

When Time Passes, Does Wisdom Grow?

As the last few hours of 1972 tick away, most of us pause to reflect a bit on how the year has gone and where the future leads.



This week will bring comments on the happenings of the past with their joys or frustrations. It will also bring speculation into the future with its hopes and possibilities. But as I watch the clock on my office wall moving from second to second, I am struck by the fact that the great common element in both past and future is time itself. The clock doesn't stop. Each future quickly becomes a past. Each of us grows older each minute.

Our present day society is very impressed with things that have withstood the test of time. More and more antique dealers are going into business. Hundreds of items bring a fine price simply because they are old. Collectors seek old stamps and old coins. Old books are placed in rare book rooms where they are treated with special care. We are not about to lose our great possessions of the past.

But why is it that in a society where there is such fascination with antique things, there is so little interest in people who have grown old? Why do the opinions of the senior citizens count for so little to so many? Why are they looked upon as a great burden to their relatives and friends? Why do they themselves consider their worth to be little?

Father Henri Nouwen, a Dutch psychologist now on the faculty of Yale Divinity School, has said that the real fear of growing old in Western society is a fear of not being able to compete in an environment where one is what he can acquire, produce and achieve. There can hardly be any more alienating feeling, he says, than the feeling that "I am, who I was."

As we stand at the end of another year, a year in which we have all grown one year older, it might be a good idea to stop and think what we will bring to our society in our old age. When we have finished acquiring and producing, will we be useful to those around us?

In societies of the past, the older people of a nation were expected to provide wis-

dom to the society. It was the older people who had experienced life and had reflected upon it. It was their job to advise and guide the young and less experienced. This was the greatest of gifts — and they could give it. "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding, for the gain from it is better than gain from silver and its profit better than gold." (Proverbs 3: 13-14).

Many will say that the young people do not want wisdom. They reject advice and guidance from the more experienced. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that as older people, we have little wisdom to give. If we are going to develop wisdom, we must begin while we are young. As we produce and acquire, we must also constantly reflect and ponder; we must think out and order our priorities; we must pray and be sensitive to the Spirit. The wise old man was a student of wisdom in his younger years. He started early to begin the process of becoming wise.

Time is passing. Life is producing and achieving. But is wisdom growing? My wish is that 1973 may see an active growth of wisdom in us all.

The Slot Man

There's Plenty of Life in the Diocese

By Carmen Viglucci

Undoubtedly the biggest story in the diocese during 1972 was the June flood and the massive efforts put into the recovery operations.



Still it was not the only story as a study of Courier-Journals for the year shows an amazing amount of activity in the diocese.

Were it not for the flood, probably the most significant story of the year was the beginning of the Year of Renewal, kicked off in September.

Lightly skipping through the year, here are some of the things that happened, more or less chronologically.

Bishop John E. McCafferty was named rector of the Cathedral parish; Courier-Journal survey showed most local legisla-

tors favor some form of aid to nonpublic schools; and, ironically, a headline announced "Chemung Schools OK This Year" — this was in January long before Hurricane Agnes began revving up.

Father Henry Atwell was named to head the Genesee Ecumenical Ministry; diocesan priests rejected, 208-111, a proposal to join the National Federation of Priests' Councils; regional coordinators were named; Human Development collection raised \$98,000.

Sister Helen Malone resigned as president of Nazareth College; federal court barred aid to nonpublic schools; abortion question took on national flavor as President Nixon backed repeal in New York State; liberalized abortion was in fact repealed by Legislature but action was vetoed by Gov. Rockefeller.

Father Daniel Holland was named director for Year of Renewal; Priests' Council rescinded support of plan to aid schools

by imposition of new parish tax; Bishop Hogan joined group of religious leaders in trip to Washington, D.C., to ask for end of Vietnam War; study paper, "Mission of the Church in the Diocese", was published in Courier.

The Council of Inner City Parishes protested not getting their full budget request from diocese; Father Albert Bartlett left McQuaid High; Father Stanley Farier became pastor at St. Lucy's; diocese's first black pastor; first Conference on the Unborn was held; Respect Life Week was celebrated; co-pastors named for St. Joseph's Church in Penfield; Courier-Journal survey showed sentiment to repeal liberalized abortion is gaining among legislative candidates; Pastoral Office moved to Buffalo Road.

There were many other important happenings and, of course, other stories on the world and national scenes. But there is enough here to show that there's plenty of life left in the old diocese and that 1973 should be even a busier time.

Editorial

Choose Life for the New Year

The baby was conceived on March 31. Of that we can be reasonably sure. For the sake of argument we shall call it a he.

His parents had so suffered from prolonged, perhaps even chronic, disease that they believed perhaps their weaknesses were hereditary.

In addition, they thought, it is a hell of a world in which to bring children — wars, threats of wars, callousness, bigotry, injustice.

They considered abortion. The father sat home while the mother and her doctor pondered the baby's fate. Their decision, by law, had to be made by early May.

We'll learn what action they took next Monday, Jan. 1. For it was the New Year's baby in question.

Of course, in one sense, this is simple fantasy but in another it is very real — because the future is tied in directly with the birth of each baby, and because each baby possesses the germ of hope that perhaps wrongs can be corrected.

More important is how society looks upon future generations. As pointed out by Father Life directors of the United States on the occasion of Family Life Sunday, Dec. 31, "The child is the representative of the future, and the way a society regards children tells us much about its

beliefs in the dignity of man."

So those mythical parents mentioned above, representing the world in a historical and societal sense, have been so wracked by physical and mental anguish and indignities that they may indeed make the mistake of pondering infanticide, which would mean social suicide.

Of course, we must hope that they choose life over death, hope over despair. The beginning of a new year is as abstract as the baby associated with it. Yet by observing the real world from day to day we will be able to tell how society decided upon the birth of that baby and how we as a people regard the future of mankind.