

Star Nov. 15, 1960.

For PDP Face union Denial



FATHER MAISONET
... read a noted message

Vote 'Sin' Must Be Confessed

The consequences of being simultaneously a Catholic and a member of the Popular Democratic Party are being felt severely this morning by many Puerto Ricans.

The ideological conflict between the church and the PDP, which raged throughout the electoral campaign, continues, brought into sharp focus by the reported denial of absolution, and the threat of denial of the sacraments, to members of the church who sought to confess their "sin" over the weekend.

Also in San Juan Cathedral, the Rev. Tomas Maisonet, pastor of the church, told worshippers at five masses Sunday—including San Juan Mayor Doña Felisa Rincon de Gautier:

"All those who disobeyed the order of the bishops cannot receive the sacraments until they have confessed."

In one parish, a couple could not be married until they had received absolution. Both were Populars and presumably confessed and vowed not to vote for the PDP again unless the party changes its philosophy.

Denies Communion Refusal

Father Maisonet, 40, denied reports that he had refused communion to any one person or any one group.

"We never denied communion to anyone," Father Maisonet stated. "We requested that whoever publically disobeyed the mandate of the bishops not approach the altar for communion unless they have made their peace in the confessional. Fortunately, no one did."

Similar actions by priests in
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Other parishes have been reported, and Father Maisonet noted that "it is up to each priest to handle the matter as he sees fit best among his people."

Father Maisonet declared the church position is only natural and that he knew of no orders issued from higher church authorities.

"If you sin you have to confess—it's as simple as all that," he said.

The pastoral letters prohibited island Catholics from voting for Gov. Muñoz and the PDP on grounds that it was anti-Christian. It was signed The Most Rev. James P. Davis, Archbishop of the San Juan Catholic Archdiocese; The Most Rev. James McManus, Bishop of the Ponce Catholic Diocese, and The Most Rev. Luis Aponte, titular bishop of Lares.

Long-Range View

Father Maisonet indicated the long-range view the church is

to attend church without being angry.

"Too Much"

"This thing on Sunday, is just too much," she whispered sadly. "I don't think they have the right to deny communion. I had to sit there and listen to Father Maisonet speak against my party in the sermon, and after he finished, I had to listen to him say that I could not receive communion even if I wished it."

"What has the Popular Party done to merit this," she lamented.

"We are defending moral principles and the word of God," said Father Maisonet later. "We care for, and are trying to reach the good Catholics. Many good Catholics misinterpreted the position of the church when they heard Doña Felisa speak against the Pastoral letters and still receive the church sacraments. Many felt they too, could disobey the church and still receive."

On her part, Doña Felisa said, "I have never in my life been filled with as much personal con-

Manus, Bishop of the Ponce Catholic Diocese, and The Most Rev. Luis Aponte, titular bishop of Lares.

Long-Range View

Father Maisonet indicated the long-range view the church is taking as he stated that each person confessing that he gave his vote for the PDP is asked whether he would vote for the party again if it doesn't change its philosophy.

"Naturally, it would be as grave a sin and by pointing this out, we only do what we have to do," Father Maisonet said. "Otherwise we'd make ourselves look ridiculous."

Doña Felisa, who attended Mass at the cathedral, said that she had not attended with the intention of receiving communion.

Still hoarse from her many campaign speeches, the first lady of the city explained, "I hadn't taken communion for some time as I cannot receive while I am angry, and lately I have not been able

letters and still receive the church sacraments. Many felt they too, could disobey the church and still receive."

On her part, Doña Felisa said, "I have never in my life been filled with as much personal conflict as I have felt in these past few weeks. I have been a good Catholic all my life and I will continue to be one, but I have been active in the Popular Party for twenty years and cannot give up my affiliations there either."

Priest's Advice On Voting

Asked whether he felt the church should advise the faithful for any particular party, Father Maisonet said, "No, any of the other three parties, but if they don't want that, they can vote blank so as to not lose their voting right."

The priest said he was aware that many Catholic had not known they committed a sin by voting for the Popular Democrats—"the press has confused the issues and the people more than anything else"—and that the parish priests would take into consideration cases where malice has not been a driving factor in the sin.