

May, 2019

Adsum

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



On the feast of Ss. Philip & James, the ordinations to the Subdiaconate of Josef Weissensteiner (Austria), Denis McGuire (Connecticut), Carlos Zepeda (Mexico), and Joseph Pham (Vietnam) and to the Diaconate of Rev. Michael Sellner (Minnesota) and Rev. Joseph Appelhanz (Colorado)



After touching the chalice & paten, the subdeacons are invested in the amice, maniple, and tunic



The imposition of hands for the matter of the diaconate



A beautiful spring day in Nebraska for our seminary group picture

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

One of the challenges that we face when the feast of the Resurrection occurs later in the spring is that immediately after Holy Week and the Easter Octave, our seminary and academy classes conclude for the year. This means that we have retreat and ordinations for the seminarians as well as grade school and high school graduations and school program occurring in close proximity.

We congratulate our seminarians who advanced to the subdiaconate and the diaconate as well as their families and relatives. God willing, we will have three new priests ordained this coming December 12th.

As many of our vocations to the seminary and convent come from our academy and boarding school, there is a simple recipe to instill this desire and aspiration in the hearts of our young people. It is to create a Catholic

atmosphere with daily Mass, confession and rosary as a part of our school day. Our students regularly participate in Solemn High Masses for special feasts, benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, rosary processions, as well as special dinners and parish get-togethers in honor of the saints throughout the year. All of our teachers at Mater Dei Academy are either priests, seminarians or religious Sisters. And many of our graduates who do not have a priestly or religious vocation, several years after graduation have been united in the holy bonds of matrimony.

As we make preparations for this coming school year, we encourage parents who wish to have a Catholic atmosphere for their children to consider our boarding school. Our upcoming school year begins August 16th.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

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

OATHS IN LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Question: Sometimes in legal documents formulas appear, which seem to indicate that the person who signs them is attesting the truth of his statement with an oath. Such are the formulas: “I swear”... “Under penalty of perjury I declare”... “I, being duly sworn in, do attest.” Are such formulas to be understood as expressing that the one signing the document is by that very fact taking an oath? Is such be the case, of course even a slight deviation from the truth, when deliberate, is a mortal sin of perjury.

Answer: In order that a person may take an oath it is necessary: (1) that the formula which is employed indicate that he is calling God to witness the truth of his assertion, and (2) that he have the intention of taking an oath (cf. Prummer, *Manuale theologiae moralis* [Friburg Brigov., 1936], II, n. 441). Now, of the three formulas proposed by the questioner the first would seem to fulfill the former condition, but the other two would not. When a person says in court or writes in a legal document: “I swear,” he implicitly calls on God as witness. For, the first meaning of “swear” in Funk and Wagnall’s Standard Dictionary is “to utter or affirm solemnly, with an appeal to God or something held sacred.” The other two formulas would not seem to suffice as valid expressions for calling on God as witness. For “under penalty of perjury I declare” merely means that the one who pronounces or writes this formula declares that he recognizes that he is liable to the severe penalties due to perjury if he is convicted of falsehood; he does not say that he is actually taking an oath. The formula: “I being duly sworn in, do attest” is a statement that one has taken an oath, but of itself is not an oath.

If the intention of taking an oath is lacking, there is no oath, and consequently, the sin of perjury is not committed by making a false statement. However, even one who withholds his intentions, while using a formula expressive of an oath, is guilty of a grave sin of irreverence if he knowingly attests what is false (however unimportant it may be), because “it is always a grave insult to call on God even externally as a witness to falsehood” (Damen, *Theologia moralis* [Turin, 1947], I, n. 466).

Hence, the person who signs a legal document containing the expression “I swear” would be guilty of grave sin in the event that he deliberately incorporates falsehood in the document. If, however, the other expressions noted above are used, the morality of false statements would be judged by the norms of veracity and justice. For the benefit of persons who, for one reason or another, do not wish to take an oath in court or in a legal document, it is well to remember that our laws always permit a person to “affirm” instead of taking an oath, in order that the consciences of those persons who regard an oath as unlawful may be safeguarded. It is true, the penalty for prevarication so the same in either case; but in the tribunal of conscience one who makes a false statement “affirming” is guilty of perjury, nor is he necessarily guilty of a mortal sin of lying.

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