

# FAMILY



## Sending Alleluias by Air

On the feast of our Lord's baptism last January, parishioners entered Syracuse's Church of the Most Holy Rosary and saw a large hanging in front of the altar which stated, "We are family."

During the homily that weekend, the preacher, initiating their Year of the Family, explained how Christian initiation through baptism/confirmation/Eucharist makes us sisters and brothers or, indeed, a spiritual family.

At the sermon's conclusion, he asked each family to write their name on a gold slip of paper provided in the pews. Later, the liturgy committee folded these together to form a 1,700-link chain fastened high along the walls of that mammoth structure.

Later, on a Lenten Sunday, they walked in and noted a new message in front of the altar, "Time to Reach Out." Nearly 500 persons also received during Mass a tiny princess phone key chain.

Behind this motto and gift was that familiar commercial sponsored by the telephone company, "Reach out, reach out and touch someone." The homilist related it to the parish theme for the 40

Fr. Joseph M. Champlin



Our Church Family

days — reach out and communicate with others — God, those in your family, others — and remove the barriers, the sins, which impede communication.

Easter Sunday there were no words before the altar, but, instead, a giant, color-rich sunburst, symbolic of the Risen Lord.

Those who looked around also could spot four clusters of balloons in many colors hung from the gallery and choir loft. Their presence in the church prepared parishioners for something to occur afterwards outside the building.

The family liturgy committee, augmented by a few helpers, had assembled at 7 a.m. that morning and, with the help of a helium tank, inflated nearly 700

balloons. Earlier a note with the following message had been inserted inside:

"The Parish Family of Most Holy Rosary Church wants to share its Easter joy that Jesus Christ is risen. He gives us New Life so that we can live in peace with our brothers and sisters. We'd love to know if this good news reaches you."

As the overflow congregation streamed out after the Family Liturgy Mass they were handed balloons, then asked to cross the street and gather in a school playground. Shortly thereafter, one of the priests with a megaphone directed them to release the balloons simultaneously. The sight was spectacular and sent people home excited with joy over the Lord's rising.

Those balloons brought similar joy later in the day to people several hundred miles away.

Joe Korflage wrote from Castleton-on-Hudson:

"I was taking a walk with my daughter and dog on Easter at sundown and picked your message off our road. I thought I'd send it back and thank you for an unexpected surprise. I send Easter greetings from downstate. Christ has risen, Alleluia!!"

## The Nestle Crunch

The week after my column on the Nestle boycott appeared, I addressed the annual convention of the National Federation of Priests Councils on the subject of today's family. One question that recurred had to do with family as social change agent. How concerned is the family about other families? How much a part of the family is consumerism? How can we make families more conscious of the materialism that governs many of their lives?

It seems appropriate somehow that when I returned home, my desk was loaded with reader reaction to my Nestle column. On the light side, one supporter suggested readers go into the supermarket and take all the Nestle coupons out of the little baskets. A farm wife wrote that she's against the boycott because dairy farmers need all the markets they can get. And I received one impassioned letter that nobody needs anything but kelp, sprouts, and paprika to survive healthily into the nineties.

On the serious side, people asked for more information, spoke to the immorality of any boycott, shared personal witness of Baby Bottle Disease in their Peace Corps or Papal Volunteer past, disputed my statements, or asked how they could get involved in the boycott. Several wrote about the films, "Bottle Babies" and "Into the Mouths of Babes" which they saw in their parish and which, one wrote, "changed

Dolores Curran



Talks With Parents

my life."

One letter to an editor from Nestle questioned his right to print my column before contacting them for verification first. I don't agree but I do feel a responsibility to readers to check my statements and facts so I called INFAC, the organization dedicated to fighting Bottle Disease via the boycott. They sent materials, as did Nestle. I ended up with over four pounds of leaflets, booklets, government hearing transcripts, WHO codes, and letters, all of which I skimmed or read.

The results? Each group denies the other's assertions and statistics. I don't have space here to go through point by point and you wouldn't read it if I did.

But here's where you come in. I think it is essential that you send for information from both

organizations and make your own moral decision. There's no question in my mind after reading all that material that the Nestle Boycott is morally right and necessary, but you shouldn't take part in it because INFAC and Dolores Curran said so. This is where that family consciousness and conscience alluded to by the priests comes in. Do the reading yourself and come to a conclusion that will decide your further action as a family and a parish.

This tired "We did not/They did too" dialogue is effective only as long as people refuse to search out facts for themselves. Fighting the boycott is The Nestle Company, Inc., 100 Bloomingdale Rd., White Plains, New York 10605. Promoting the boycott is Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFAC), 1701 University Ave. S.E. Minneapolis, MN 55414. Send for material from each. Enclose a dollar or two to INFAC for material and postage because they're operating solely on donations. If you decide to become a member after reading both sides, you will receive newsletters and updates for a small membership fee.

I call upon parish outreach and family groups to sponsor an evening in which both Nestle's and the boycott's sides are presented. This is being done in many dioceses with some success. It forces us to be conscientious in making a decision. Once we do that, we can no longer ignore our responsibility for action. That's part of growing up in the faith we profess.

## Father Beatini — A Special Brand of 'Dolce Vita'

Perhaps the hardest thing to accept, after the death itself, is that most of us did not get a chance to say goodbye to our friend, Father Joseph Beatini. From the initial diagnosis to the end, Sunday, May 25, it was but three weeks.

And there are some, including this writer, who, ostrich-like, simply refused to believe that he was really as ill as he was.

I suppose in one sense all deaths are shocks, the latest and freshest evidence of our mortality, striking with new devastation. But, to Father Beatini to be alive was to be joyful. La dolce vita in the best, most innocent sense. Thus, the great feeling of loss now.

I knew him six short years and every meeting was a happy one, usually filled with friends, good food and song. If there is any consolation now, it is that all the memories we have of him are so very warm and dear.

We called him Don Giuseppe, which was the title of respect accorded him by his Italian relatives and he in turn gave us all Italian names. Mary would become Maria, Tony was Antonio and so on.

He was with us at Christmastime briefly, but the get-together I shall remember most (after the parties he staged himself) took place at our house last August. It was a Sunday afternoon picnic which began at about 5 p.m. in our backyard and there were about 15-20 of us, including children.

His friends came early on that hot, sultry day. He was late as was often the case, frequently because he was so much in demand at church outings, senior citizens' affairs, homes of relatives.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

Certain things stand out about that afternoon. The kids had a ballgame going and Father James Marvin took off his shoes and socks to run the grassy bases and Bishop Hogan kept hitting the ball out of the yard into the next tract, later abandoning the game to get into a soccer scrimmage with our youngest.

On the culinary front, things were, as usual, also memorable. One of the packages of Italian sausage, when unwrapped, proved to be green. The first batch of chicken burned to a crisp on the unfamiliar, borrowed grill. The cream for the strawberries turned to butter from too diligent beating and Elaine got a bonus with her dish of fruit — a little green bug. Only the hard rolls from the Italian bakery were perfect. As we sat down, nobody seemed to notice the flaws, except of course, the most obvious. Father Beatini still hadn't arrived.

Father Marvin, his best friend, made the decision. When he finally arrived, as we knew he eventually would, we were all to give him the cold shoulder. We were not going to let him get away with always being late.

Midway through the meal, one of the kids, stationed as a lookout, gave the signal. "He's coming. He's coming. Father Beatini is coming!" We all assumed ferocious scowls.

My husband and I met him at the door, our resolve lasting five seconds before we dissolved into laughter. Around the table he went, dispensing charm and lollipops which he'd brought in a brown paper bag as if we were all five-year-olds to be placated by sweets. And we were. But by the sweetness of the man. Not the candy.

Later we gathered around the piano, my sister Judy, who teaches music at West Point, at the keyboard. After many tries I'd finally got these two music makers together.

For three hours we sang, going through every song book in the house. Father would sing alone, in a duet, with the whole crowd. We sang the Italian songs, the Irish songs, the German songs. In between when we would stop for breath, the children would take over with solos — on the guitar, the piano, in small, piping voices.

Then Father would begin again; his beautiful tenor moving us all. Toward the end of the evening he sang the song he always included. With his arms around the "boys" as he called the editor and publisher of this paper, they rendered "No ti scordare di me" — do not forget me. His blue eyes filled and so did ours. It was a moment to remember always, a night to treasure.

Buono Sera, Don Giuseppe.

We will not forget you.