

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Sarah Child

An acquaintance who broke her shoulder this past summer was regaling me with the cold, hard facts of what it means to a family when the mother is put out of commission, even on a temporary basis.

In this case, her one child, a pre-schooler, had to be sent to his grandmother several hundred miles away for the summer.

Because she was in pain for a long time (they could not put her shoulder in a cast) meals were not

cooked, the housework piled up around her, increasing her depression, and except for a friend who popped in when she could, she was all alone during the day.

Had it been her husband who had had the injury, she pointed out, he would have stayed home, drawn sick pay, been nursed by his wife.

Because she had no family in town who could take over for her,

she was, to put it colloquially, up a tree.

When a friend of another faith wanted to know if her church didn't have an organization to help members out in an emergency she had to reply in the negative.

Strangely enough, the same day I bumped into this acquaintance I had been thinking of a church organization service in connection with another matter.

I had been thinking of our relatively new tract of some 70 families. There is not one black family among us, in spite of the open housing stickers in some of our windows.

I thought of the black families

who have the economic ability to buy in the suburbs but fear the loneliness, even ostracism.

What my acquaintance of the broken shoulder had needed was physical help. And what many blacks need to move to the suburbs is financial help.

But what the temporary invalid had wanted even more than somebody to do her laundry for her was somebody to come in and hold her hand for a while and tell her things were going to get better.

What a black family might want is reassurance in as simple a form as somebody inviting themselves in for a cup of coffee and staying to dispense information and emotional support.

How terrific if parish councils that have not yet done so would form separate committees within their groups to serve as friends to those in need.

To say to a black family who wanted to move to their community: Come and we will be your friends. To say to the sick and lonely: I am here and I want to listen.

MARIAN TRIDIUM

A tridium in honor of Our Lady will be held Oct. 14-16 at St. John the Evangelist, Greece, with services beginning at 7 p.m. Speakers will be Fathers Ronald Antinarelli and Edward Callens and, on the final evening, Bishop John E. McCafferty.

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