

### THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father,

Please explain the logic in condemning divorced persons. Why, when they need spiritual support, does the church deny aid? If a person breaks the commandments — commits adultery, steals, perhaps even murders — they can, with sincerity, go to the confessional, anonymously, and receive absolution. They are then able to receive the Sacraments. Yet a person, for whatever reason, has faced failure — perhaps found new happiness — sometimes children need two parents — still the church refuses to forgive — to begin anew — to nourish spiritually and morally. Who decides divorced people can not change, that they must also be divorced from the church, disgraced by omission, they must go alone. Surely Christ would not deny himself to anyone.

Signed, C.B.

Dear C.B.

It is interesting that your letter arrives so very shortly after a presentation was made to the Diocesan Pastoral Council on the ministry to divorced and separated Catholics. So I can assure you that

at least those who are in positions of leadership in the church are not taking a negative attitude toward these people nor are they writing them off. One of the thrusts of the movement is the effort to eliminate the idea of excommunication from the church because of divorce and remarriage.

The rationale behind the exclusion of divorced and remarried Catholics from the sacraments is based on the idea that the original marriage was very definitely one ratified by God and therefore indissoluble. Under that assumption the marriage would last forever and the second marriage would not be a marriage at all but merely a state of living in adultery.

However, that is a terrible oversimplification, especially in view of the fact that it is by no means easy to determine which marriages are ratified by God, and therefore cannot be torn asunder. Much of the work of the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal has to do with making decisions about the reality of marriages in the eyes of God.

Even under these circumstances it is not always possible for human beings to make that decision. Therefore it is judgmental and condemnatory that we should shun people who are in this particular situation. We have no way of knowing their status in the eyes of God; therefore we have no right to put them aside as though they were junk. Whatever can be done in this ministry, I am certain will be done because there are many people who have a very deep compassion for those involved in this situation and realize the injustice of it. I hope that you will do whatever you can relative to your Parish Council or whatever means you may have available. Thank you for writing.

## Christmas At The Cathedral

The Christmas celebration at Sacred Heart Cathedral will begin with a family liturgy at 5 p.m. Friday designed especially for young children. Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will celebrate the Mass and give the homily. At 4:45, he will help the children decorate the Christmas tree with their hand-made ornaments. A procession, lighting of the Christmas candle and blessing of the crib also will precede this Mass and all of the others scheduled.

The folk Mass for young adults that Father Thomas Wheeland will celebrate at 7:45 p.m. will be preceded by 15 minutes of carolling. Youth group members will present a living nativity tableau.

At 11 p.m. the cathedral choir, directed by Anthony Rimore, will begin a concert of Christmas music. A brass ensemble from the Eastman School of Music will take part. Bishop John E. McCafferty and his associates will celebrate the midnight Mass, and Father Joseph D'Aurizio will give the homily.

The Mass at Dawn will be celebrated at 7 a.m. There will be Christmas Day Masses also at 8:30, 10, 11:15 and 12:30. The Mass at 5 p.m. that satisfies the Sunday obligation will be the Mass of the Holy Family.

### YOUNG AT HEART

A special Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 4 for the Young at Heart group at Our Lady of Lourdes. Members are asked to bring friends to the Mass and the meeting that begins at 10:30.

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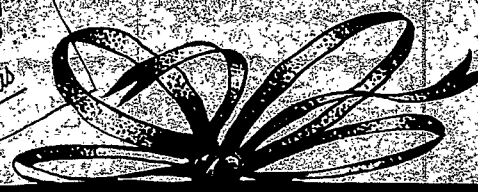
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It is a living experience of Jesus, message to love God and our neighbor.  
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It is a vacation, with a learning experience thrown in, but the emphasis is on the vacation.

### WHEN?

1st week June 26 to July 2, 1977  
2nd week July 3 to July 9, 1977  
3rd week August 21 to August 27, 1977  
4th week August 28 to September 3, 1977

### HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

WRITE Family Camp  
P.O. Box 32  
Webster, N.Y. 14580

