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Adsum

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

On December 1, 1958, the worst school fire in the history of the United States occurred at a Catholic grade school, Our Lady Queen of the Angels, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. This fire claimed the lives of 90 children and three religious Sisters. The documentaries on this tragedy often focus on fire prevention, but as Catholics, there is a very important aspect for us to consider. Our Lady Queen of the Angels had an enrollment of 1600 children with average classes of over 60 students.



This reminds me of the Catholic school I attended in the 1960's; Seven Holy Founders was taught by the Servite Sisters. And from 2nd grade to 8th grade our school numbered 1000 students.

These two examples of Our Lady Queen of the Angels and Seven Holy Founders were typical of the Catholic school systems throughout the United States prior to Vatican Council II. Most of the teachers in these schools were religious Sisters. As the Sisters had a vow of poverty, they were able to financially operate these schools "on a shoe-string." By 1965 the Catholic education system in the United States peaked with 13,000 schools educating 5.5 million students!

It is truly shocking how the changes of Vatican Council II devastated the Church. In 1965 the number of religious Sisters who taught in Catholic schools throughout the United States numbered approximately 100,000, and by 1995 there were less than 13,000 teaching Sisters. This directly impacted the number of Catholic schools.

Not only was the Catholic school system devastated, but also numerous convents, seminaries, and churches have closed down throughout the United States. As Our Lord had foretold: "By their fruits, you shall know them!"

Another consideration along these same lines is the flourishing parishes before Vatican Council II. Once again, my old parish, Seven Holy Founders, numbered approximately 500 families. It was truly amazing how three Servite priests were able to manage such a large congregation. Besides offering multiple Masses on Sunday, the priests had to hear hours of confessions and administer baptisms, marriages, last rites and funerals. It was indeed a momentous task.

In his pastoral concern for the clergy, His Holiness Pope Pius XII sought to remedy the tremendous demands placed upon them. He implemented particular laws in the area of the liturgy to lessen their burden. One good example is the Eucharistic fast. Prior to Pope Pius XII, the Eucharistic fast for the celebration of Mass began at midnight and also restricted the drinking of water. This meant that a priest on Sunday who had to offer multiple Masses would not even be able to drink the ablutions after his

Masses. The same could be said for the recitation of the breviary. Pope Pius XII initiated liturgical laws to simplify its recitation. Even with this simplification, praying the Divine Office takes nearly two hours. Truly Pope Pius XII was properly called *Pastor Angelicus* (the Angelic Pastor).

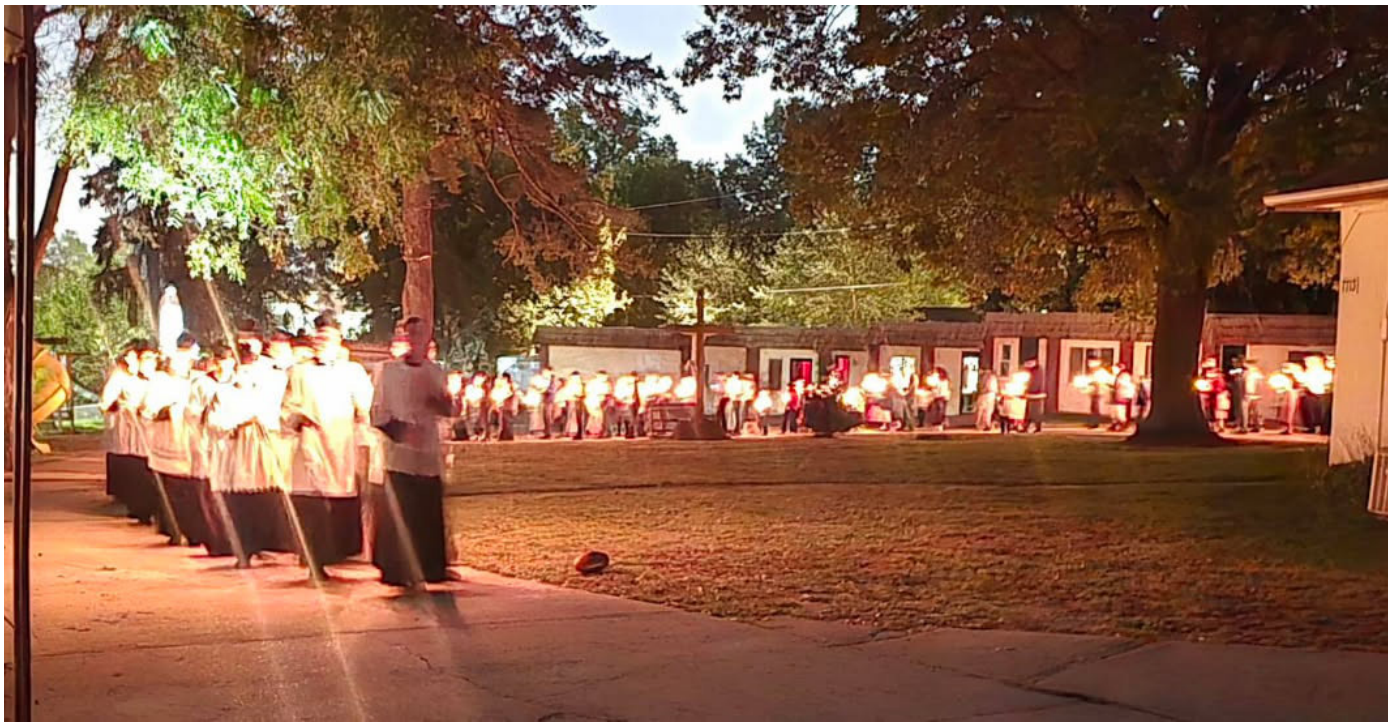
As bishop, my focus is on the establishment of Catholic schools. Our children are the future of the Church; they are the future Catholic mothers, fathers, religious Sisters, religious Brothers, and priests.

This is also the reason why we operate our seminaries. Here in Omaha, Fr. Carlos Borja, Fr. Stephen Sandquist, Fr. Lucas Oliveira and I spend hours in the education and formation of our seminarians. In northern Idaho, Fr. Benedict Hughes CMRI, Fr. Martin Sentman CMRI, and Fr. Brendan Hughes CMRI form the CMRI religious seminarians. Our seminarians are the future clergy of the Church. This semester at Mater Dei Seminary we have fifteen seminarians, eight in philosophy and seven in theology. We cannot express sufficiently our appreciation for your prayers and support.

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



Solemn High Mass on the Feast of All Souls



Candlelight Rosary Procession on October 13th, in honor of Our Lady of Fatima

Excerpt from *The Woman Shall Conquer*

by Don Sharkey

One of the most famous examples of Our Lady's granting spiritual favors to the wearers of the Miraculous Medal occurred less than ten years after it had been struck.

Alphonse Rathisbonne was a French Jew who had no religion. When his brother Theodore became a Catholic and then a priest, Alphonse was filled with aversion. He was a typical intellectual of the nineteenth century, a worshiper of humanity, who sneered at anything spiritual.

In November, 1841, Alphonse found himself in Rome although his itinerary had not called for a stop in the Eternal City. There he met Baron de Bussiere. The Baron urgently requested him to wear the Miraculous Medal and to recite daily the prayer of St. Bernard, the *Memorare*. Alphonse did so in the spirit of accepting a dare and without the slightest bit of faith.

On January 20, 1842, Monsieur de Bussiere saw Alphonse walking along the street and invited him into his carriage. They stopped at S. Andrea delle Fratee because the Baron wished to see a priest there. In order to kill time, Alphonse entered the church.

He was not very much interested and was walking around rather listlessly. Suddenly the church seemed plunged into darkness and all the light concentrated on one chapel. Very much startled, he saw there Our Blessed Mother bathed in glorious light, her face radiant. He advanced toward her. She motioned with her right hand for him to kneel. As he knelt, he realized at last the sad state of his soul. He perceived that mankind had been redeemed through the blood of Christ, and he was seized with a great longing to be taken into the Church of Christ. The Blessed Virgin spoke not a word, but these things came to him as he knelt before her.

The next day Alphonse was baptized by Cardinal Patrizi, vicar of Pope Gregory XVI. The Holy Father, as Bishop of Rome, ordered an official inquiry, and after four months the authenticity of the miracle was recognized.

Alphonse Maria Rathisbonne, as he was named after his baptism, devoted the remainder of his life to the winning of his fellow Jews to Christ.



The incorrupt body of St. Catherine Laboure,
to whom Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal appeared in 1830

More Answers to Today's Moral Problems

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

Holy Communion for the Mentally Retarded Child

Question: What course should be followed in allowing a mentally retarded child to receive Holy Communion?

Answer: The questioner presents a problem which occurs quite frequently, and yet is not easy to solve. According to the discipline prevailing in the Latin Church, a child who is so defective intellectually as to have no understanding or appreciation of the Blessed Sacrament may not be given Holy Communion even in danger of death. The Code prescribes that outside the danger of death (for in danger of death all that is necessary is that the little one be able to distinguish the Blessed Sacrament from common food and to adore the Body of Christ reverently), a child must understand according to his capacity those mysteries of faith that are necessary for salvation by necessity of means, and approach the Holy Eucharist with the devotion suitable to his tender years.

In practice it is often difficult to apply these rules to children who have not attained to normal intellectual development. Evidently, those who are classified as idiots (with an I.Q. less than 20) should be excluded from the reception of the Holy Eucharist. But this same rule should not be applied to morons (with an I.Q. from 50 to 70) nor even to all imbeciles (with an I.Q. from 20 to 50). Those persons who are charged with the spiritual care of retarded children who offer any hope of reaching the required mental capacity for Holy Communion should be prepared to give them a long course of instruction, patiently repeating over and over again the necessary doctrines. When this work of zeal has been properly performed, many of those children who at first seemed incapable of the minimum knowledge required for First Communion may eventually manifest the requirements for even the frequent reception of the Blessed Eucharist. Such, at least, is the belief of those who have had considerable experience in caring for children of this type.

Thus, a religious engaged in the care of mentally retarded children wrote:

> The mentally deficient child can arrive at an appreciation of religious truths if given instruction adapted to his mental capacity. Those children who have been given formal religious instruction over a period of years are found to possess a degree of knowledge and ability for practical application of the truths of Catholicism sufficient to permit them to receive the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. From the data obtained in the study it would seem that a period of three years or more of religious instruction prior to the reception of the sacraments is desirable for those children on the higher levels of the imbecile group and also those in the moron group.

At the convention of the National Catholic Educational Association in 1952, Monsignor Feider, chaplain of St. Coletta School, Jefferson, Wisconsin, made this statement: "Our patients range in I.Q. from 30 to 80, with an average I.Q. of about 50. According to our experience, all patients with an I.Q. of 40 or higher can, with proper direction, be brought to the sacraments. I also find that most of those in the range from 30 to 40 I.Q. can be trained to be communicants."

It should also be noted that the decree *Quam Singulari* in which St. Pius X rendered the Holy Eucharist available to children as soon as they reach the age of reason contains the comforting assurance that they need not possess the full use of reason. "Nor is the full use of reason necessary, but the incipient use is sufficient—that is, some kind of use of reason (*aliqualis usus rationis*)."

In this connection it is useful to quote the prescription of the Code regarding those who have the right and duty to judge the fitness of a child for Holy Communion: "Regarding the sufficient disposition of children for First Communion the judgment should pertain to their confessor and their parents or those who take the place of the parents. It is the duty of the pastor to see to it, even by an examination if he prudently judges it opportune, that children shall not approach the Holy Table before the use of reason or without sufficient disposition."

Those who have the spiritual care of mentally retarded children should not be too ready to decide that a child is not sufficiently intelligent to receive Holy Communion. I am inclined to say that any child who can express ideas in speech, even though very simply and confusedly, can be presumed to be capable of receiving Holy Communion if proper training is provided.

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