Yes, We Have Nine!

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tled to make the whole thing easier by saying, "I have four children in school."

He said, "My, that's quite a family. We have two, and that keeps us busy. How do you manage with four?"

I said, "Well, it isn't easy."

And he said, "I'll bet it isn't."

And I said, "No, it isn't."

He said, "Do you have any little ones at home?"

I began to wish that I were home with the little ones. But this time I decided to go through with the whole thing, so I said, "Yes, we have nine children."

He said, "Thirteen children! No! Not really! Do you mean it?"

Realizing I had thrown him off the track again, I said, "No, not thirteen. Only nine. Six at home and four in school."

This time he really looked frightened, and I suddenly realized that six at home and four in school equalled ten children. It was too late to do much about it. I found him shaking my hand hurriedly, muttering something about a large family, and heading for the door.

When he got there, he turned around, stared at me briefly, and when he saw me looking at him, moved rapidly out the door and down the street.

I forgot what I came to the store for, so I went home to my children, not thirteen, not ten, only nine, and I was relieved to know how few there were.

It's useless to try to conceal the fact that I have nine children in order to avoid the question and answer period. This won't work. I tried it once and have felt guilty about it ever since.

It was last summer, and for some strange reason — probably a suggestion of my wife's — found myself going for a walk with seven of the children.

Most of them are a year apart and look very much like stairsteps when they're together. When we go for a walk, they like to walk single file with about twenty paces between them. I always stay in the rear in order to keep an eye on all of them.

As we proceeded down the street people sitting on their porches looked up from their newspapers to see one of the children passing the house. A few seconds later they looked up to see a second child who resembled the first one.

Then they noticed a third child, and were curious enough to look down the street, where they saw four more children. Their faces revealed their disbelief, and I must admit it wasn't the kind of sight one sees every day.

Usually someone asked me if they were all mine.

When I said "Yes," they started the same old thing— "Wow!" "Not really!" and "What a family," comments with which I fully agreed.

(Once a woman uttered an ambiguous, "Well, I never!" and I spent several hours trying to decide how she meant it.)

I didn't mind too much that they sometimes ran next door to call one of the neighbors out to see the parade. But after walking for what seemed like hours, the exclamations did begin to get monotonous, and the children were becoming obstreperous.

We were starting toward home when another man on another porch looked up from his newspaper and said, "They aren't all yours, are they?"

Since I was tired, and since he suggested a good answer, I said, "No, they aren't," careful not to let the children hear me disowning them in public.

He said 'Cub Scouts?'.

I said, 'Yes,' and he went back to reading his paper. This went so well that I tried it once more on the way home.

Then I started to think of the possible consequences. What if some of the people I lied to were in the parish and later discovered that these were my children? What they'd think of me is obvious. What if the children found out?

So if it's a choice between denying that my children are mine, or going through with the customary dialogue, I'm going to go through with the dialogue.

There are times, though, when the dialogue goes beyond the number of children and on to the question of, "How do you afford it?"

This gets very complex. For one thing, I can't answer this question for myself. It's almost metaphysical. I can't tell someone I just met that I still owe the plumber for fixing the toilet.

One of the children — we still don't know which one — put Paul's plastic farm set in the toilet and flushed it at least out of sight, sheep, cows, tractors, and all.

And I don't think a stranger would believe me if I told him to invest his money in aureomycin stock, which I'm sure is going up and with my considerable help. But what I want to tell him is that neither my wife nor I think first of all about how we can afford it.

For my wife, the largest problem is an accumulation of small problems, such as cooking unbelievable quantities of food, putting on snowsuits with zippers that don't work, changing diapers, settling fights every three minutes, finding the one shoe or mitten that is always missing, setting up steam kettles for those colds, listening to them play what they call games and making the kind of noise that they call playing, looking for pieces of jigsaw puzzles, discovering who is lying, who started it, who didn't do it, who ate it, who sat on it, who spilled it, who knocked it over, who turned it on, who turned it off, who opened it, and so forth.

For me, I think first of such things as having to go miles out of the way enroute home to pick up a Wolf book for one of the boys who has his Cub Scout test for Wolf the next evening; or buying a parakeet for Paul's birthday and having to walk through mid-town with the bird in the cage, which is worse than walking with seven children.

I think of trying to talk to my wife when I first return home, and of being constantly interrupted, ending up by uttering incomplete sentences and finally giving up trying.

I think of taking eight of the nine upstairs to give them their baths, to sort out their pajamas (three wear red, two wear blue, two wear yellow and Edward has a long nightgown), to sort out their toothbrushes, to comb their hair, to cover them up, to find those who are hiding, to refuse them a third drink of water, to refuse to let them go downstairs.

I try to read something that will interest them all and find myself shouting at the top of my voice: "AND IN THIS FOREST THERE WAS NOT A SOUND. SILENCE, SILENCE EVERYWHERE. THE BIRDS DID NOT SING. THE WIND WAS STILL. THE BRANCHES OF THE TREES DID NOT MOVE."

And then we say prayers, and their ways are not our ways. They pray as if they were mystics who could no longer express themselves in ordinary language, who could only mutter strange sounds that God alone could understand.

And after prayers, the little ones are covered up again, and then—then they all begin to talk, and to giggle, and to get out of bed and back in bed, and then — finally — they fall asleep.

This is what I think of when I think of having nine children. But I don't want to say this to everyone I meet.

As you can see, raising ten kids isn't easy, but it helps to have six of them in school and only four at home. And if I meet you someday and say "Wow!" please try to understand that I'm not crazy.

When all of the children go to sleep, I go downstairs to greet my wife and to finish all those sentences. Sometimes all I can think of is "Wow!"

This article is reprinted from the June issue of Marriage magazine as a Father's Day feature. The magazine is an excellent monthly publication for better Catholic family living. It is published at St. Meinrad's Archabbey, Indiana, for $3 a year. Robert Christin, author of this article, does have nine children. He is on the faculty at Notre Dame University.

Judge Tells Students Hold On To Faith

"Hold on to your faith," was the resounding challenge City Court Judge Leo T. Minton gave 58 top honor senior students of Rochester area high schools Monday evening.

He spoke at the 14th annual Merit Award dinner given by the Monroe County Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Two "most outstanding" students represented each of the 29 public and Catholic high schools to receive the VFW honors.

"Our nation was the first to write into its constitution the guarantee of religious freedom," he said. "This freedom was not recognized by our founding fathers in order that we might now ignore it.

"It is now our privilege and duty to be citizens of deep religious faith," Judge Minton stated recalling frequent statements of President Eisenhower and former presidents who voiced a similar plea.

HE TOLD the graduates loyalty to their church is an essential ingredient of true patriotism. He outlined the heroism and sacrifice shown on battle fields around the world where Americans suffered and died to preserve basic freedoms we now enjoy.

He said recent Supreme Court decisions forbidding religious instructions in public schools have "tortured the first amendment out of its original meaning." The constitution's first amendment, he explained, was meant to assure equal freedom for all denominations, not isolate them in a church sanctuary.

Twenty-five novices received the white veil of a Mercy nun at ceremonies in the Motherhouse chapel Sunday. They hold a candle recalling their Baptism and symbolic of their dedicated life to Christ the Light of the world. (This and the page one photo by Courier Journal photographer Paul Contestable.)

Twenty Five Given Mercy Nuns' Veil

(Continued from Page 1)

Holy Apostles — Sister Mary Thomasetta (Edna Slyck), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Slyck.

Our Lady of Lourdes—Sister Marie Joseph (Anne Crowley), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph P. Crowley.

St. Augustine — Sister Mary Morris (Joan Tannhaus), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Tannhaus.

St. Charles Borromeo, Greece — Sister Mary Albert (Marilyn Ward), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Ward.

St. Thomas the Apostle—Sister Mary Benedicta (Katherine Rappl), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Rappl.

St. Mary, Corning — Sister Mary Aquinas (Ruth Busshaus), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Busshaus; Sister Mary Davidica (Ann Carapella), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Carapella.

St. Vincent, Corning—Sister Mary Emil (Mary Ann Kosakowski), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Kosakowski.

St. John, Clyde — Sister Mary Eleanor (Ann Maloy), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley Maloy.

St. Patrick, Elmira — Sister Miriam (Mary Nugent), daughter of the late John and Mrs. John Nugent.

St. Peter, LeRoy — Sister Mary Paulus (Virginia Taylor), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. La Monte Taylor.

St. Michael, Newark — Sister Mary Ancilla (Mary DeMetsenaere), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Achiel DeMetsenaere.

Slave Girl On Way To Canonization

Vatican City — (NC) — The beatification cause of a one-time African slave has been discussed here by the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

The congregation considered the writings of Sister Josephine Bakhita, who was born in Nigeria of pagan parents in 1865. Her cause is the first modern cause of an individual African-born Negro. Pope Benedict XV, however, beatified 22 martyrs of Uganda in 1920.

At the age of 10 Josephine Bakhita was sold into slavery, as was her older sister.

She was bought by the Italian minister at Khartoum who, on returning to Italy, entrusted her to the Canossian Sisters who instructed her in the Catholic Faith.

On December 1, 1893, she embraced the religious life of the convent in which she had been instructed and entered the novitiate at Verona. Her life was a model of zeal and religious fervor.

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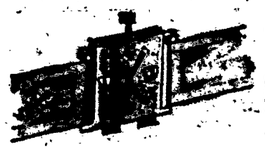

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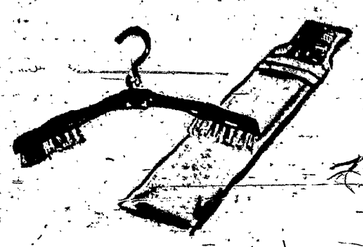

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From Western Germany: a new group of handsome beer steins for collecting Dads! Several colorful styles, all with metal covers..... 1.75 to 7.50

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