

Mission To the Sick

By FATHER LOUIS HOHMAN
Diocesan Director of Vocations

If there is one time when people get upset with their parish priests it is when for some reason or another the priest has failed to visit a sick member of their families.

Maybe the illness was not serious at all. Maybe it was of short duration. Maybe they knew full well that the priest was bogged down in some special duties. Regardless of these considerations they become very annoyed. It would be well for priests to give this phenomenon serious consideration.

The common sense of the people often reaches the deeper meaning of things. Perhaps in this case they have understood the special meaning of the priest's relation to sickness.

The Vatican Council made the following statement on this subject: "Finally, and above all, priests must be solicitous for the sick and dying, visiting them and strengthening them in the Lord."

More often than not a priest's visit to a sick person may seem quite casual and perfunctory. Of itself it doesn't seem to make very much difference one way or another. But to take this point of view would be a serious failure to see the true dimensions of the case.

Each of the Gospels is a rather abbreviated account of Christ's activities. Yet a large percentage of them deals with Christ's relation to the sick. This is partly explainable by the fact that the Evangelists were trying to show the Divinity of Christ through his miracles. But the large number of the cures is explainable only by the solicitude of Jesus for the sick.

It is important to remember that sickness is intimately related to the Redemption of Christ. Man is subject to disease as a result of his domination by the power of evil. It is because man from the beginning deliberately placed himself under the evil influence of the serpent, that he is liable to bodily illness.

If he had not sinned originally, he would have been in control, oriented, and therefore free to subject to the disorder of sin. Christ came to restore God's order to the world and that is why he gave so much attention to the sick. And in his instructions to the Apostles as he sent them out on their first mission he said, "As you go along, proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, make lepers clean and drive out demons." Matt. 10: 7-8.

While it is true that the miraculous nature of these activities bore witness to the Divinity of the mission, it would seem legitimate to conclude that care for the sick itself was a part of that proclamation. The Apostles, of course, were not merely physicians. They would be bringing the power and the love of Christ to bear upon their care for the sick.

It is in this light that we must consider the mission of the priest to the infirm. If the truly stands in the place and person of Jesus Christ in our time and if he shares in the mediatorship of Christ, there in his visits to and care for the sick he brings an extra. That extra is his very power and love of Christ. It is the vitality of the Holy Spirit.

More and more science is discovering the intimate relationship and inter-relationship of body and spirit. The welfare of one affects the other and vice versa. It is taken for granted that anyone who visits a sick person is trying to cheer him up. It is easy to forget that the cheering up can directly contribute to the recovery of the person. But for the priest there is even more that can be done.

First of all, if the person has problems of conscience, if he is in a state of sin, obviously he must be restored to peace and the knowledge of reunion with God. As a side effect this itself can contribute mightily

to his physical well-being. Secondly, although the sick one will realize that the priest is not a miracle worker, he will be given the grace to see in the priest the loving concern of Christ himself. And love itself is a healer. Preeminently can the love of Jesus overcome the forces of evil in whatever sphere and so the priest brings the power of the Spirit to this weak and suffering person. Because he is the instrument of Christ, the priest carries with him the consolation, the encouragement, the peace of Christ. If we cannot measure in a physical way the measure of achievement of a pastoral sick call, does not the concern and the anxiety of the people themselves for that visit of the priest bear witness to its importance?

In all that has been said above we implicitly included the Sacrament of the Sick. The problem here is that people still think of it as the "last" Sacrament, as the gateway to death as well as its herald. Priests must educate in season and out of season that the Sacrament of the Sick is not merely for the dying but is the certain sacramental presence of Jesus Christ at the bedside.

In referring to the sacrament, St. James made no reference whatever to dying: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him bring in the priests of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." Jas. 5: 14-15.

And the absolutely central thought of the ritual for the Sacrament of the Sick is the return of the sick man to the community, to the Eucharistic table. By not getting this important point across to the laity, we may be depriving countless people who are not dying but are seriously ill of a powerful direct influence of Christ upon their condition.

The priest then, should reach out to the sick in his parish with great eagerness and a fresh realization of the Spirit he can bring to them. He will be the vital and effective instrument of the Lord, bearing out the words of the sacramental ceremony: "Stretch out your hand and raise him up, give him new strength and maintain him in it, give him back to your holy Church with all he needs for his well-being."

Kolping Unit Marks 40 Years

The Catholic Kolping Society will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its founding with a program and dance on Saturday, Nov. 5, in the German House.

Highlights of the program are performances by the Zither Club and songs of the Rochester Saenger Youth Chorus.

The Praeses of the society, Very Rev. Michael G. Downing, C.S.S.R., will present silver Kolping pins to outstanding members.

President Leo P. Saum appointed William Roeger as general chairman. German food and coffee and Kuchen will be served by the Kolping Ladies. The rest of the evening will be filled with German and American dancing to the music of Harold Tausch and his Bavarian Orchestra.



Seton Ball on Nov. 26th

Deadline for the Nov. 26 Seton Ball is rapidly approaching so final arrangements are being rushed by Mrs. Louis E. Dwyer, Mrs. James Segerson, Mrs. Philip Fitzsimmons, Mrs. Adrian Hanna and Mrs. Joseph Vasile. The Ball will be held at the Manger Hotel to benefit St. Mary's Hospital.

Fund Drive Underway

State Hospital Chapel

The drive to build a chapel on the grounds of the Rochester State Hospital began last Friday, Oct. 28 in the very auditorium it is intended to replace, and on the feast day of its patron saint—Saint Jude.

Some 300 patients attended the Mass offered by Monsignor John E. Maney, pastor of Corpus Christi Church, assisted by local clergy and Father James Callan, Catholic chaplain.

The community phase of the drive will officially start Friday, Oct. 28 in the very auditorium it is intended to replace, and on the feast day of its patron saint—Saint Jude.

The goal of the drive is \$300,000 to build a chapel seating some 450, to be located on the hospital grounds. The State of New York has already given the site, and will maintain it once it is constructed.

BISHOP KEARNEY wrote about the project: "We recognize the changes which in our time have revolutionized the treatment of the mentally ill in our hospitals. To the doctors, nurses, and hospital staff whose dedicated lives have made this possible, we all feel a great debt. These changes have now made possible, and indeed, necessary, the expansion of religious facilities at the State Hospital to meet the needs of those whose spiritual welfare is our care."

"The numbers involved, both of patients and families, is formidable. At a time when their needs are acute, and the anxieties of those close to them are most burdensome, we should like to relieve that distress and comfort those so burdened. It is for this reason that I should

like to see a Catholic chapel located on the hospital grounds. The state authorities have made available for this use a site which is most appropriate and centrally located. It remains for us to supply the means necessary to build a fitting and worthy reflection of the care of the Divine Physician," the Bishop said.

Father James Callan, a priest of the Rochester Diocese, and chaplain at the hospital for the last eleven years has strongly promoted the chapel as being a necessity in the modern mental hospital. "The revolution of the last decade in the care of the mentally ill presents all of us in the community with this fact: Fifteen hundred Catholic patients in our Diocese have no church. They have the freedom to go to a chapel. They feel the need for their faith, and they seek it. The psychiatrist acknowledges the strength which religious values can give. But there is no place except an auditorium one hour a week.

The chapel site is located on Elmwood Avenue to the west of the tall Medical-Surgical Building. Accessible from the street, yet centrally located to the patient population, it is planned to go into construction in the spring.

A pledge or donation may be sent to Chapel of St. Jude Fund, Rochester State Hospital, 1600 South Ave., Rochester, New York 14620, or directly to the Catholic Chaplain, Father James Callan, at the same address.



Golden Jubilarians

MR. AND MRS. JAMES W. FAKER, Linden Ave., Brighton, celebrated their 50th anniversary on Sept. 19 with a Mass of Thanksgiving at Blessed Sacrament Church. A dinner for friends and relatives was given by their daughters, Mrs. Raymond J. Liddell of Chula Vista, Calif., and Mrs. Charles K. Palmer, Rochester. They have two grandchildren. The couple was married by the late Monsignor Thomas F. Connors on Sept. 14, 1916.

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Solemn Funeral Rites For Father Kujawski

Solemn funeral services were held Friday, Oct. 28 for Rev. Leonard P. Kujawski, 40, assistant pastor of St. Casimir Church, Elmira.

Father Kujawski died suddenly Oct. 25.

Celebrant of the Requiem Pontifical High Mass was Bishop Edward J. Harper, C.S.S.R., Assistant priest was Msgr. Leo G. Schwab, V.F.; deacon, Father Ladislav J. Szczepanski and subdeacon, Father Matthew Sudara.

Father Kujawski was eulogized by Msgr. Joseph L. Hogan, rector of Becket Hall, St. John Fisher College, as a noble and dedicated priest.

Msgr. Hogan said Father Kujawski possessed the "home virtues—refinement, gentleness, reverence for authority, compassion and a generous heart."

An editorial in the Elmira Star-Gazette stated: "For fifteen of his 40 years the Rev. Leonard P. Kujawski performed a clergyman's duties with a zeal and understanding that won him an affectionate place in many hundreds of hearts. His service wasn't measured in years but in the good with which he filled them."

A message of condolence was received by Father Szczepanski and the members of St. Casimir parish from Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, newly appointed Bishop of Rochester.

Father Kujawski was ordained in 1951 and celebrated

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Meet THE LAVERNES

From left, Robin, Mrs. Mary Laverne, Carol, Tom and Jackie. Their fourth daughter, Sister M. Thomasetta of the Sisters of St. Joseph, teaches at St. Mary's School in Waterloo, New York.

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G. ROBERT ALHAIT, Chairman, Citizens Committee for Tom Laverne

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