

# Psychiatry, Religion Now Partners

By REV. L. JAMES CALLAN

Catholic Chaplain at Rochester State Hospital

In the past, the relationship between Religion and Psychiatry could hardly be called untroubled. In fact, only an occasional bright spot appeared in an otherwise mutual atmosphere of misgiving, mistrust and outright hostility. Yet in spite of this both disciplines never quite lost their sensitivity to the needs and interests of each other.

The remnants of this past heritage have still not entirely disappeared but the change has been great, and in our day, accelerated.

"Through the course of my professional life," said Dr. Guy Walters Director of the Rochester State Hospital and practicing psychiatrist for some thirty-five years, "an atmosphere of respect and cooperation has always existed, but today, probably more than ever before, we recognize the interdependence of both the emotional and spiritual life of the patient. The State of New York has recognized this by implementing the Hospitals' religious program with professionally trained Chaplains to work effectively with the emotionally disturbed.

"The Chapel planned by the group, headed by the committee of businessmen and Father James Callan, our Catholic Chaplain, is a further extension of this concern. As well as supplying land for this use the State, once the Chapel is built and debt-free, will completely maintain and care for it. We lend our wholehearted support in this effort to build a Catholic Chapel," Dr. Walters said.

Probably the best indication of an increasing cooperation between Religion and Psychiatry is the fact that clergymen unhesitatingly recommend psychiatry in the complicated emotional problems of their parishioners. But this interest is not new to the Church.



Dr. Guy Walters, director of Rochester State Hospital, views plans for proposed Catholic chapel to be built adjacent to hospital. With him are Father James Callan, chaplain, and Robert Benedict, president of the hospital's Board of Visitors.

Long before the great breakthroughs of the 19th and 20th centuries in the art and discipline of psychiatry, Religion bore the full responsibility of the sick and the disturbed. Going back to the great formative era represented in the 13th century, nursing was at a high peak with a tradition of high religious motivation. The sick were the province of the Church.

The Greek tradition of Christian "milieu therapy" dates from before this time. The first

European asylum for the care of the insane was built by a Franciscan, long before the 16th century, and was followed by others. The first mental hospital in America was in French Catholic Quebec in 1839. St. Vincent de Paul (early 17th century) proclaimed the truly pathological nature of psychosis, insisting on a humane and Christian approach to their treatment. Tuke, in England, and the pious Catholic Pinel in France, (both in 1792), and Rush in this country took defi-

nite steps toward a more psychological conception of mental disorder.

No one of us underestimates the work of men like Braid, Charcot, Kraepelin, Janet, Freud, McDougall, Adler, Jung, Prince, Adolf Meyer, and many others.

Popular misconception to the contrary, in this period the place of Religion was not wholly obscured.

Who can forget the famous

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quotation from Jung: "Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over 35—there has not been one whose problem in the last reason was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age had given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook." Or who can overestimate the validity of this statement from a psychiatrist, James T. Fisher, who, in his retrospect of nearly 50 years of practice commented: "If you were to take the sum total of all the authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychiatrists, and if you were to take the whole of the meat and none of the parsley, and if you were to have these undiluted bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount."

Many psychologists and psychiatrists might be cited at this point to confirm the above, but the example of one of our own Catholic laymen could serve the point just as well. Robert Benedict, retired Labor Relations Director of Bond Stores Inc., and a Catholic layman of Blessed Sacrament parish, has served on the governing Board of Visitors of the Rochester State Hospital for more than 21 years, acting as its President for the last ten.

Deeply involved with the problems of the care of the mentally ill, and actively engaged in working intensely with the psychiatrists and personnel of the Hospital, Mr. Benedict has grown to know at first hand the help and cooperation of religion and the healing arts. "I am vitally interested in this expansion of religious services which a Chapel could provide daily to so many in the Hospital. The unquestioned therapeutic value of religion and the realization by all that the whole man—the physical, the emotional and the spiritual man—is involved in the treatment process, gives to religion in the State Hospital an unprecedented importance in our day. No man lives happily or well without values and principles. And nothing supplies or reinforces those values and principles as does a belief in God and its practice," Mr. Benedict stated.

## Priests for Tomorrow



### Perfection

By FATHER LOUIS HOHMAN  
Diocesan Director of Vocations

"I heard of these priests playing cards and I always thought priests were perfect."

Just about every priest has at one time or another heard this or a similar statement and has probably reacted with some degree of frustration. The word "perfection" is at best confusing and when applied to an individual or group, it is positively disconcerting. Let us attempt to unscramble some of the knots.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Obviously Jesus was not commanding infinite perfection—only God is or can be infinitely perfect. The perfection man must seek must be that of a creature, albeit a creature elevated by the grace of God.

How can we define perfection?

To be perfect is to be completely what one is capable of being. So in order to know what perfection is for any creature we must know the nature of the creature and its potential. It is fairly simple to speak of a perfect rose or a perfect circle or even of a perfect animal. But when we come to man it becomes extremely difficult precisely because man of his nature is so complex.

Man is not only a combination of chemicals but also of complex organs, systems, appetites, drives, emotions and mind. Added to these is the fact of his free will. Nor are these "parts" of man independent one of another but act and react upon one another in the framework of a personality.

It is well known for example, that sickness of the mind can cause physical illness and physical illness can seriously disturb the mind. The combinations of action and reaction within the human person are almost unlimited. Hence the possibilities of the human being getting disordered, mixed up, or simply imperfect are without limit too.

The first important ingredient of perfection in a human being, therefore, is that all his parts work in harmony with one another, that he be an integrated personality, that he be a man of balance. He must not put undue stress on his animal needs, nor on his emotions, nor even upon his intellect to the neglect of his affection or relations with others. He must try to strike a reasonable balance among all the facets of his being. He must be fully human, in order that God's divinity may dwell fully in him.

Dr. Goldbrunner wrote a book entitled "Holiness is Wholeness." Since God's grace builds on nature, we must try to be whole, balanced human beings as a foundation for that grace.

One reason we lay so much stress on this aspect of perfection is that, in the past, far too much stress has been laid on being supernatural as though human perfection consisted in denying one's humanity and becoming a sort of synthetic angel.

A mother superior of a large congregation recently told us

tion. Is it any wonder that many people feel the priest "will not understand," that they could not tell Father lives in some spiritual stratosphere above such things?

When they do meet a genuinely human priest, are they not pleasantly surprised?

We may not forget that Jesus Christ was a priest, precisely in His humanity. It was as human that he redeemed man. And certainly every evidence of his personality points to His beautiful humanity.

He loved people, first of all. He lived with them, dined with them, enjoyed their company. He had great compassion, having a deep feeling for them—the little children who came to him, the multitudes in the desert who were hungry, his friend Lazarus who died and even his native land over which he wept. He knew fatigue and joy and fear and loneliness. He was divinely human and humanly divine. And since our priesthood proceeds from Christ's humanity, it too must be human, in the very best sense of that word.

Therefore, while the priest is taught the superiority of his intellect and will over the rest of his nature, he will learn by discipline and denial that he must balance the use of his God-given appetites and emotions, never using them to unreasonable excess, but at the same time not denying their existence either. If they are the creations of God they are good and must find their rightful and reasonable place in the total personality.

It is in such willing, loving, full personality that God can dwell in His fullness. It is such a personality that can become a beautiful temple of the Holy Spirit.

## Not Enough To be 'Nice'

Dearborn, Mich. — (RNS) — Auxiliary Bishop Joseph M. Breitenbeck of Detroit, launching the archdiocese "Project Commitment" before some 400 lay leaders, urged them to work for social justice "not merely in words and shallow phrases, but in reality and truth no matter the price paid personally."

"Ours cannot be a nominal membership in a nice social organization," he emphasized, "but a dedicated union with Christ in order that we might make real His basic teaching of love of God and neighbor."

All persons in leadership, he said, "must realize that the further we go in expanding our sphere of influence, the greater becomes our responsibility to the community, to social justice and to the Negro."

He pointed out that he was referring to "bishops, civic leaders, pastors, professional personnel, social workers, and leaders in fields controlling real estate and employment."

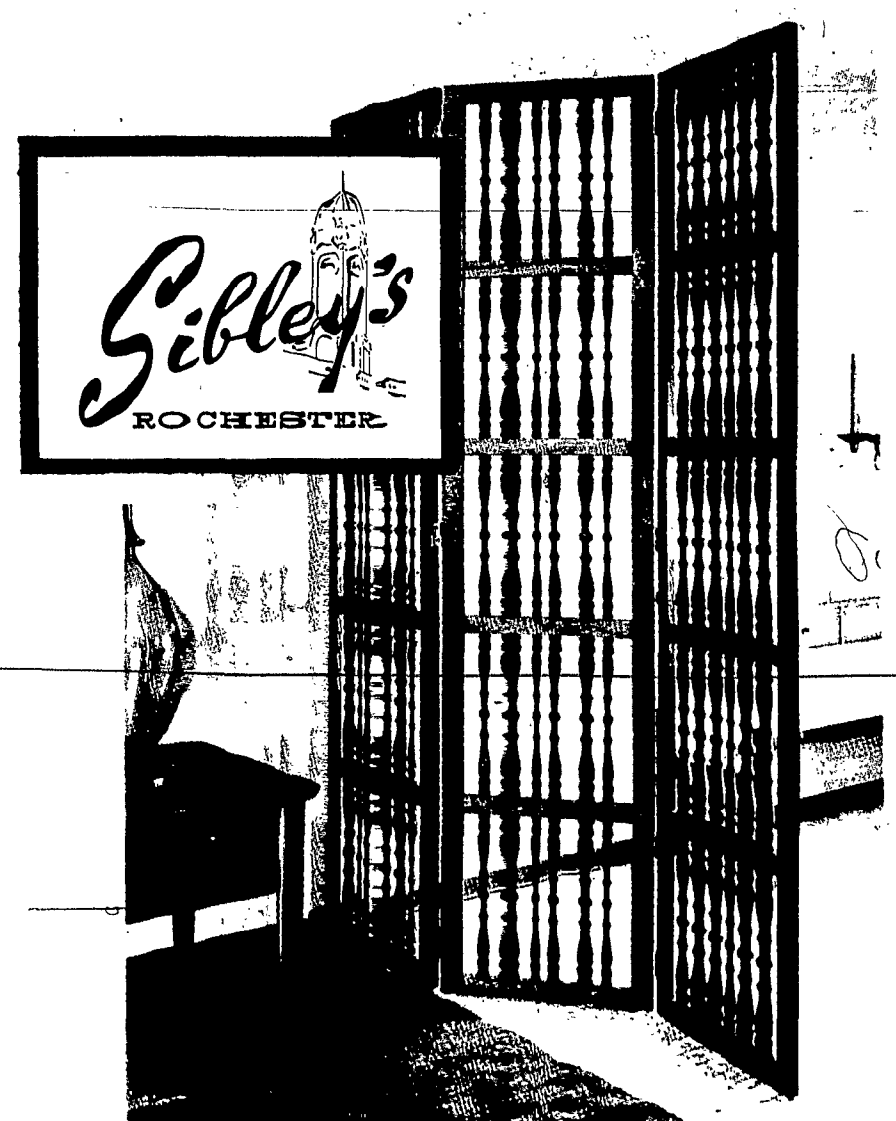
"Project Commitment" is an education program started in Detroit last Spring by Archbishop John F. Dearden and the Archdiocese Committee on Human Relations. It is designed to communicate to lay leaders the Church's teachings on racial justice and operates at the deanery level of between 22 and 28 parishes.

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