

THE THIRD ORDER

Of the Society of St. Pius X



4th August 2008

curtis@isp.net.au

Phone: [61] 2/95677088

Fax: [61] 2/ 95673228

280 West Botany St. Rockdale,
Sydney, Australia

Dear Postulants and Professed members,

I would like to say a few words this month on the rule of television. As you all know as a general rule the use of the television is off limits to 3rd order members. And just for clarity sake I have included a copy of the television rule in this month's letter. The reasons for not watching this or related Medias are deeper than just avoiding the spirit of the world. It is a question of what to do with our spare time and the value we place on human interaction and active intellectual pursuits.

To quote an article on technology by Christopher Check on the influence of modern technology, illustrates the point: "These machines promise freedom when, in fact, they enslave us. They dissolve tradition. Rather than strengthening human relationships, they render them more abstract. They encourage isolation. They divorce us from reality. They make truth hard to uncover. They serve as obstacles to our relationship with the divine." In short, many of these modern wonders do more harm to human nature than the good that they propose. Human beings need human contact and the technology that promises to increase contact actually makes it more distant. This is the phenomenon of virtual reality. The television gives us a version of reality that does not correspond with the truth. Similar things can be said for the internet and the e-culture that is on the increase.

We could also speak of the intellectual damage done by an overdose of images as well as the loss of the ability to communicate with each other using proper language. People will always remain the best educators of other people and the tools they use will never substitute for human contact.

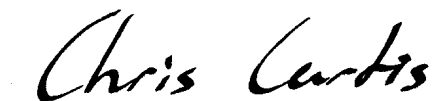
The question is, what to do instead of watch T.V. or play on the internet etc? These forms of entertainment are very exciting and easy to enjoy at the same time as being damaging to us. The images that we can conjure up from reading a good story or listening to a beautiful symphony are far more powerful and enjoyable than the images offered to us by the screen. Reading of the great classics should be something common amongst us. These need not be always spiritual books but real classics like G.K. Chesterton or Charles Dickens to name a few. The works of Shakespeare are worth the effort to learn. It is also possible to take up an instrument or find out about the music of a certain composer. If there is a good music concert in town, it may be worth a listen. These cultural activities also make good conversation topics to bring up around the dinner table which aid the communication between family members or friends. What we are aiming for is a love of the true, the good and the beautiful that reflect the ultimate truth, goodness and beauty of God.

The fact of not being permitted to watch T.V. should be an incentive for us to find real activities instead of virtual activities to replace it with. For parents of children they

need to be able to offer an alternative to the attractive modern culture that is more attractive rewarding so that the children will not be seduced by the allurements of the anti-culture media that surrounds us. Children will do what they see their parents doing, so if the parents are setting the cultural pace, then it is more likely that the children will follow.

Please keep in your prayers the seminarians who will take the cassock on 15th August that they correspond to the grace of fidelity to the clerical state. As usual I will offer Holy Mass for the intentions of all members this month that we remain faithful to the statutes.

In the Sacred Heart, through the Immaculate heart of Mary,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Curtis". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Chris" and "Curtis" being capitalized and prominent.

Fr. Christopher Curtis
Spiritual Director of the Third Order of SSPX
For Australia

Television, Videos, DVD, and the Third Order of the Society of St. Pius X

There is a point of difficulty concerning the Rule, which needs clarification: the television. In an address given to the Third Order at St. Mary's, Kansas, USA, in December 1982, Archbishop Lefebvre said: "It is difficult for many people to abandon the TV. But I know some families who had TV who asked to become members of the Third Order, and they gave it up. And afterwards they said: 'Now we understand why you ask us to abandon TV. Before we didn't understand, but now that we do not have it, we know that there is more peace in the family, more quiet, more spirituality.' TV should be a good thing, but in reality it is not."

Here are some more detailed rules regarding the use of television, video, DVD and movies:

- 1) The commercial television (with the antenna, its programmes and advertisements) is completely prohibited.
- 2) The use of honest television programmes recorded on video is permitted.
- 3) Attendance at the movies shown in cinemas is prohibited.
- 4) Honest and moral movies recorded on video or DVD and given to a private group are permitted.

Further clarifications:

Regarding No. 1 & 3

We admit that not all T.V. programs and movies are evil. There are some good ones. But helping us to attain perfection, Archbishop Lefebvre calls us to sacrifice. He wants us to make, for our Crucified Master, even the sacrifice of what is good. Not everything is sinful, we admit. The Third Order as if a religious order in the midst of this world, its members must follow more closely the three Evangelical Counsels and the eight Beatitudes (especially the first: "Blessed are the poor in spirit"). Thus, if someone wants to belong to the Third Order, he will have this sacrifice to make; if he does not want to make it, he cannot be accepted.

Regarding No. 2

Many, nowadays, use video as an educational help. Let us not forget that a machine will never replace fully the teacher. The excessive and/or exclusive use of these machines will generate a passivity in the children that will have for them terribly harmful consequences later on.

"God loves a cheerful giver."

