

# Year Ends In Sadness

The old year ends sadly as Catholics throughout the nation pause this Sunday to pray for persecuted people.

For those who have faith, these prayers will be the best way to assist the victims of bigotry and hatred.

For those who have no faith, the prayers will be a futile gesture to stem the tide which is engulfing the world.

The great danger is that those who have some faith, but only a weak and insipid faith, will fail to pray with the fervor needed to win God's intervention in the growing chain of darkness which drags the Church into the shadow of death.

OUR LORD HIMSELF warned that devils such as those which plague the Church today can be defeated only by "much prayer and fasting." There is no doubt about it that devout souls are praying and fasting—but the remedy is to be found in the qualifying adjective—"much."

And as we must admit as we survey our comfortable lives there certainly isn't very "much prayer and fasting."

One of the great tragedies of our era is not so much the wide-spread suffering of countless victims of persecution but the fact that so many people just don't care. We have come to the point that the misery of millions doesn't daunt us the least. Bluntly, we have become hard-hearted and that is not the Christian way of life.

Our Lord told us we best serve Him by aiding our needy fellow-men. Most of us have been so pre-occupied with taking care of ourselves that we have blinded ourselves to the needs of others.

That is why the American Bishops have set aside this Sunday, at the crossroads of two years, to remind us that Christmas and New Year's Day are days for half the world's population.

Besides the fact that these victims are for the most part hungry, cold and hopeless, they are even denied the last vestige of human freedom—to think and to believe as they want to. They are brainwashed, soul-warped and torn from their faith.

One of the greatest deceptions of the enemies of the Church is to mislead the flock of Christ through false shepherds.

IN CHINA, the Communists have forced the clergy to break their ties with the Vatican and to intrude fake bishops into the cathedrals where Kremlin doctrine replaces Christian truth.

IN YUGOSLAVIA, once Catholic periodicals are taken over to become journals of Red propaganda.

Priests, prelates and laymen who held honored positions in their various countries suddenly become spokesmen for the Communist program.

How do you explain such events?

Those who have been victims of brain-wash tortures will tell you we are witnesses to a conflict between the powers of darkness, that in reality this is devils' work in stark actuality.

In the face of this fact, even our mightiest Thor or Atlas is vulnerable. We need these weapons, yes, but we must add to our arsenal the sword of the spirit, the prayers and penances we are asked to give this Sunday and through the New Year.

## SERMONETTE

Charly Hopeth All Things. I Cor. 13

By THE REV. RICHARD MADDEN, O.D.C.

Our charitable friend is a confirmed optimist. No matter how lousy things get in the world, his love engenders a staunch hope that "Somehow things will get better."

He sees saturated advertisements oozing out of Madison Avenue as the labor fruits of sallow little men with squinty little brains; and he hopes that somehow they will find a better way to sell "un-memorable" than by marching girdle-clad beauties across the T.V. screens of America.

He hopes that Hollywood will eventually stop putting questionable goddesses on celluloid screens to become so doped by the adulation of the movie-minded masses that they are helpless to stay their children from sticking butcher knives in the bellies of hoods. He hopes that cinema tycoons will stop nourishing youth on heavy dosages of horror films; but give them instead something on which they can mould and mellow their young lives.

As for teenagers themselves, our charitable friend maintains the highest hopes for them. He understands that growing up today can be a bit more complex than it was in his time. There are more snares, more temptations, more occasions of sin. But he still believes that in the long run, they will measure up and do a better job with their lives than he did with his. This is his deepest hope anyway.

And whether his friends brand him with the mark of the deceiver or not, it is of trivial importance. The important thing is that his hope has strengthened him. For now, when he is depressed and overwhelmed at the violent end of today, the only thing he has left is the glowing hope that with God's help, things will be better tomorrow.

## Lip Service To Integration

Jefferson City — (NC) — An "mere lip service" to racial integration from West Africa, Thomas gration. The question I keep asking is, of the Daily Mail in my mind, and many others ask freedom, Sierra Leone, who is themselves too, is — how can visiting this country as a guest America be so intent on promoting the U. S. State Department, in brotherhood throughout the said, "So far as I can see, the world and take the stand on northern United States is paying cial integration that it has?"

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MOST REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., President

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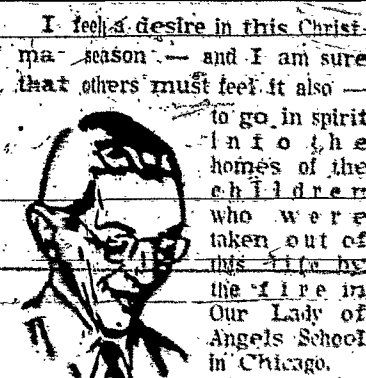
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## Home Devotions

JOSEPH  
BREIG

Chicago  
Fire



Joseph Breig

I feel a desire in this Christmas season — and I am sure that others must feel it also — to go, in spirit, into the homes of the children who were taken out of this fire by the fire in Our Lady of Angels School in Chicago.

This is an extremely difficult matter to write about, not only because of my limitations, but because human language stumbles under the burden of the greatest realities. But it is very difficult makes it all the more worth the trying.

I am not uttering a mere pious platitude. I am saying deepest truth. When I say that now these youngsters are present with their parents, and with their brothers and sisters, in an incomparably more permanent way than ever before.

WHEN I AM ASKED how many children we have, I answer five. I do so for two reasons. First, because in the ordinary manner of speech, the question means how many living children? And second, because there is no particular point in injecting a note of bereavement.

In so replying, however, I am conscious of the huge inadequacy of my response. The fact is, we have seven children. The further fact is that the two whom we would describe as having died are inexpressibly more alive than the others.

And finally, they are with us in a more moving sense than the five whom we can see and touch.

As I said, this is not easy to put into words. Let me try it this way. We do not think of Christ, or His Mother, or St. Joseph or the other saints as dead. We know that they are filled with a vitality and a soaring joy which makes us in comparison, seem lifeless. Our children who died are alive with the kind of life — as are the children who died on Our Lady of Angels school.

OFTEN IN THE mornings, our grade school children, Jimmy and Regina, climb into the car with me to ride to their parish school. "Bye," they say as we part; and "Bye, kids," I call after them. And then we are separated until evening. But never am I separated from our Joe, who died, and our Bernadine, who died. They go down with me; they are with me at my desk; they return home with me.

They are, our own saints, these innocent ones who went to God with their baptisms spotless upon them. Why God did not leave them with us, we do not know. But we do know that if we could see through the eyes of His boundless wisdom and goodness, we would understand, and approve.

If I may express it so, we would take God into our arms and hug Him for having taken our little ones to Himself.

SINCE WE CANNOT see with His knowledge and holiness, we do not understand, or at best understand faintly. But we know that He loves our children, and us, infinitely more than we can love them or love ourselves. Therefore we accept; therefore we approve; therefore we give thanks even out of our pain and bewilderment. And in prayer which reaches through the veil to our children, we grow closer to them each day.

We say they were taken out of this life. And we say that the children of Our Lady of Angels School were taken out of this life. But that is only a manner of speaking. Entrance into God's company is not so much a departure from this life as its completion and perfection. It is the triumph for which we were born. It is the coming into our inheritance.

MYSTERY IS the condition in which we live, and serene acceptance of mystery is deepest wisdom. We do not know why God permitted the fire in Our Lady of Angels school.

What we do know is this: that never does He allow human frailty to go to waste. He cherishes our heroisms, and out of them draws colossal good for us and our fellow-men.

"Thank goodness, Christmas is over!"

That statement, said with a sigh of relief, signalled the end of day, December 25, 1958.

The carefully wrapped packages are scattered, torn open, toys already in pieces, candy canes half eaten and sticky, scarfs and gloves left behind by visiting relatives, and head aching from the noise — what else can you say after a day like that except, "Thank goodness, it's over!"

But in the mind of the Church, it isn't over. Christmas is for twelve days, not just one, and climaxes with the Epiphany or Twelfth Night, the feast of the wise men.

During the ages of faith, these twelve days were kept as a festive time and we in our modern era should at least know, and if possible restore, the customs which made Christians joyful.

THE FOLLOWING day-by-day suggestions are from a booklet by Father Francis X. Weiser, S.J., "Religious Customs in the Family" published in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Although this season is dominated by the observance of Christmas, it also has its own feasts and customs which blend into the frame of the main celebration. Almost every day a new element of devotion and joy is added to the treasury of family traditions.

Fortunate indeed is the home that keeps these customs alive, where parents and children know how to honor and observe Christmas for twelve days, as the Church does.

### DAILY DEVOTIONS

A short Christmas devotion could be held on each of these twelve nights before the crib in the home.

After January first, the figures of the Magi might be put up some distance from the crib and then moved nearer every day, to indicate their gradual approach to Bethlehem. Children draw great delight and inspiration from such symbolic gestures.

### ST. STEPHEN'S DAY

On the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr of Christianity (December 26), the story of his life and death might be told to the children in simple words, to explain the meaning of martyrdom. (See Acts, chapters 6 and 7.)

The crib could be decorated with red flowers. St. Stephen is also a protector of horses, and on this day farmers in Catholic countries bring their horses to have them blessed by the priest in front of the church. This might give the parents an occasion to explain the Christian attitude of kindness to all God's creatures.

### ST. JOHN'S DAY

Today (December 27) parents might explain to children the life of this holy Evangelist, who stood under the Cross when Jesus died.

The Church bestows a special blessing upon wine today. It is an old sacramental in honor

of the Eucharist.

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Children the world over are fascinated by the Christmas story. This article explains how parents can dramatize in their homes the "twelve days of Christmas" during which the Church teaches the lessons we should learn from the birth of the world's Saviour.

of the evangelist who, according to legend, drank a glass of poisoned wine without suffering harm because he had blessed it before he drank.

IN MANY Catholic homes it is also the custom that children, before going to bed, thank the parents for all their love, care and goodness. In France and French Canada the father blesses all members of the family on this evening, or on New Year's Day, with the sign of the Cross.

### NEW YEAR'S DAY

This day, the eve of the Nativity, should actually be a "second Christmas" in the family. All the rich and features and details of the Christmas celebration might be repeated.

For this reason it is advisable to keep the Christmas tree and the decorations up until after New Year's Day. They should be kept until the day after Epiphany. This can easily be done if a little pot or can of water is placed around the foot of the tree to prevent it from drying out.

### ST. SYLVESTER DAY

The last day of the year, the feast of St. Sylvester, is a splendid occasion for family observance.

It is a tradition of centuries to visit our Lord in a church on the evening of December 31, to thank Him for all the graces and blessing bestowed upon the family during the past year, and of asking His continued protection and help. At the

family devotion in the evening "Holy God, we praise thy Name" is sung by all.

In many Catholic homes it is also the custom that children, before going to bed, thank the parents for all their love, care and goodness. In France and French Canada the father blesses all members of the family on this evening, or on New Year's Day, with the sign of the Cross.

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Year's Day. This custom deserves to be highly recommended. It provides for the children an additional experience of thrill and happiness.

Also, it prevents their being over-saturated with presents on Christmas Day, which usually makes them tired and more somnolent.

### EPHANY

This feast is one of the greatest in the Church, and really a holiday of obligation. It is only by special dispensation of the Holy See that we do not keep it as a prescribed holiday in the United States.

It commemorates the visit of the Magi at Bethlehem, when our Lord manifested Himself as Redeemer to these representatives of the gentiles, using the miraculous star to call them.

Thus it becomes the central feast of the Catholic missions, and parents could well explain to their children the apostolate of our missionaries to foreign lands.

Epiphany is the last day of the Christmas celebration in the home. On the previous night the Magi have "arrived" at the crib, their figures being neatly arranged in front of the manger. For the last time the Christmas tree is lit and the family holds its evening devotion before the crib. So often a special feature of solemnity or celebration night, accompanying the evening meal, is the "farewell to Christmas."

### Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 28 — Holy Innocents (red). Gloria, 2nd prayer of Christmas. Creed, Christmas preface and canon prayers which are said daily through Jan. 1).

Monday, Dec. 29 — St. Thomas of Canterbury, martyr (red). Gloria, 2nd prayer of Christmas. Creed.

Tuesday, Dec. 30 — Mass of Sunday after Christmas (white). Gloria, 2nd prayer of Christmas. Creed.

Wednesday, Dec. 31 — St. Sylvester, pope (white). Gloria, 2nd prayer of Christmas. Creed.

Thursday, Jan. 1 — Circumcision of our Lord (white). Gloria, Creed. Holyday.

First Friday, Jan. 2 — Mass of yesterday, except no Creed and ordinary canon prayers.

First Saturday, Jan. 3 — St. Mass of our Lady (white). Gloria, preface of the Blessed Virgin.

Sure Sign

"You know, Helen," a man said to his wife, "I think our little Willie is growing up."

"What makes you say that?" the wife asked.

"This morning," said the man, "I saw him walk around a mud puddle."

Loneliness can take place in a crowd or in isolation. One is conscious of being lonely and can take steps to relieve this feeling. It is nothing that we should really be concerned about.

Loneliness also implies being without company. Eric Fromm speaks of a "total aloneness" in which one realizes that he alone must make a final decision on what is the right or wrong thing to do.

Being alone offers an opportunity for concentration. It is desirable and often essential. It is possible to be alone without being lonely or alone.

Loneliness, however, is not associated with health and well-being. It is not something one seeks or desires. It has often been defined as the condition of an individual who desires contact with others but is unable to achieve it. This inability can be due to the inherent character of a person or to some external circumstances in society.

This is later expressed in shyness, distrust or an inferiority complex. It may manifest itself in alcoholism, drug addiction, and even schizophrenia — which is living in an unreal world. Loneliness can express itself also in simple homesickness.

This deep loneliness then, has its source in early childhood and later in man's many men as women. It is one of our greatest problems, and it is rarely, rarely understood.

Grant that rulers of peoples may elevate and direct thought to the greatness, to the dignity, to the benefits of such a peace, and may measure the rights of the life of their nations not with the length of the sword, nor with the extension of desired advantages, but according to the holy rule of Divine will and law.

O Spirit, Creator, visit the minds of Thy faithful and fill their hearts with Thy grace. As long as this time of trial shall last, with the omnipotence of Thy gifts, grant the custodians of the flock of Christ to be able to fulfill and promote, with firm faith, joyous hope, and inflamed charity, the salutary mission the Redeemer left to His Disciples: "You will be My witnesses."

Until the day dawns when the Church, putting off the mourning of her unspeakable grief, will be able — grateful and jubilant before the God of Peace and the Sun of Justice — to exclaim: "The right hand of the Lord hath wrought my strength; the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me; I shall not die but live and shall declare the works of the Lord."

## Marriage Click

## No One Came

The story was recently reported in the press that a certain lady died alone in a small apartment. She had left a diary in which she had written for every day of the past year, these words, only: "No one came."

She probably afterwards an agonizing don't let

was recorded in the same way by a Welfare Agency with this message: "From another lady who writes in her diary: 'No one came — thank goodness.'"

WE DO NEED social contacts, but we also need privacy. It is possible to enjoy solitude but never loneliness. There is no subject about which we receive more mail from readers of this column than loneliness.

One of the ways in which sociologists measure the mental health of a community is by noting the proportion of suicides to the population. Ever since the first study of suicides was made about 160 years ago it has been realized that isolation and loneliness are possibly the most important factors that make for suicide.

Loneliness is a common experience. We have all had it. It implies being without the company of others but likewise the earnest wish to be with others.

Loneliness can take place in a crowd or in isolation. One is conscious of being lonely and can take steps to relieve this feeling. It is nothing that we should really be concerned about.

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## Pope's Prayer For Persecuted People

Composed by Pope Pius XII

Come, O Holy Spirit, Creator —

Thou didst already come on the first Pentecost, and art still with us. Thou art near the Spouse of Christ; art her life, her soul, her comfort, her defense in every moment, and particularly in times of distress and grief.

Pour down from on high so much of the fullness of Thy gifts that all pastors and their flocks may radiate in the world the light of their faith.

Be Thou the support of our hope, the strength of their love.

Through Thee, Illuminating Spirit, Spirit of Counsel and Fortitude, Christian minds of every condition, humble or high, may understand and feel not only the extraordinary gravity but also the heavy responsibility of the present hour, wherein an old world, which sets in sorrow, is generating a new one.

MAKE CLEAR TO ALL who bear the name of Christ the narrow path of virtue, which alone leads to salvation, so that they may arouse themselves from the sleep of indifference, like warmth, irresolution, and endeavor to free themselves from the disordered upheavals of earthly things.

Through Thy consoling Spirit may there return not only the relief of resignation but, above all, the vigor of trust to animate innumerable hearts that now groan and are about to be broken under the weight of

anxieties and straightened circumstances, of sacrifices and injustices, of oppression and humiliation.

Be Thou our repose in labor, our calm in agitation, our warmth in coldness, our relief in lamentation.

Be Thou the Father of orphans, the defender of widows, food for the poor, support to derelicts, roof to refugees, guardian of the persecuted, protection of combatants, liberation of prisoners, balm to the wounded, medicine to the sick, refuge of sinners, help of the dying.

Console and reunite all those who with pure hearts love one another whom present hard vicissitudes have separated.

Grant that where the voice of human comforts is mute, the smile and hand of Christian charity may speak, and before the eyes of their faith may shine, as a pledge of joy that never fails, the dawn of a day wherein the superabundance of Thy ineffable reward will fulfill the words of Scripture: "God will wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, for the former things are passed away."

Through Thee, Master Spirit of Truth, may an intense desire of peace be diffused in the hearts and minds of men, not through fear of sacrifice, but through moral reawakening.

May it be a desire for a peace of justice, moderation and wisdom; a peace which, in

its terms, in its depth, in its fulfillment, may not forget Thy warning word: "There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel apart from the Lord."

And at the same time, infuse in them that deliberate will of such a peace which will not ignore its indispensable foundations, its fundamental lines and the developments which follow it.

Grant that rulers of peoples may elevate and direct thought to the greatness, to the dignity, to the benefits of such a peace, and may measure the rights of the life of their nations not with the length of the sword, nor with the extension of desired advantages, but according to the holy rule of Divine will and law.

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