



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

This issue of the *Adsum* begins with two congratulations. The first is made to Fr. Gregory Drahman, CMRI on his 25th Anniversary of ordination to priesthood. Our Lady of the Snow Parish in Denver celebrated this event for their pastor in appreciation for Fr. Gregory's pastoral care for them. The second congratulations goes to Rev. Mother Mary Agnes, CMRI who celebrated at the end of June her golden jubilee of religious vows; 50 years in the service of God! We wish Father and Reverend Mother many more years to come.

It would seem that the summer months should be a time when life at the seminary slows down; however, this has not been the case this year. In addition to classes in moral theology, canon law, and the sacred liturgy for our three deacons, the activities for the month of July include our biannual priests' meeting, boys' camp, and girls' camp. And for those who are not from the Midwest, frequent thunderstorms have inundated us with extraordinary amounts of rainfall, which means a never-ending battle to mow the large lawns on the church, seminary, and convent properties. Our nearby Missouri River has risen over its banks and caused minor flooding in low lying areas.

This summer provides us also with the necessary time to prepare our facilities for the upcoming seminary and school year. At this time, we will have 16 seminarians attending classes this fall and over 20 boarder boys in residence for Mater Dei Academy. As we know from cosmology, space is finite and it is always a challenge to accomodate everyone each year.

Our summer camps for boys and girls have always been a great success, not only for our youth to meet Catholics from other states for wholesome recreation but also to have a spiritual boost of daily Mass, regular



June 29, 1993, the ordination of Fr. Gregory Drahman, CMRI at Mount St. Michael

confessions, recitation of the Rosary and morning and night prayers. Last year we had 118 girls attend the 22nd annual girls' camp, and over 60 boys in attendance at their camp. By the end of each camp, the boys and girls are thoroughly exhausted and ready to go home to hibernate for the following week!

During the July apparitions at Fatima, 1917, Our Lady showed the children a vision of Hell; during these hot and humid days of summer let us heed Our Mother's pleading to pray and sacrifice for the conversion of poor sinners.

With our prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



With the ordinations in May, our past two issues of the Adsum omitted photos at the end of Mater Dei Academy's school year. Our high school archery team placed 2nd in the state and one of our students, Jose Nevada, was the top male archer in the state.



Our high school graduates of 2018

The Pope Speaks: Pope Pius XII on Conscience and Education (March 24, 1952)

The object of education and its role in the natural order is the development of a child to make a complete man of him; the role and object of Christian education is the formation of a new human being, reborn in baptism, into a perfect Christian.

We would now draw attention to an element which, though it is the basis and lever of education, especially of Christian education, seems to some people, at first sight, almost extraneous thereto. We would like to speak of that which is deepest and most intrinsic in man: conscience. We are led to do this by the fact that some currents of modern thought are beginning to alter its conception and question its value. We will therefore treat of conscience in so far as it forms the subject matter of education.

Conscience is, so to speak, the innermost and most secret nucleus in man. It is there that he takes refuge with his spiritual faculties in absolute solitude: alone with himself or, rather, alone with God—Whose voice sounds in conscience—and with himself. There it is that he decides for good or evil; there it is that he chooses between the way of victory and that of defeat. Even if he should wish to do so, a man could never shake off conscience; with it, whether it approves or condemns, he will travel along the whole way of his life, and likewise with it, a truthful and incorruptible witness, he will come up for God's judgement. Hence conscience, to express it with an image as old as it is fitting, is a sanctuary on the threshold of which all must halt, even, in the case of a child, his father and mother. Only the priest enters there, as entrusted with the care of souls and as minister in the Sacrament of Penance; nor for this reason does conscience cease to be a jealous sanctuary of which God Himself wishes the secrecy to be preserved through the seal of the most sacred silence.

In which sense can one then talk of the education of conscience? It will be necessary to call to mind some of the fundamental Catholic doctrinal conceptions in order to understand well that conscience can and must be educated.

Our divine Savior has brought to ignorant and feeble man His truth and grace: truth, to show him the way toward his goal; grace, to give him the strength to reach it.

To go along that way means, in practice, to accept the will and the commandments of Christ and to conform one's life to them, i.e., each single act, inner or exterior, which the free human will chooses and decides upon. Now, what is the spiritual faculty, if not conscience, that, in each particular case, gives guidance to the will so that it may choose and determine its actions in conformance to the divine



will? Conscience, then, is the faithful echo, the clear reflection of human action's divine pattern. Therefore, expressions such as "the judgment of the Christian conscience" or, "to judge according to the Christian conscience," mean this: that the pattern of the ultimate and personal decision for a moral action, must be taken from the word and will of Christ. In fact, He is the way, the truth, and the life, not only for all men collectively, but for each single one; the mature man, the child, and the youth.

From this it follows that the formation of the Christian conscience of a child or a youth consists above all in illuminating his mind with respect to Christ's will, law, and way; acting, so as to induce him freely and constantly to execute the divine will. This is the highest task of education.

But where shall the educator and the youth find in each individual case with ease and certainty the Christian moral law? They will find it in the law of the Creator imprinted in the heart of each one as well as in revelation, that is, in all the truths and precepts taught by the divine Master. Both the law written in the heart, that is, the natural law, and the truth and precepts of supernatural revelation, have been given by Jesus the Redeemer into the hands of His Church as humanity's moral treasure, so that the Church may preach them, intact and protected against any contamination and error, to all creatures, from one generation to another.

Outlines of Moral Theology

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

SUPERSTITION

Superstition literally signifies a sin of excess. With respect to religion it means the sin whereby a person gives cult to the true God, but in a manner that is excessive, or gives to another the cult that is due only to God.

A person could sin mortally in giving cult even to the true God—for example, if the excess lay in the fact that the cult was based on a serious falsehood. Thus, one who would worship God with the ceremonies of the Old Law, which imply that the Redeemer has not yet come, would sin mortally. On the other hand, one would sin venially by giving God cult which is excessive only in its manner—for example, if a priest would add genuflections and bows in the sacred rites over and above those prescribed by the Church.

Superstition of the other type—cult due to God alone but given to another—can be either idolatry, divination, or vain observance. Idolatry is the worship of an image of a false god, and it is a most grave sin. Under this would come also worship of the sun or an animal, etc.

Divination is the undue quest for knowledge of secret things by the aid of the devil. If it involves an express petition to the devil, it is, of course, a most wicked insult to God. But, it may be tacit; and actually this takes place when a person tries to “read” the cards or tea leaves or a crystal ball. He is implicitly calling on the devil, for these things of themselves cannot furnish the information; God or good spirits will not use these means of communicating knowledge, and so the only source remaining is the evil spirits. Hence, divination is a mortal sin from its whole nature, admitting no lightness of matter. However, it frequently happens that those who practice it are excused from grave sin through ignorance or thoughtlessness, or because they engage in it merely in jest. But often, even in such circumstances, there is danger that scandal will be given and that the participants will be led to more serious occult practices.

The ouija board is a form of divination. Spiritism particularly is a grave form of this sin, and for this reason, the Church explicitly forbids Catholics to take part in spiritistic seances, even merely passive assistance. Much of the spiritism practiced today is fraud; but since the danger of diabolical intervention is always present, it is a serious sin of superstition.

Astrology, as it exists with us, is also largely chicanery. But if one strives to obtain from the stars knowledge of the future, in as far as this is dependent on men’s free acts, this too is superstition. At most one could hold that the heavenly bodies exert an influence on the sensitive factors of human nature, and thus indirectly and fallibly influence men’s conduct. Such a doctrine has little to support it scientifically, but it would be free from the sin of superstition.

To believe that one can obtain knowledge of occult things through dreams is usually a sin of superstition. God at times makes use of dreams to communicate knowledge, but in this event He also gives the recipient assurance that it is He who has spoken. To go to a fortuneteller on one occasion as a joke, without ascribing to her any occult powers, might be only a venial sin; but it would be dangerous, and those who do this habitually are guilty of mortal sin.

The sin of vain observance consists in the attempt to obtain through the use of some creature an effect which is above its nature—e.g., a rabbit’s foot or a lucky coin to secure protection from harm. This too is an implicit seeking of help from the devil, in as far as any special power which the creature may possess cannot come from God or a good spirit, and hence must have its source in the devil. But, as in the case of divination, often those who perform acts of vain observance give no heed to any diabolical intervention and are in good faith—hence, can be excused from mortal sin. Hence, it is better to treat such customs as knocking on wood or avoiding thirteen at table as foolish rather than sinful.

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