

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Reflections on St. Joseph

Many modern statues tend toward a formalized, almost Oriental or Byzantine impersonality; the classical repose of the features is probably a reaction to the very realistic crucifixes and glass-eyed statues of my childhood. But recently I saw a statue of St. Joseph which was even more extreme. The "face" had no features at all. It was a wood-carved statue and the head was simply a light wood cylinder, topped by wood shavings for hair. At first, it seemed too extreme, but I have reflected on it since and it seems every bit as authentic as the glass eyes or Oriental impassivity of any other statue of my patron that I have ever seen.



If ever there was a selfless - faceless - man, it was St. Joseph. Try as we may, our reconstructions of his personality remain loving projections or fabrications. He stands in the shadows of the New Testament, or perhaps more accurately, in the shadows of Jesus and Mary.

The self-effacement (and effacement is a kind of "losing face") required of Joseph was extraordinary; his young bride-to-be must have broken his heart with the news of her pregnancy. Yet, his instinct was to protect HER, not himself, however awkward or critical judgments of his action might be. And throughout the story of Jesus' birth, we only know that somehow Mary was sheltered and somehow the baby was able to survive, even though Joseph must have agonized over the rudeness of the shelter and the bare survival conditions. One has only to witness the grinding

poverty of the small villages of today's Middle East to appreciate the ingenuity of St. Joseph's providing for the little family.

In a society as patriarchal as that of Joseph's time, it is astonishing that the evangelists give us so little information on the guardian of Jesus. True, the early Church emphasized the Virgin Birth and attempted to reduce the role of Joseph in the Holy Family... but one may also conclude that this lack of emphasis simply testifies to Joseph's complete adequacy in his role. All went well; the family managed to sustain a decent, private life-style on the earnings of the carpenter, at first alone and then aided by the son. Volumes have been written on the peace and order of that home life. The joy of contemplating what the imagination can picture of the relationships there is inexhaustible.

We have just recently observed Father's Day, and we might do well to ponder the characteristics of a good father, the characteristics Joseph must have had. We have already mentioned self-effacement and I do believe that basic Christian virtue is particularly exercised in marriage and parenthood. The beautiful harmony of family life is only achieved when each member is attuned to the personalities and needs of the others.

Providence is a word that we are accustomed to seeing with "Divine" in front of it, but providence is a virtue every father must have. To be provident is to provide for another; it includes paying the mortgage, buying new sneakers, keeping up the insurances, planning surprise outings for ice-cream cones, etc. ad infinitum. None of the above items was typical of St. Joseph's providence and yet he provided all that was

necessary for Mary and Jesus. And today's fathers do the same.

Reflectiveness is a quality that is hard to manage in our busy days. Joseph reflected on all the circumstances of his betrothal, of the birth of Jesus, of the flight to escape Herod's mad decree. He certainly did not stop reflecting through the young manhood of Jesus, though the Bible tells us nothing of those years. Do fathers in today's families make time for reflecting on their relationships with wife and children? On the power of example? On the values they believe in and pass on to their children? On the balance of work and leisure? On the years that will follow the "emptying of the nest?"

Gentleness in the exercise of authority is surely one of the hardest virtues to practice. Formerly, it might have been called humility or patience, and it worked both for those in authority and those who were subject to authority. Nowadays authority is not in vogue; parents must begin their gentle exercise when the children are in the cradle or risk the unhappy results of a harsh and unexpected use of it when it is too late. The awareness of proper roles - parents together or separately, and children - is essential to a peaceful home life, the kind we know through faith existed at Nazareth.

So when we are looking at ourselves in that morning mirror, seeing that same old face with all its comfortable familiarity - with a new wrinkle, a summer tan, a new make-up or a different aftershave - it might be good to pause and think about the self behind that face. Do we have the heroic holiness of St. Joseph, which would make our face unimportant - which would place our true value deep beneath anything a mirror shows us?

Restart Drug Services:

Helping Those Who Need It Most

By Michael Groden

The staff at Restart Drug Services, a division of the Catholic Family Center, are very patient people. They have to be. Trying to persuade drug abusers to quit their habits too often ends in frustration. Somehow, though, they remain optimistic.

"A person who stays off drugs for one day is considered a success here. It shows that he has at least tried, that he hasn't given up hope," explained Roger Battaglia, Restart's director.

Battaglia, together with Carolyn Ideman and Andrea Busch, head up the drug abuse counseling program designed primarily for sentenced and non-sentenced inmates of the Monroe County Jail.

It provides professional guidance for inmates arrested on drug possession or drug-related crimes and also serves as an information clearing house for other county drug programs and interested citizens.

The "Court Team," headed by Carolyn Ideman, visits "clients" twice a week for counseling sessions which can range from getting a client into one of a variety of drug rehabilitation programs, to finding jobs or job training for them after their release.

Restart can sometimes even keep the client out of jail by providing the courts with alternatives to prison terms. As an example Battaglia said that some non-sentenced inmates can be given suspended sentences if they agree to attend a drug rehabilitation program as part of their parole.

Ideman said that she and



ROGER BATTAGLIA



CAROLYN IDEMAN



ANDREA BUSCH

co-counselors Israel Alicea and Marta Mayo, see an average of 45-50 clients, mostly male, each month. That figure "does not include wives, mothers and girl friends of clients" for whom counseling is also provided, she said.

The second and newest branch of Restart is the "Intake Unit," supervised by Andrea Busch. Started in January, 1977, Intake offers a referral service to clients outside of jail. She explained that many people who want help with a drug problem, either for themselves or a loved one, do not know exactly where to go for help.

There are dozens of drug agencies in Monroe County dealing with special areas of drug abuse. The Intake Unit, after a confidential interview, finds which program or combination of programs best fill the needs of the client.

Intake also has an im-

pressive library of drug information. Busch mentioned that people writing college papers on drugs and drug addiction often consult the Intake library.

Battaglia stressed that Restart is not just a program for "so called hard drug addicts," such as heroin users. The person who takes "safe drugs," that are prescribed by a doctor, can also be addicted.

"Housewives who pop valium to cope with the kids often are drug abusers," offered Busch. Barbituates are the second most abused form of drugs in the country, second only to alcohol, also an addictive drug, she said.

When people combine the two, a practice becoming more and more frequent, the results are often fatal, she said.

At the end of the interview all three Restart officers agreed that many of their clients too often are not "highly motivated" to

quit drugs, which makes the job even harder. Battaglia said that one thing they all try to do is get to the first-time offender before they've served time. "Once someone goes through the court system (arrest, trial, sentencing and jail terms) they're very hard to reach, they become alienated," he said.

Restart is showing results, however. Former prisoners are coming to the office, located at 55 Troup St., for follow-up counseling and "walk-in" clients have increased. In 1976 forty-one per cent of the clients agreed to take rehabilitation treatment, a high figure when the odds are figured.

Battaglia ended saying Restart Drug Services "is here for everyone," and that all the professional counseling is offered in a non-threatening, relaxed atmosphere. Further information on Restart can be obtained by calling their office at 546-3046.



Fr. Louis Hohman

(The following letter will be the last one on the subject.)

Dear Father Hohman,

In regard to M.M.'s letter in the May 4 Courier: your answer to it was perfect; however, may I add that all Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, and Jews, are God's children, and I am reasonably sure He has no special niche just for Catholics.

My views may be a bit old-fashioned, in that I would like to be able to distinguish a Priest or Nun when I encounter them, only because I would like to show the respect due them, and feel that they give so much of themselves they have earned the right to dress as one of God's chosen people. However, I am sure that what they wear has nothing to do with their teachings or what is in their hearts.

May I add that one of the dearest persons I know still wears her habit and veil and is loved by all who are lucky enough to know her, adults and children alike.

Although Christ did preach and pray in Church, the Bible tells us He spread the word of God whenever and wherever there was a gathering, whether on land or sea. So what difference if the Church looks bare - our love for Him is what counts.

As for myself, I am glad the Mass is in English, so I can understand from the learned priests and be fulfilled with His teachings.

Our faith is certainly very shallow when we need to have something to remind us that Christ died that we might live.

My heart goes out to all of the M.M.'s, and I pray that all the Catholics in the world will accept the changes as they come, and put their faith and trust in Christ, not in clothes worn by our teachers or reminders which hang on the walls.

Yours in Christian Faith (Signed) I.B.

Dear I.B.,

I am publishing your letter for several reasons. The first is that there are definitely arguments for both priests and sisters wearing special clothing, as well as arguments against special clothing. On the one hand, we must keep in mind that for centuries there was no distinguishing garb worn by either the clergy or religious in the Church. Even the altar vestments that we wear today were originally the ordinary street garb of the first century. On the other hand, the wearing of clerical or religious garb does contribute something to situations and circumstances above and beyond proclaiming the Christian faith of the person wearing them. It is true that one can and should be known by a lived faith, but there are circumstances, social and otherwise, in which it would be well to have a simpler identification of a person's calling. It is good for nurses, for example, to be in uniform while on duty even though if they were wearing ordinary street clothes they would still have the same skills. The uniform gives a kind of reassurance that they have those skills. Obviously it is not an essential element, but a helpful one.

I like the rest of your letter very much and appreciate your sharing it with our readers. God Bless you.