

Insights in Liturgy

Children's Prayer: A Cooperative Ministry

By Pam Schaeffer

To talk of a child and prayer is to talk of a cooperative ministry between adults and children. The first way we meet God is through the love and care of those in our immediate surroundings — those we look to for warmth, comfort, assurance, affirmation — our parents and other family members, friends and neighbors, and those in authority (i.e., teachers and other school personnel). The values and attitudes reflected by adult example have a powerful effect on the children in their care. Children, in turn, work marvels in adult lives by breathing a new enthusiasm into things that would normally be taken as ordinary. Through our children's eyes adult vision clouded over the years is once again focused. As adults we encounter God in still another way, through the innocent dependence of our children.

To minister to children we must enter their world. The wonder, awe, and pure joy found in this world is something most adults feel they had left behind long

ago. Parents, the first teachers of faith to their children; teachers, and all who work with young people soon happily discover that children willingly take us by the hand and invite us into this special world. We are privileged to enter our children's world and should enter fully aware of the impact our guidance (ministry) will have in their lives. And we are privileged further by allowing ourselves to grow with our children as they innocently minister to us.

In order to prepare children for life's demands, parents and all who minister to children must first of all be people of prayer. Children need to be prepared for full participation in the community's worship by seeing their parents and other adults pray. Mother, father and all who are invited into this cooperative ministry help children to see that prayer is what we all do as God's children. Seeing that adults take prayer seriously and that they pray at major moments, is a good experience for children. At home, while children are still very young, parents and other family members

should encourage prayer and help the child express in very simple words and gestures what he or she wants to say.

The family has the first responsibility in teaching human and Christian values. Among the human values which are a part of every child's formation — and a part of the eucharist and liturgical prayer as well — are these: being able to celebrate, to listen, to express thanks; to forgive and ask forgiveness, to greet and welcome others; to take part with a group in an activity; to share in a friendly meal, and to experience actions which are symbolic. (cf. Directory for Masses with Children, paragraphs 9 and 10). Gradually, more complicated situations might be considered: moderation in all things, doing one's best, working hard for the Lord, a feeling for the dignity of work, self-respect (a sense of our worth), a sense of honesty, concern for others, and respect for law. This is a sacred trust, an immense responsibility, yet parents need not be overwhelmed! This responsibility of ministry to our children is shared by the faith community and supported by their example, concern and

prayer.

Christian tradition calls us to specific times for prayer: morning, mealtimes and in the evening. But when ministering to our children, we must remain open to other opportunities: a moment of joy, wonder, thanks, when in trouble, in need of guidance or help, in danger, times of creativity, exploration and discovery. Sensitive adults will let the Spirit guide both themselves and their children in prayer, without forcing the children, or stifling the Spirit's action in them. Together, children and adults will grow toward a natural blending of daily life and prayer that will be carried over into the community's more formal times of worship.

This cooperative ministry is not a one-time, one-day task. It requires years of love, prayer, and patience. There are no easy formulas or instant recipes. Only a unified effort of prayer, suffering, love, patience and understanding will enable children, parents, teachers, parish ministers and the entire community of God's people ministering with each other to grow to our full stature in Christ.

Refugee Helper Gets Wilson Award

An American diplomat who organized international efforts to save hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean (Cambodian) people will be the recipient of the 1980 Joseph C. Wilson Award for achievement in international affairs.



ABRAMOWITZ

Morton I. Abramowitz, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, is credited with being more effective than any other individual in the continuing effort throughout 1979 to save the Cambodians. He organized emergency food convoys to the Thai/Cambodian border and cajoled international relief organizations to increase and improve their operations on behalf of the Cambodians.

He also was instrumental in encouraging the Thai

Government to establish centers to care for Cambodian refugees.

The Wilson Award will be given him at a public luncheon on Wednesday, Oct. 22, in Rochester's Americana Hotel. A \$10,000 honorarium will accompany the award.

Camp Benefit

The second annual Camp Stella Maris Benefit Dinner-Dance is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 24 at the Burgundy Basin Inn; 1361 Marsh Rd., starting at 8 p.m. Funds from the event will provide capital improvements at the camp, including replacement of a motorboat destroyed by fire last summer and kitchen improvements.

Tickets for the dinner-dance can be obtained by calling 381-3134, or 223-1651.

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Volunteers Work In Appalachia

Some 300 college and high school men, including six from the Rochester diocese, participated in a summer program working with the poor in Appalachia. The program was sponsored by the Glenmary Home Missioners.

According to a Glenmary release, assignments vary by location and need. "Many of the men spend daylight hours at hard manual labor, repairing and winterizing homes. Some are engaged in visitation programs, calling on isolated people. Volunteers teach Bible schools, assist at day care centers and sheltered workshops," the release said.

The six men who participated in the program from this diocese are Martin Kenney of Fairport, Brian McDermott of Seneca Falls, Jim and Larry



TY LAMBERT

Kurmis from Rochester, Ty Lambert of Elmira and Kevin Whalen of Elmira.

The release said that "Volunteers learn the



JIM KURMIS

meaning of mission, because in some places only one out of every 200 people is Catholic, yet more than 41 percent of the population is unchurched."



BRIAN McDERMOTT



MARTIN KENNEY

NE Block Alliance

The North East Block Club-Alliance of Rochester will have its third annual convention from 6 to 11 p.m., Monday, Oct. 27, at the Neighborhood Street Academy, 316 Bay St. The agenda includes workshops, dinner and election of officers. All are welcome to attend; no charge.

Bloodmobile

The Red Cross Bloodmobile will be at St. Lawrence Church, 1000 North Greece Rd. from 1 to 7 p.m. on Oct. 29. The day following, the unit will be at Mother of Sorrows Church, 5000 Mt. Read Blvd. from 1 to 7 p.m. Babysitting services will be available at both sites.

A Typical Bishop Sheen Ceremony

New York (RNS) — A block of a busy crosstown Manhattan street was renamed for one of America's best known priests whose name became a household word in pre-Vatican II Catholicism.

Standing on the steps of St.

Agnes Church, Mayor Edward Koch proclaimed that East 43rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues henceforth would be known as Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. Bishop Sheen was formerly bishop of the Rochester diocese.

A lunch hour crowd of more than 1,000 filled the block, following an outdoor Mass on the church steps. The renaming coincided with the posthumous publication of the archbishop's autobiography, "Treasure in Clay." The bishop died last Dec. 10 at the age of 84.

The ceremony was typically New York. Mayor Koch recalled having been in St. Patrick's Cathedral last year when Archbishop Sheen embraced Pope John Paul II.

Hildegard, the longtime popular singer who often attends St. Agnes, did the Mass readings and led the crowd in singing "God Bless America." Mayor Koch pulled the draperies away from the bright new street sign, and the nearby Grand Hyatt Hotel served coffee and rolls.

Msgr. Joseph M. Brew who celebrated the Mass said it was the sort of ceremony that Archbishop Sheen, "who loved New York," would have made his own.

Indian Cardinal To Visit Diocese

Cardinal Joseph Parecattil, Archbishop of Ernakulam, Kerala, India, and a member of the Chaldean-Malabar Rite, will be the guest of Bishop Matthew H. Clark and the diocese this weekend.

The cardinal will be the principal celebrant of the noon Mass at St. Andrew's Church on Portland Avenue, Sunday, Oct. 26. Also celebrating will be Father John Hempel, pastor, Father Robert Gaudio, associate and Father Joseph Reinhart,

diocesan director of the Propagation of the Faith.

The cardinal is in the U.S. en route to his home in India following a stint as a participant in the 1980 Synod of Bishops in Rome. He is a member of the Congregation of the Oriental Rite, the Secretariat for Non-Christians, and the Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law. He is president of the Commission for the Revision of the Oriental Code of Canon Law.

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