

Saintly Priest N.Y. Missioner

BY REV. JAMES J. GALVIN, C.S.S.R.

This is the third of five articles on Venerable John Nepomucene Neumann, saintly pioneer priest of the 1800's, who preached his first sermon, heard Confessions and baptized for the first time in Rochester. His suggestion that German speaking Catholics needed a parish of their own led to the founding of St. Joseph's Church, this year marking its 125th anniversary.

On his Ordination day in New York City in June of 1836 his fellow priests when Father Neumann's health cracked under the burden of building, teaching, racing to sick calls, and taking little care of his health. He was forced to take to bed with fever and chills and a rapid pulse. Finally the Superior in Baltimore recalled him, appointing another in his stead.

He labored hard at attaining that ideal amid the hardships of the Niagara woods. He had kept tally on himself by means of a spiritual diary in which he jotted down an examination of conscience from time to time. He practiced recollection to a high degree. He practiced poverty, humility and simplicity of heart, and when he failed, he took himself to task in the little black book. As a diocesan priest on the frontier he was already a religious in all except name and vows.

"Father Neumann is a born religious" said one of his assorted novice masters. When this young diocesan priest joined the Redemptorists at Pittsburgh in October of 1840, he had already made a grueling four-year novitiate of his own in the wilds of the Niagara Frontier.

Profession in Baltimore
He made those vows as a Redemptorist at St. James' Church in Baltimore on January 16, 1842, the first young man in America to join the family of St. Alphonsus.

A more self effacing religious would have been hard to find. His confreres had never seen the like. In Baltimore where he was stationed for two years after his profession, there were many distant out-missions attached to St. James—for Archbishop Samuel Eccleston had entrusted all the Germans of the Archdiocese to the Redemptorists.

Untiring Ministry
"I'm more used to country work," Father Neumann naively suggested, and before any were the wiser, he was off on exhausting treks by horse, canal-boat, stage coach — down the Shenandoah valley of West Virginia; up to Cumberland in the Allegheny mountains; up the Susquehanna to York and Columbia in Pennsylvania.

There was a sick call one afternoon at the monastery on Asquith Street. Somehow it was Father Neumann, instead of the man on duty, who was called. Only by accident was it discovered that he had made a compact with the Brother Porter—"If a sick call comes during the hour of rest, knock at my door. I'm always awake."

Superior in Pittsburgh
It was a clear mark of the Redemptorists' trust in his capabilities that they made him superior at Pittsburgh when he was but two years professed. He was called upon to build St. Philomena's there—the mother parish of all German Catholics in Western Pennsylvania. In 1844 there were but two other churches in Pittsburgh.

But today, if you hail a red cap at Pittsburgh's Union Station and ask directions to St. Philomena's on Liberty Street you'll be told: "Sorry sir, never heard of it." Ask a taxi-driver and you'll hear: "No sir, no such church around here. This is the business and hotel district—the Golden Triangle." The fact is that the stone church and the rectory built by Father John Neumann were demolished three decades ago to make way for the freight depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The Church Builder
But the old site in Bavardstown on the edge of the Golden Triangle still wears the golden halo — blessed by the dreams and heartaches of a saint. Young Father Neumann financed the construction of this large stone Gothic church.

Bishop O'Connor of Pittsburgh, who chose him for his weekly confessor, used to say that Neumann built St. Philomena's with nothing but prayer. Came Friday evening and Neumann had no funds to pay his carpenters and stonemasons. Somehow by Saturday afternoon the money was at hand. The whole process was a mystery to his confreres.

Pittsburgh to Baltimore
Besides building a church, he also connected a school for the children of the parish. Over many a Bayardstown supper table the family listened while little Hans or Lisl repeated the wonderful story Father Neumann had told them that day in school.

While religious superior, he maintained his old reputation for taking all untimely sick calls in the parish, whether in the early afternoon or in the dead of night. "Let the others rest, they need their sleep," he would whisper to Brother Louis, the porter.

'Childish' Wife Fails To Accept Routine Demands Of Married Life

By FATHER JOHN L. THOMAS, S. J.
Sociology Professor St. Louis University

How do you handle a childish wife? We're married three years and have one child. My wife just hasn't grown up. She likes to go out every night, forgetting that I have to work the next day and we have limited funds. She dislikes housework, leaves beds unmade, dishes unwashed, floors un swept, and dirty linen in the closet until I complain. Then she claims I don't respect her, because she came from a broken home, and so on. She's a good housekeeper if she wants to be, but she prefers to be away from the house and among people, even though somebody must care for the baby. Any suggestions?

Judging from the description in your letter, Fred, you're in for a rough future. After three years of marriage and the arrival of a child, most couples are ready to accept the routine demands of domesticity. It appears that your wife hasn't quite made up her mind whether she wants marriage as a vocation or not.

Of course it's a little late to start thinking about that at this stage in the game, but some persons evidently take their marriage vows without going any thought to their practical implications. In every marriage there are some unforeseeable and unpredictable elements, though babies, housework, and restrictions on social life are not among them.

THERE ARE several reasons why some young wives find it difficult to adjust to the roles of motherhood and home-making.

Many of them have received little training for such work. Much of their previous education and experience was related to holding a job outside the home. Hence, they not only lack adequate "know how" for fulfilling their domestic roles, but their personal orientation, "mind-set", and attitude are geared to working with others rather than in the relatively isolated environment of an incipient family circle.

In this connection it is worth noting that modern women are discovering that they face a difficult dilemma. Without adequate education and experience they are as capable of holding a job or following a career as are their brothers, and modern society provides ample opportunities for training and employment accordingly.

On the other hand, in contrast to their brothers, when young women marry, they are expected to give priority to the demands of home, that is, they must either quit their jobs or hold them subordinate to the tasks of bearing and raising children or keeping house. Because they are the principal bread-winners, men face no such dilemma in marriage and continue to give prior attention to job or career.

MOST MODERN wives meet this situation remarkably well, though their increasing demands for more companionship and shared social life are clear indications that they find the isolation of domesticity more trying than did their mothers. Your letter suggests that your wife has not been able to reconcile herself to her new roles within the home, hence her exaggerated demands for social life and her avoidance of routine household tasks.

What appears to be the source of her difficulty? Why should she remain childish and irresponsible? She knows how to keep house, so in contrast to many young wives, her problem is not lack of adequate "know how."

I think you uncovered the root of the trouble when you remarked that she came from a broken home and reacted to criticism with the protest that you did not respect her.

What can you do? Well, Fred, your ultimate goal is to help her to see that her real happiness and fulfillment must be defined in terms of her roles as wife and mother. Unfortunately, because of her previous experience, she has no adequate

19. 1852, Father Neumann went there to give the nuns a conference on St. Joseph, and to teach catechism to the little Negro orphans. When he returned to his room, he found something on his table—a jeweled ring and a pectoral cross! His pleas and prayers had been fruitless. Within ten days he was consecrated Bishop of Philadelphia.

(Courtesy Philadelphia Standard and Times)
(Continued Next Week)



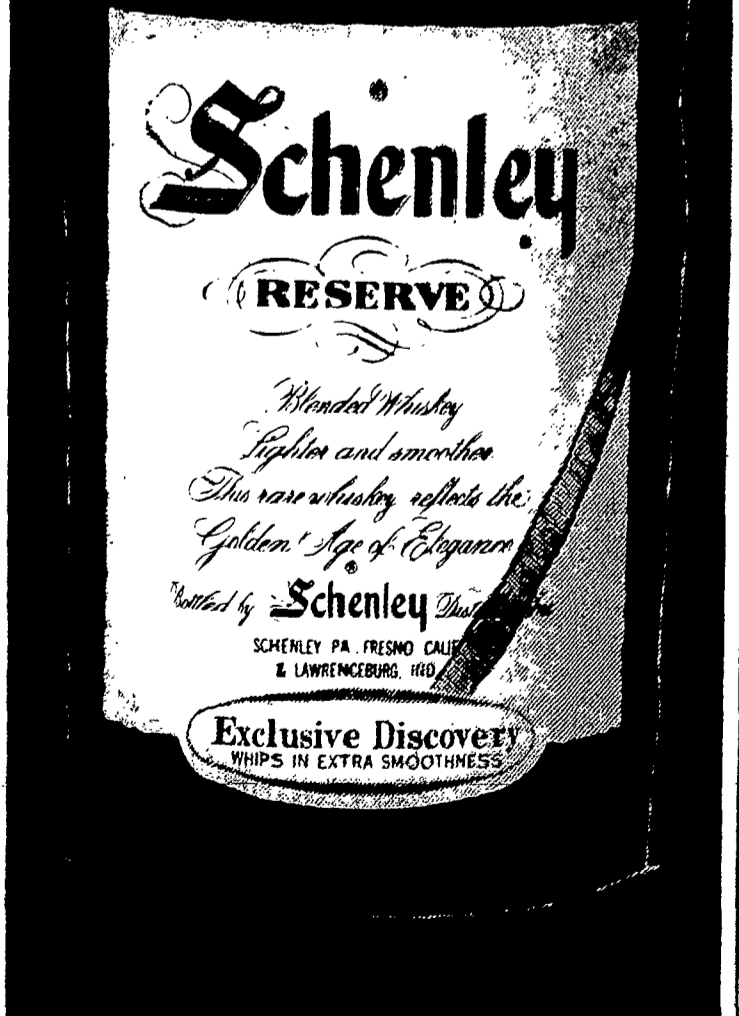
image of these roles or their personal implications so that she tends to think of happiness as something to be sought outside the home. Knowing her mistaken attitudes and the changes required, it will prove most helpful to lose no opportunity to praise and encourage her when she does well around the home or in caring for the baby. Try to build up her esteem for these roles and to give her self-confidence by showing her that you love and appreciate her as wife and mother.

It will also help if you can associate with some balanced young couple whose outlook and activities are in line with what you are trying to accomplish.

Be firm when you must, yet avoid criticism that reflects on her as a person. Remember, the more fulfilling she finds her experience with you in the home, the less need she will have to seek happiness outside.

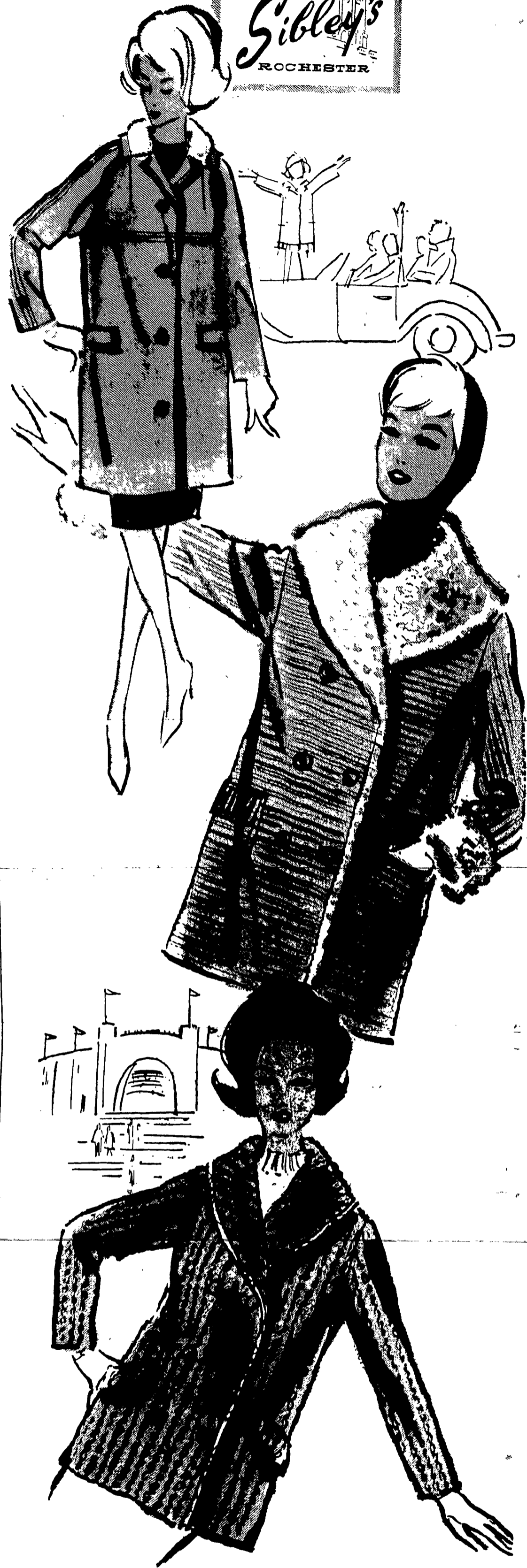
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