



## The Down News and the Up News

WHEN:

The pepper plants you so confidently set out at the end of May are pelted twice by hail in June . . .

And the big, fat (adorable?) rabbit that lives in the thicket next to the house discovers the garden is very accessible and very tasty . . .

And the end of the school year sees you as actively involved in the kids' review work and extra credit projects as they are . . .

And nobody will admit to having the kind of sneakers that leave geometric clumps of mud in the front hall . . .

And you inadvertently bleach the red soccer shirt to a rosy pink . . .

And the weather is so cold and bad you build a fire at 1 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon for both physical and psychological warmth . . .

And you learn that one more set of friends is

Sarah Child



All in the Family

moving away (this one to Raleigh, N.C.) . . .

And you discover that the mint chocolate ice cream you brought home because it doesn't tempt is really rather refreshing . . .

And you get a sinus headache, take something that makes you drowsy and you sleep through the youngest's concert . . .

Then you know that things could be better.

WHEN:

You discover the hail didn't do much damage after all.

And the rabbit (which really is sort of cute) doesn't eat that much . . .

And you realize that the end of school is really here . . .

And everybody pitches in to help you clean house including the muddy front hall . . .

And the soccer shirt proves to be last year's . . .

And the weatherman promises warm weather by the end of the week . . .

And somebody eats up all the ice cream thereby removing the temptation . . .

And the youngest makes it clear she forgives you, and says she wouldn't mind a trip to the custard stand to make up for all she suffered . . .

Then you know things are looking up.

## Too Human?

Our Church has always sought to balance both human and divine elements in its teaching and pastoral practice. Some writers today are arguing that we have shifted from a pre-Vatican Council excessively divine emphasis to a current exclusively human approach in Catholic thinking and action.

In those decades prior to Vatican II, for example, the priest who visited a critically ill person might read through the ritual prayers and administer the sacrament, but fail to spend much time in listening to the patient or the relatives. Interfaith couples who came to a rectory for marriage planning discovered rules about the who and where of the wedding that were rigid, offering few or no alternatives. Congregations at Mass prayed silently, gazed at the distant priest with his back to them and wondered in awe at the liturgy's mystery.

Behind those trends was an emphasis on the divine power working automatically in the sacraments, the God-given monolithic character of the Church and the nothingness of creatures who worship before an awesome Lord.

During the past 20 years we have shifted from that orientation. Thus to follow the illustrations, we stress the need for greater humanness in our ministry

Fr. Joseph M. Champlin



Our Church Family

to the sick, offer more flexibility to ecumenical couples and encourage congregational participation.

Two recent writings raise the questions: Have we overshifted? Are we now too human? Is the divine missing?

Clayton Vitz, associate professor of psychology at New York University, has written "Psychology as Religion: the Cult of Self-Worship" (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.). In this paperback, he attacks the psychological theories of the influential Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, and Rollo May, together with their many popularizers.

In Vitz's judgment, these writers and teachers, by overly emphasizing self-actualization, discovery of the self and fulfilling self needs, have replaced divine worship with self-worship, substituted the-I for God.

"I don't go to Church anymore because I never get anything out of it," reflects something of this trend.

Jesuit sociologist Joseph Fichter, writing in the April 1980 issue of that clerical journal, *Homiletic and Pastoral Care*, reports on a recent survey of Catholic health care institutions. His study revealed a conflict between those who consider current training programs for hospital chaplains or ministers too humanistic and others who believe the older approach was too religious.

Fichter's conclusion underscores the point of my remarks in this column:

"Bringing Christ to people in pain is a sacramental act but it is always also a human act. Ministry to the sick and dying was once mainly a priestly function, but is now carried on by many religious Sisters and lay people in parishes as well as in hospitals. It must continue to emphasize the spiritual dimension, but spirituality must be conveyed in the human mode. At the same time we have to avoid the tendency to replace theology with psychology, pastoral ministry with clinical counselling."

The three questions posed above merit pondering. For if we slip into either extreme we lose the balance, the mid-point at which stands truth and wisdom, the correct blend of the human and divine in what we believe and how we act as Catholics.

## 'I Wish I Had the Time . . .'

"I never seem to have the time," she said wistfully. Then she turned on me with some exasperation in her voice, "How do you find time for all you do?"

Find time? Nobody I know finds time. We divide it, conserve it, and squander it; but we don't find it. It's about the only commodity that is available to each of us in equal amounts. The use of it is what makes it seem unequal.

Time can be viewed and utilized in many ways. Here I'd like to discuss how. The first is time-gulps or short periods of time that consume a lifetime: We can either use them or lose them while waiting for the fantasy of long uninterrupted periods of time during which we think we can fulfill our dreams: write a book, become a gourmet cook, build a boat, study German, or jog. That's the second way of looking at time pertinent to this column.

I tend to make use of the half hours in my days so that puts me in the first category. I would prefer having a whole day or week to think about and write a short piece, but whole days are hard to come by so I take what I can get and take it gratefully.

I reflected on the topic last spring when I travelled from Milwaukee to Columbus, O., to deliver a lecture. Although my Columbus talk wasn't until

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Talks With Parents

7:30 p.m., I got up in Milwaukee at 7 a.m. to go through all the stages of travel and wait. I didn't get to my room in Columbus til three. Where did those eight hours go?

They evaporated into periods of 30-minutes: 30 for breakfast, a 30-minute wait for the airport limo, a 30-minute ride to the airport, 30 between baggage check-in and departure, a 30-minute flight from Milwaukee to Chicago, 30 to catch another plane, 30 to retrieve slow baggage in Columbus, 30 to get to my room at St. Mary's of the of the Springs. There was one long period — the flight itself — which took a little over an hour.

But by the time I reached Columbus I had read a voluminous Sunday paper, written six Easter cards with notes, studied my talk, written a new opening to a chapter in my book and caught a tiny refreshing nap on the plane.

I don't necessarily like using my time this way, but I have to. I saw others in waiting rooms staring at their hands, turning them over and over. I've never found my hands that interesting. My seatmate on the plane plugged in his earphones and beat his wrists to music all the way to Columbus. (I offered it up for Holy Week.) Two men traded the "Ain't the world awful?" conversation in the limo all the way to the airport.

I believe that women are better users of time snatches than men because we learn early to grab the half hours during naptime to accomplish what would not get done otherwise.

Businesses are discovering the time-efficient expertise of the empty nest mother. She knows how to use that quarter hour lurking here and there. Women don't expect solitude and serenity in which to work. We learned long ago to work with interruptions.

Those of us who accomplish our achievements in the midst of a busy family life aren't magicians. We don't have more time than others. We give up a lot — time others use to dream, to chat, to play tennis, to idle away. We shouldn't be envied but neither should we be apologetic. We just make different use of the half hours that eat up our lifetimes.