

# The Absence Of God

(Continued from Page 6)

in a loud voice: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachani", which means "My God, My God, why have you deserted me?" (Mark 5/24)

Here His soul was as naked as His Body was naked. Denying Himself any Divine consolation, as He had refused to accept twelve legions of angels in His defense in the Garden. He now felt something of the loneliness of the atheists, the darkness of the skeptic and the sadness of prodigal children. The basis of His Life had always been communion with the Heavenly Father. Now that is broken off in order that He might feel the way unbelievers feel. It is even a moment when God felt the hell in which some souls live. Hidden behind these words, too, were all forms of mental sickness, neuroses, psychoses and the legion of mental breakdowns which result either directly or indirectly from human guilt.

He shared what was worst in man and what touches him most intimately when all things fall apart. By that one cry He made Himself the Brother of all the defeated and He became Loneliness among the lonely.

It was also the moment when He actually became closest to His Father, because it was the moment when He reconciled the defeated and desolate men to the Father. By feeling the absence of God which haunts souls, He atoned for their weakness to bring them into a sense of the Presence of God. It was a prayer in which every agnostic and atheist could join, as Christ complains about the disorderliness and ugliness and the victory of evil in the world.

It is only because there is a God, and my God, that one may complain without God the world would not be worth complaining about. Without God there would be no one to complain to. His infinite understanding leads Him to suffer vicariously all that separates men from God and weighs like an intolerable burden on His Heart.

It is well never to consult a psychiatrist who has not suffered, for there is a special wisdom that comes from plumbing the depth. Clever interpretations and analyses are not enough in the face

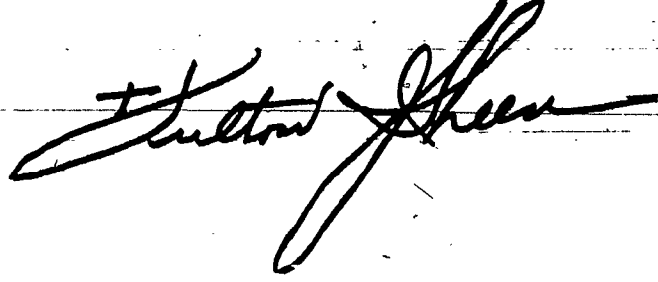
of the abyss of mental suffering. Here is a God Who was sent down into hell with the Nietzsches and the Sartres in order to feel what they feel, so that He could have compassion on all. (Heb. 5/2) Even all of the afflictions of hospitals, and the wasted pain on battlefields and deathbeds, were allowed to close over Him in order that He might be a Brother to all who are destitute of consolation.

What we must concentrate on is not the cry "My God", but Thou, "Why hast Thou deserted Me?" He clings to the One Who seems to have forsaken Him. He speaks to the One Who apparently does not hear. He counts on the One Who, for the moment, does not seem to exist.

Here is no God in the third person: "Why does God allow me to suffer?" "Why does God permit evil in the world?" The first time that God is addressed in the third person in Holy Scripture, is by Satan himself: "Hath God said" (Gen. 3/1) True religion addresses Him in the second person.

It is indeed regrettable that we are now using the word "You" to God, massing Him with our poor, wretched mortals, instead of allowing for His Transcendent Separateness and Holiness in the sublimity of the word "Thou".

Most of our confusion in religion comes from discussing God in the third person singular, rather than from speaking to Him in the second person. For immediately after the "Thou", He falls into the Hands of the Father: "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit". The Absence is followed by Presence. "Black Grace" can become "White Grace" not by a change on His part, but on ours.



## 7 Diocesan Students Win Merit Scholarships

Seven students from diocesan high schools were named winners Wednesday in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Two of these students attend Nazareth Academy and two attend Bishop Kearney High School.

According to a statement from the National Merit program, "no advance list of winners can be perfectly complete or final in all details, for a variety of reasons."

The winners from Nazareth Academy are Joyce Desmarais and Elizabeth Zimmer. Joyce is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Desmarais, and, among other activities, is a member of the National Honor Society and has had poetry and essays published in Expression and Spectrum literary magazines. She plans to attend SUNY at Buffalo and major in English. Elizabeth is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Zimmer, is prose editor of her school's literary magazine and a member of the National Honor Society. She plans to attend Cornell

University and major in biochemistry.

Laurence Behr, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Gervin Behr, is a student at Aquinas High School, and is an officer in the National Forensic League and a staff member of Aquinas literary magazine. He plans to attend SUNY at Buffalo to study law.

Michael Craldi, of Bishop Kearney High School, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Craldi. He is president of the National Honor Society and participates in the National Youth Conference on the Atom. He plans to attend Michigan State University and major in physics.

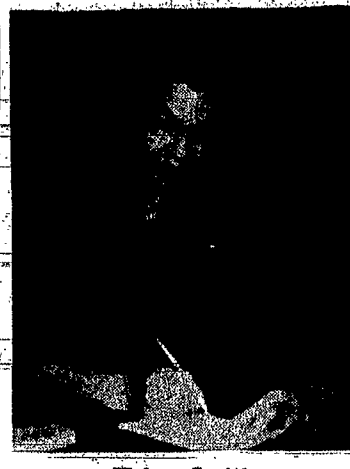
Carol Dole, also a student at Bishop Kearney High School, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Dole. She is a member of the National Honor Society and is editor of the school newspaper. She plans to attend Manhattanville in the fall.

Carol Hee, a student of Notre Dame High School in Elmira, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hee. She is a member of the National Honor Society

### HOLY NAME PRESIDENT

William McCortney was chosen president of the Holy Name Church at its recent election. Named with him were Gus Antlora, vice president; Garry Schaffer, recording secretary; Richard Flanigan, corresponding secretary, and Donald Tryon, treasurer.

Dr. George W. Barrett, bishop of the Rochester Episcopal Diocese, will be cited for "Demands on the Ministry Today: The Issue of Integrity." The Rev. Friedrich Rest of Salem United Church, for "The Cross in Hymns."



Helen Smith

### Camp Seeking Counselors

Girls 18 and over who may wish to be considered for the position of counselor at Camp Stella Maris from Aug. 3 to 23 may contact Mrs. Helen Smith, girls' encampment director, at the camp office, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester (454-2030).

Counselors are being sought who are qualified to teach or to assist in teaching handicrafts, archery, campfire programs, drama, sailing, and other sports.

Enrollment is now under way at the camp office for both boys' and girls' encampments. There will be six periods for boys (ages 7 to 15) from June 22 to Aug. 2, and three periods for girls (ages 8 to 14) from Aug. 3 to 23.

### Library Friends To Honor Authors

Father Robert F. McNamara of St. Bernard's Seminary and Dr. Egidio Papa of St. John Fisher College are among the 50 authors from this area who will be honored Tuesday noon by the Friends of the Rochester Public Library.

They will take part in the annual Authors' Day program, each speaking briefly about his recent works. Father McNamara's books published within the past year are "The Diocese of Rochester, 1868-1968" and "St. Bernard's Seminary, 1893-1968." Dr. Papa's book, published in Rome, is "The Syllabus of Pius XI in the French, English and Italian Press."

Dr. George W. Barrett, bishop of the Rochester Episcopal Diocese, will be cited for "Demands on the Ministry Today: The Issue of Integrity." The Rev. Friedrich Rest of Salem United Church, for "The Cross in Hymns."



Eleanor Pallone

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## Cabrini Circle Fete May 4

An exhibit of Mexican crafts and articles will feature the annual dinner and reception of the Mother Cabrini Circle, scheduled from 12:30 to 6 p.m. Sunday, May 4, at the Montgomery Neighborhood Center, 10 Cady St.

The Mexican display is being brought to the dinner by Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Whalen of East Avon, who for several years have spent part of their time at two dispensaries and clinics for the poor in Mexico.

A major program of the Mother Cabrini Circle is providing scholarships for Negro students to Catholic high schools in Monroe County. More

than \$5,000 was contributed toward such scholarships last year. The circle has 18 new applications for the new semester beginning in September.



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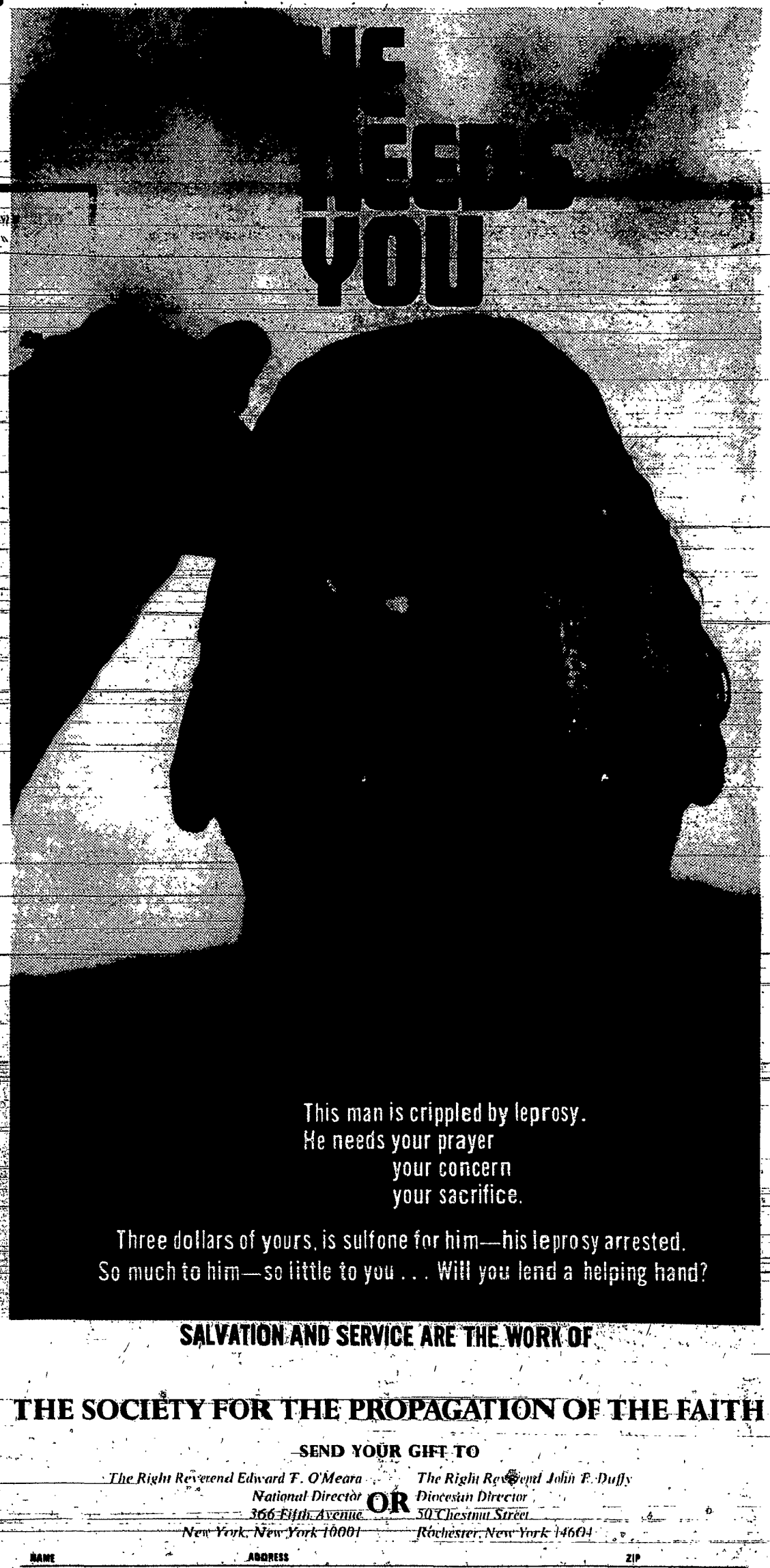
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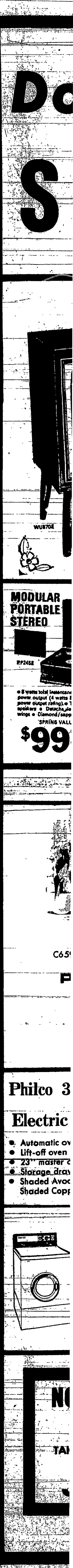
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