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# Do You Love Your Children?

by Daniel A. Lord, S.J.



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A QUEEN'S WORK PAMPHLET



# DO YOU LOVE YOUR CHILDREN ?

*by*

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# **Do You Love Your Children?**

By Daniel A. Lord, S.J.

Do you love your children?

That's an insulting question, isn't it? But it's one that you won't mind answering, since the answer is a vigorous "Certainly, I do."

Well, God loves your children too. They are His, you know, His sons and daughters. He made them. He died for them. He wants them to be more successful than ever you do. He wants them to move happily through life to heaven.

So if you love your children, please read this carefully and act on it. It is important for you; but it is a matter of life and death for your children.

## **Confusion Everywhere**

It's really a confused world, isn't it?

What's right? What's wrong? What's good? What's bad? What's true? What's false? What ought I to believe? What ought I to do?

Your associates are confused. Those who govern us are confused. And confused voices shout to us from the radio, the TV, the newspapers, the platforms, the classrooms, the books.

Well, it's not easy to live in a confused world.

We want to know the truth and we want to know how to live by it.

That is why Jesus Christ taught us with such clarity and force.

That is why His Church, the Catholic Church, obeys His great command, "Going therefore, teach ye all nations"!

That is why a Catholic who knows what Christ taught, is safe and undisturbed and certain and confident. That is why the Church today is the calmest and most intelligent voice speaking throughout the world.

"Who heareth you, heareth me," Christ said to His Church.

So when we listen to Christ's Church, we listen to Christ Himself.

He said that this teaching Church, the Catholic Church, would speak with His voice.

In the answers to life's big problems, the Church has a way of talking common sense and divine wisdom.

But in the smaller questions, the Church also has a way of saying the right thing and giving the right direction and ending a lot of confusion with a clear-cut "This is right; for this is what Christ taught and teaches."

## Your Confused Children

Well, if grown-ups are confused, as most of them seem to be, imagine the mental confusion of the youngsters.

"We're right and we're the only ones who are right," shout the Communists.

"No, listen to us," scream the Fascists (who didn't die with Hitler and Mussolini).

"There are all kinds of Christianities," says the Protestant, "and they agree on very little, but they are all true."

"There is no truth at all," scoffs the sceptic.

"No God! No right and wrong! No truth!" asserts the atheist.

To make things worse, as your modern youngsters grow up, they are violently tempted.

You're not so old as to forget what it means to be young and tempted. Recall the first hot temptations of the flesh? Remember when passion first awoke? Remember when you first had to resist a dirty story? Recall when a companion tried to lead you astray? Remember when you had to fight your ugly little adversary called sin and didn't know where to turn or whom to consult or what to do?

It's no fun being a youngster and tempted.

But if your boy and girl are normal, they are being tempted. They are tempted from inside their own fallen natures. And they are being tempted systematically by a world that tries to make sin look mighty attractive.

### **God Help Your Child!**

When I say, "God help your child!" I mean just that.

God has to help your boy and protect your girl.

They must not be the victims of all the false teachers who fill the world.

They have to be given strength and grace enough to stay pure and decent and obedient and studious and honest and truthful when it is so easy to sin.

Only God can help them to do that.

These young people today need God's help as nobody ever needed it before. And if you don't help them to get God's help, who will?

Not those who don't believe in God.

Not those who make war on God.

Not those who hate God.

Not those who completely ignore Him and pretend He does not exist.



Not those who are forbidden by law to speak of God or His helps and His Commandments.

How are your children going to get God's truth and God's help?

### **"I'll Do the Job"**

Says you, "Don't worry! I'll teach my children all they need to know about God."

Excuse me if I laugh, gently but with complete disbelief.

So you can teach your children all they need to know about God and Jesus Christ and Christ's truth and the Church and right and wrong and good and bad!

Look! You admit you can't teach your children to read and write. You send them to school for that.

You may help them sometimes of an evening with addition and subtraction, and later perhaps with algebra and geometry. But you pay a teacher — or the state does — to see that they really learn how to handle figures.

If you had all the time in the world, you might be able to teach them geography and science, history and literature. I doubt if you've got the time. Modern mothers and dads are pretty busy people. So they call on the

school to take over the education of their children. "I'd love to teach my own boys and girls, but the truth is, I just don't have time." (Nobody would admit he didn't have sufficient knowledge.) "So let's hire some professionals to educate our children and let's force all the parents to send their youngsters to school."

Time was when maybe the home was the center for education. Not nowadays.

So what makes you think you can teach your children the difficult subject called religion when you can't teach 'em to add and to subtract or to recite the capitals of the states or to give the causes of the Revolutionary War? Don't kid yourself about your kids. You're much too busy and the hours you spend with your children are much too cluttered with radio and meals and TV and friends and all the other excitements and necessities for you to teach your children.

You don't, and, be honest, you won't.

### **Children Don't Like It**

"But," says you, being a very good and obedient parent, "my children don't want to be sent off to learn their religion."

If you face it, children don't want to be sent off to learn anything. You don't find them whooping it up for mathematics. They don't go into raptures over their music lessons. You have to force them to get up mornings and go to school, and any little excuse is trumped up to wriggle out of going to class — any class.

But if you are the kind of parent I think you are, you send 'em off to school, no matter how loudly they protest.

You despise any parents who don't give their youngsters a complete education.

In fact, the United States (and your town or township) thinks education so important that it pays no attention to the occasional howls of protest (or the yawns of apathy) and slaps a fine, not on the children, but on the parents of the children who don't turn up for school.

And if tomorrow we did not have compulsory education in our country, you would demand it.

So your children don't want to learn their religion?

So what?

They don't want to go to class of any kind. They don't want to go to the den-

tist. They don't want to swallow their cod-liver oil or their vitamin capsules. (At least many of them don't.)

But you see to it that they do.

You know what's good for them and they get it, no matter how loudly they howl. You see to their education. And they have to take it, whether they like it or not.

### **The Great Teacher**

Christ is the world's greatest teacher.

What He taught is the most important truth in the world.

Up to the time of His coming, people walked in shadow or partial light. They guessed. They hoped. They dreamed. They suspected. They questioned.

"What is God like? How does God feel about us? What am I, anyhow, and what is this creature called man? Is death the end? What's true and what's false? What's good for me and if it is, why? I want to be happy; how is that possible? Is God ready to help me or do I have to shift for myself? If there is a life after this life, how can I be sure to live it happily? And if sin is punished, how can I escape that sin, and failing that, escape the punishment?"

Despite beautiful answers in the Psalms, men were confused then, you

see, as those outside the Catholic Church are terribly confused today. They wanted to know and they couldn't seem to find out. They knew all the important questions, but they missed the vital answers.

Then Christ came, and He went about teaching the answers.

He taught the people all about God: Father, Creator, Savior, Sanctifier. He told men and women how important they are and why. He talked of life after death and explained the means by which we gain that life after death. He warned against the danger of losing our souls, and told what we have to do to miss that awful fate. He explained what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is harmful, what is true and what is false.

He was the world's greatest teacher.

### **Teaching Goes On**

Into His three years of Public Life, Jesus Christ crammed so much teaching that the scholars and teachers of all the centuries since have not exhausted what He taught.

Indeed, the answers to all modern problems are found basically in Christ's teaching. But it takes learned men,

study and thought and investigation, to apply what He taught to the problem facing us today.

Because men reject what He taught, they are confused.

Because they won't study their problems in the light of His teaching, they are in a world-wide mess.

Because they have turned away from the road to eternal life that He showed them, they've got the roads of this life all cluttered up with wrecks and mines, all criss-crossed with detours, all doubled back on themselves, all marked with fingerposts and guideposts that mislead the baffled traveler.

What Christ taught was clear.

But who wants to listen to clear teaching? Who wants to turn from the noisy clamor of the misleaders to the beautiful certainties of the Divine Leader?

### **Religion Is a Cinch**

"Ah," cries the modern man and woman, "religion is one of those things you get without study. You don't have to put in a lot of time learning religion. Religion is a cinch. It's easy. It's simple. Any smart child can pick it up in a few afternoons before First Communion."

That's interesting, if true.

If religion is a cinch — easy, simple, a push-over — it's the only thing in modern life that is. Education is the effort to get young people to understand some little part of this complicated world. What does anyone get these days without study? Mathematics? Science? Medicine? Law? Literature? Language? Music? Acting? Sports?

It seems to me that where once on a time a boy went to school for four years and got an education, he now goes for twelve and then is only beginning his college training. My grandfather learned all there was to know about medicine back in the '60's by going to Rush Medical in Chicago for six months. Now a young doctor finishes college and goes on to study medicine for anywhere from four to fourteen years.

I'm baffled if religion, the answer to all the big problems of this complicated age, turns out to be a cinch, when the problems are so tough that the masterminds muff them. If this is a complicated world, religion in the complicated world is no twice-a-week for half an hour snap course.

And anyone who pretends it is, is just trying to talk himself out of a responsibility.

### **The Teacher's Teacher**

“Going therefore, teach ye all nations,” cried Christ to His Church. And that is what the Church tries to do.

The Church is a teaching Church. It does not guess, or surmise, or opine, or think perhaps, or suggest that probably this or maybe the other. It doesn't teach something today and deny it tomorrow. It doesn't change its mind with every fashion and style. The Church teaches with the voice of Christ.

“Who heareth you, heareth me,” said the Savior.

Which is precisely what makes the teaching of the Catholic Church so entirely different.

The Church knows about God and wants to make God clear to the world.

The Church knows what is right and what is wrong and how important both of these are for the happiness of mankind.

The Church has Christ's own truth and it is distressed that everyone won't listen and learn, accept and use that truth.



The Church knows how we move through life happily and safely.

The Church can show us heaven and hell, how to gain one and how to avoid the other.

The Church is fully aware what makes a Great Man and a Virtuous Woman — no easy matter in this difficult and confused age — and the Church wants to place that knowledge at the disposal of all who will listen.

The Church may incidentally teach science and literature and art and government, economics and geography. The Church's big job remains to teach the Truth of Christ and the Ways of Christ, Christian Virtue and Christian living.

And when the big problem comes up in the individual life or the wider life in which all these days must be spent, the Church has a way of coming up with the right answer. A lot of people, of course, would rather hear the wrong answer or no answer at all than hear the right answer from the Catholic Church; but that's their hard luck. Actually it amazes even the casual student how quick is the grasp of the Church on the big question that confronts the world and on the right answer that solves the problem.

## Cheating Your Child?

If your child is cheated of all this, your child has a right to be pretty mad later on.

Knowing arithmetic may be important; knowing God is a lot more vital.

Knowing Columbus or Caesar or Newton or Napoleon is certainly not going to be as important as knowing Christ.

Your boy or girl has a right to know how to vote or bank his savings; much more important is his ability to make a good confession or his habit of receiving Communion regularly.

It's fine if he turns out to know the right answer to a chemical formula and to be a good judge of a short story or a classic play; but in the long run it's going to matter a lot more if he can distinguish right from wrong, and, faced with a problem of honesty or virtue, can come up with the correct answer.

He might make a place on the "Quiz Kids" or "Information, Please" and yet be a complete ignoramus about the truths that Christ came to teach. His answers to life will depend very largely

on how he can answer the question of what happens after death. And a fine physical education in a topnotch gym won't make him virtuous or give him a pure and obedient and honest soul.

### 'Tain't Fair

So the Catholic Church, as the teacher commissioned by the greatest Teacher, thinks what your child is taught is most important, and is certain that if he misses the really vital teaching, he is handicapped for life and perhaps doomed for eternity.

That is why the Catholic Church in the United States has created the miracle of the Catholic school system. From kindergarten to university, the Catholic child can be trained in schools which, along with an education that parallels and matches (and sometimes tops) any education on earth, teach how to live in this world and how to prepare for the world ahead. As the bishops have put it, your child is a "citizen of two worlds." He has to be educated for success in both.

The Church thinks your child is cheated if he doesn't get both kinds of education — for time and for eternity.

But if for any reason, and with proper Church permission, your child is not in a Catholic school, don't cheat him still further.

Be sure that you send him to get as much as he can of Christ's teaching.

### Essential Teaching

Send him and see that he goes to the religion classes offered by your parish. See that in high school, when his confusion can easily become more bewildering and his temptations more violent, he is getting Catholic teaching along with his other studies.

Your child rates no less.

He is gypped if he misses that.

You are his parent, and God is going to hold you responsible for the complete education of your child.

He has to know about God. He has to be able to recognize and use the great truths which Jesus Christ came to give to the human race. He has to be adept in handling the aids which Christ has given for his salvation — prayer, the sacraments, the Mass, Catholic devotions.

It's not enough that he knows how to add and subtract unless he also knows

the value of sanctifying grace. He can't recognize the worth of a piece of literature and be ignorant of the value of virtue. He can't know the heroes of his country and the great men of history without also knowing the heroes of God, and the saints who are history's really top men and women.

It is easy to cheat a child. Many a father and mother does just that.

As a result, the boy or girl comes out of school with trained hands and a clever mind, and the most surface knowledge of God's truth and a vague, foggy groping for what is right and what is wrong. You don't get those things by wishing for them. They come by study. You can't pick them up in a little casual reading. You need a good teacher.

The Church trains priests and religious men and women to teach your children. They are the experts who parallel the experts in the fields that you insist must be taught by people who know. And it is your job to see that your children sit in the classes taught by these experts in religion and goodness. While they are young, they have to learn what Christ said and why He said it. They have to develop hab-

its of religion along with the other habits that result from their education. They mustn't merely be clever; they must be good. They can't just be smart; they have to be virtuous. They can't be skillful unless they are also decent. They have to face the confused world of today with clear knowledge and confident grasp on what God gave them for their safety here and their salvation hereafter.

### **Your Job**

As parents, your job is your children. You don't just bring babies into the world. You must develop and give to life trained, competent adults.

The world is full of confused people.

See that your children have the calm and reassuring truths of Christ.

The world is muddled by people totally at sea about what is right and what is wrong.

See that your children are trained in goodness and know virtue from vice.

The world is crammed with inept people, whose intentions are sound but who lack the strength to do the hard and worthwhile and virtuous thing.

See that your children know that God has given them the means to be strong, the helps to be virtuous, the aids to correct living; and that these are within easy reach of the educated Catholic.

Send your child to the Catholic school if you really love him and want his success in time and in eternity.

But if for any reason, he is not in the Catholic school, see that he is not cheated of the knowledge that Christ brought to the world and the means the Church offers for a happy and virtuous life. Send him at least to every available parish religion class.

In recent times, the Church has emphasized the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. This is a world-wide organization meant to continue from infancy to maturity growth in knowledge of Christ and His doctrines and principles. It is graded for all types of minds as well as for all ages and levels of education. It acts on the supposition that there is a lifetime of study for the person who really wants to understand his faith. But then, the libraries filled with the growing books on Cath-

olic life and living are proof of the inexhaustible character of Christ's glorious truth.

The lucky child is the child who from kindergarten through Catholic university has a Catholic education. He cannot possibly know too much about his Faith and its practice. He cannot conceivably be too well prepared for living the Christlike life in the midst of the organized armies that fight that life, block and ignore that life, slander and try to destroy it.

You are cheating your children if you don't see that they get a Catholic education.

Surely you love your children too much for that!



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