the heart of the Judeo-Christian “ethic” was to give way to a “quality of life” lifestyle which relegated to human life a relative and variable value. The editorial was meticulous in avoidance of the word or even the concept of “religion,” relegating everything to an ethic. Undoubtedly this mind-set, pervasive in America, had much to do with the Supreme Court’s 1973 abortion decision.

The Judeo-Christian ethic proclaims God as creator of the universe and of man and as the Supreme Being. This new ethic is obviously a challenge to the Judeo-Christian God. In this secular ethic, God, at best, takes a back seat and He is treated in the main as though He does not exist. Thus, with such technological advances as have occurred and which are perceived to be possible and man’s ability to perform feats previously only dreamed of, the new ethic proclaims man as the measure of man. Science, at this time, projects a world without God.

In the July, 1983 issue of Pediatrics, a commentary by Peter Singer reveals the full aspect of the development of this new ethic and places the value of human life in its actual framework when viewed from the standpoint of this new ethic. It is obvious that he places science and religion on a collision course. I quote in part: