

Cardinal O'Connor's attack on Satanism

Two weeks ago, EIR reported that New York's John Cardinal O'Connor had taken the occasion of a Lenten sermon on the temptation of Christ in the desert to warn his parishioners of the links between heavy-metal rock music and the proliferation of satanic cults. We reprint here excerpts of the Cardinal's sermon, which was delivered at St. Patrick's Cathedral on March 4:

There can be no question about the reality of the devil. It is considered old fashioned to talk about the devil of his reality. Rather, he wants the opportunity to sneak up on us, to prowl around as a roaring lion trying to devour us. . . . In the Fourth Lateran Council we're told that God created the devil and the other demons good by nature, but they of themselves became truly evil. . . .

Pope Paul VI wrote very poignantly of the devil [as] "the treacherous and cunning enchanter who finds his way into us by way of the senses, the imagination, lust, utopian logic, or disorderly social contacts in the give and take of life, to introduce deviations." . . .

The incredible increase in the tragedy of abortion is truly irrational. . . . The present move toward assisted suicide, what we so cleverly call "death with dignity," is not natural. We are putting ourselves to death. I personally believe that we are witnessing a diabolical influence in the world. . . .

[T]here are two reasons why I address the devil today. The first . . . is that we tend to ignore the reality of the devil and consequently . . . the devil often has free rein. But there is another danger that has developed in recent years, a terrifying phenomena about which many of us know very little and about which I think we should know more. Parents in particular should know more . . . because [it has] gripped a number of young people.

Not too long ago in the State of New York, 100 sheriffs [met] to discuss one thing: diabolically influenced violence. . . . They have seen so many crimes of violence with so many peculiarities about them and so often involving the young, that they spent a week with experts in demonism to discuss the various forms of Satanism that seem to be gripping a number of young people today. I don't want to generalize about anything, but just listen to certain types of rock music, some calling suicide a solution to your problems. . . .

Those who work with these things [Satanism and occultism] tell us that there are four general manifestations. First, there's the dabbling in various types of rituals. Young high school students, for instance, may gather in a cemetery at night and dress themselves in strange clothing and wear masks and sing grotesque songs and dance in a bizarre fashion. They beat themselves into a kind of frenzy, often stripping themselves and engaging in various kinds of unfortunate activity. In some instances, they go off and commit suicide with the words, "I'm going home to the devil." Now this isn't something in a pop magazine. This is something that's very real that we're being confronted with. When I see those ads on television, "It's 10 o'clock; do you know where your children are?" I no longer smile.

Satanic cults

The second manifestation along the same continuum is the Satanical cult. This is the Charles Manson kind of thing in which people are assaulted, tortured and killed in very grotesque fashion. . . .

Then there is "occult Satanism." There are some who believe that certain kinds of rock music and certain kinds of rock concerts, using certain kinds of lyrics and certain kinds of beats, are motivated by a form of occult Satanism. The ultimate that I have very sadly come to learn about is the so-called Black Mass. One shudders even to talk about it. . . . This is occult Satanism. You think it doesn't exist? Sometime, even in the middle of the afternoon—if you think you can stand it—turn the television on to the right station and you'll see it. . . .

Then finally, there is the so-called religion of Satan. There is, for example, a Church of Satan in existence today. There's a Temple of Set which is Satanic. There is a worldwide Church of Satanic Liberation and they have what they call a "Satanic bible" and a "Satanic ritual." . . . These almost certainly lead to actual diabolical possession. . . .

Our culture keeps working against Christ. Some of our music, much of the pornography, some of the evils in which we engage, these keep working against Christ and making us prey to the devil. . . .

I do ask you, especially those who are parents: Remember how vulnerable young people are when they have been robbed of all absolutes, all straightforward, honest-to-goodness, unambiguous, unconfusing moral teaching. When there's no one to say to them, "This is right, and this is wrong." When they are told that even the Church is wrong. When they are told that even the Church doesn't know what it is talking about. We hear young people say, "The Pope doesn't know what he is talking about. Who are the bishops to tell us what to do? Who are the priests? Who are the nuns? Who are parents? Who is anyone to tell me what to do?" the message they're sold. And what does it do? It creates a terrible vacuum. It's into that vacuum that Satan loves to leap.