

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

It Takes Time to Find God

We who live amidst the mad pace and hurry of this XX Century have to make a special effort to find time to discover Him and to get in touch with our own self. The famed psychiatrist, Dr. C. G. Jung once remarked: "Hurry is not of the Devil; it IS the Devil."



In his recently published "The Other Side of Silence," Morton Kelsey makes this observation about our typically busy life: "An efficiently busy life, which keeps us occupied without being harried and keeps our attention entirely on interesting outer things, is probably more potentially destructive of spiritual growth than debauchery or alcohol or hard drugs. These obvious indulgences usually at least lead to emptiness, and sometimes to despair, and in such times one is dangerously vulnerable to being found by God. On the other hand, a quiet, efficient and busy life spent continuously in good works can shield an individual most effectively from any plunge into the depth where God dwells."

I believe that this is the trap that most of us fall into. We are easily lulled into the conviction that we are doing the Lord's will because we are His busy bodies — rushing like mad to fill our lives with good deeds. Yet, the truth is that if we have not left time in silence to listen to Him, we can never be aware of what He really wants us to do.

I am afraid that most of us fill up our time keeping busy because we fear to be alone. We do not want to deal with everything we find in ourselves. We all have inner demons that we should be dealing with head on. When we fail to deal with them, we allow them to play their mischief on our families and friends and all with whom we share ourselves.

There is a story of a clergyman who went to a

psychiatrist because he felt an approaching mental breakdown. He had been working fourteen hours a day and his hands trembled and he found it difficult to rest at night. The doctor prescribed eight hours of work, eight hours of sleep and eight hours to be spent alone in the quiet of his study. He spent the eight hours in his study reading and listening to the music of his favorite masters. But his condition had not improved. When he complained to the doctor, the doctor reminded him that he did not want him to be in the company of an author or a musician for eight hours, but wanted him to be alone with himself. The clergyman said: "But I cannot think of any worse company." The doctor said: "And yet this is the self you inflict on other people fourteen hours a day."

I am sure we all have to learn to bring time to a halt. Life can get painfully out of kilter and the only way it can maintain any sort of balance and harmony is to have stopping times that allow for silence and reflection. This turning inward is a venture that we have to pursue on our own.

A prominent philosopher speaks about a typical life in our urbanized and industrial society: "Most modern life is a studied attempt to avoid ever being alone, faced with the reality of the inner world." Does this sound familiar to us as he sketches a typical day of the average man (the average housewife could match it for the hectic pace). "He begins with the moment a disc jockey connects with him to awaken him in the morning. He may stay wrapped in gentle music while his razor whirrs, and then the news bombardment begins. He gets his breakfast in between skeins of words, headlines, box scores, political phrases... he drives to work joined to the radio again, and switching over to concentration on a job even requires the help of pipeline music. With lunch he is fed conversation and business problems like spaghetti, and there is only one difference at dinner. He chops the family threads off to change over to TV or perhaps a meeting. Only when he drops into bed too tired even to dream do the conscious lines stop radiating, and if he cannot sleep there is the ever

present sleeping pill or tranquilizer to remove the necessity of a nighttime encounter with silence. The next day the routine starts over, and if there should be any free space in the day, the picture is quickly finished by simply adding squiggles to the lines and calling them recreation." And may I add we even are hectic at that as we hurry to 'relax.'

Someone has said that the lives of most of us are like jewelry stores where someone has deliberately mixed up the price tags. Diamonds are priced at next to nothing while synthetic and simulated gems are listed as worth thousands of dollars. Only when we stop business as usual and take stock can we avoid bankruptcy. As long as we keep the store crowded with people, we have no chances to take inventory. We have to shut the doors for a time — to check the stock list, our list of priorities and then put the right value on the right object. If we truly believe that God is a loving Father, we need not fear that He will deprive us of anything we really need. He wants us to find Him so He can bring us to our deepest and most lasting satisfaction. Life does have a way of keeping our price tags shuffled. That's why we must stop and find redeeming time in quiet and silence.

I think one of our most fervent petitions should be, "Slow me down, Lord." Spiritual writers have for ages spoken of the "heresy of hyperactivity." I recall a letter that St. Bernard wrote to one of his monks who had become Pope. He warned him about "his accursed activities" that were destroying him. I suppose the initial reaction of the Holy Father was one of shock. He thought he was spending every waking moment doing good for others. But Bernard was worried about a schedule that had crowded out precious quiet times for reflection.

Now I must close this column for I HAVE RUN OUT OF TIME. EVEN BISHOPS ARE PRESSURED TO MEET DEADLINES. It gets easier for me each day to pray for eternal rest and peace and quiet and liberation from the sound and fury that signifies nothing.

Listen to the Silence

Following are excerpts from an address by Father Charles Lavery, CSB, president of St. John Fisher College, to the New York State Convention of the American Heart Association on Nov. 3. Father Lavery took as his theme "Listen to the Silence."

Your challenge to rekindle enthusiasm for the heart made me think of "The Heart" and then of hypertension, worry and every other problem of human life that you and I meet each day.

Then I thought of peace, relaxation, lack of worry, silence. Permit me to share some thoughts with you.

I speak not as a physician but as a priest and as one whose whole life has been centered upon education. Since my two roles in life concern people, I am much aware of tension, worry, and lack of inner peace. All too often we act virtually as irrational persons.

Because the world in which we live daily moves faster, we have lost the knack of stepping aside and finding ourselves. Gone are the days when it took weeks for a letter to travel. Our slow delivery today is due to other reasons I can sense.

The speed of travel, of sound, of vision have made the world much smaller. To cite Marshall McLuhan, it is truly a global village. But what a world it would be if we could make it like a village where everyone knows the other, where there is time to stop and chat, to play and not worry about accidents or crime.

All of us, somehow or other, are aware of the increased frenzy of modern living and yet we do not take the normal steps to change our pace.

Needless to say, I am fully aware of the modern world and its changes, and I am sure that 100 years from now the world we see will be as changed as the four corners of any village in this state of 100 years ago today. But the one reality that will not have changed will be man himself.

We were made by God, in my belief, to become truly human persons, with an intelligence that seeks knowledge, and a will that is made to love. Through our intelligence and will, we are made to be masters of ourselves, and not slaves to the world, to automation or to speed. Man can only be a master when he is at peace within himself.

They can't stand silence, they do not wish to face themselves.

Have you been out in the country in recent days to behold the beauties of nature? Have you listened to the silence? If you did, you could bear so much more — even at a great distance from you. This is the peace that I am trying to describe to you.

At this point you may think I have wandered far from the heart and hypertension. I have not. As a non-medical person I am trying to assist each of you personally and all of you who are seeking to combat hypertension. What I am trying to suggest is the need for each of us to secure greater inner strength and peace and lead others to it.

The world is seemingly very dark, there is much suffering, hardship, cruelty, poverty, crime — so many things that you could begin to wonder — as some do unfortunately — is it worth it?

Today we lack a sense of humor, and joy sounds like a word that is artificially produced.

Today it might be good if we did get off the whirling world for a while, to look at others, smell the flowers, and even rest.

Silence could tell us so much, and, as you know, we can renew ourselves by finding ourselves.

What I have been stressing is the necessity of accepting the full measure of our responsibility to ourselves and others. But to do this we must have an anchor in life or a compass which is set upon truth. We must regain a right relation to the truth of things, to the demands of our inner self and finally to God. Otherwise we become the creation of our own power and we float without order.

To disregard ultimate values in life is to live in a lopsided way — it is to live aimlessly.

We must encourage people to acquire a certain distance from things, to train them to think independently and to resist the anonymous faces of forces that enslave them. If man is to resist slavery to things, in truth, to barbarism, he must develop self-discipline and self-restraint. In this way he can develop from his inner self and find that life, is worth living and it can be a great joy. If he is master of himself, he

Our world hates silence. Many people cannot be alone. Man cannot possess peace in the midst of turmoil.

Courier-Calendar

Corpus Christi Bazaar — This weekend at school hall, East Main at Prince plants, crafts, baked goods Saturday, Nov. 19, 11 a.m. - 8:30 p.m., Sunday 9-11 a.m.

St. Joseph's Arts and Crafts — At school hall, 39 Gebhardt Rd., Pentfield 40 booths, country kitchen Friday, Nov. 18, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday 9-11 a.m.

St. Monica's Bazaar — With Santa Claus and baby-sitting, Saturday, Nov. 19, noon-9 p.m., at 841 Genesee.

Holy Cross, Dryden, Happening — Nov. 19 and 20, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. in parish center, Union Street greenery, pantry stocks, baked goods, hand-made gift items and things from the Far East, free refreshments.

St. Ann's Home Christmas Crafts — Sale of residents work in ceramics, macrame, knitting, toys, decorations, etc. 2-6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 25.

Mill Valley Holiday Boutique — Ninth annual Monday, Nov. 21, Southeast Branch YMCA, Jefferson Road, Pittsford.

St. Stanislaus Harvest Bazaar — Sponsored by Holy Name of Mary Society in auditorium Hudson at Norton, 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 19, 3 p.m. Sunday.

Mother of Sorrows Fall Festival — at 5000 Mt. Read, 6-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 18-19, hot meat buffet both nights.

Our Lady of Mercy Hunger Bazaar — At 600 Denise Rd., Greece, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, sale of handcrafted items, homebaked goods, proceeds for world and local food programs.

Kearney Mothers' Christmas Boutique — In Bishop Kearney High School cafeteria, 125 Kings Highway South, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Nov. 19, gifts, food, advice on construction of straw wreaths.

St. Christopher Turkey Fest — With turkey sandwiches 7-11 p.m. Nov. 18, King Road and Union Street, North Chili.

St. Jude's Turkey Festival — With lasagna, 1-6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 20, at 4100 Lyell Rd.

St. Andrew's Turkey Festival — With German food 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18, 924 Portland, sponsored by Holy Name Society.

Most Precious Blood Turkey Hop — Dinner dance in school hall 7 p.m. Nov. 19, music by Trade Winds. Reservations: Carl Murano, 254-9578.

Nazareth Academy Garage Sale — At school 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 19, noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Mothers of Twins Club — Regular meeting 7:30 p.m. Nov. 17, Messiah Lutheran Church, Mt. Read at English Road, instruction on making wreaths. Club information, Mrs. Paul Murray, 392-7534.