Special Awards

Stella Garland, left, was one of 64 volunteers at St. Ann's Home/The Heritage that were honored with special service recognition pins from Sister Marie Michelle Peartree, right, administrator of the complex. The recipients were praised as part of National Volunteer Recognition Week for the total of 77,000 hours of service they have put in. Mrs. Garland has volunteered her services for 11 years, a total of 6,480 hours.

Fr. Louis J. Hohman

The Open Window

Criticism Causes Wounds

Dear Father Hohman,

My 10-year-old son has just returned from serving Mass at our parish church. After having been on the altar for every Holy Week service, including the 2½-hour Easter Vigil last night, he still felt he wanted to serve the 7 a.m. Mass today. He really loves being on the altar. So far. He came through the kitchen door today in tears, because the priest whom he and another were serving had unkindly criticized them during and after Mass. My concern here, of course, for my son and his brother who has also been in the same situation, and for the other boys that I have seen being criticized while on the altar — all in front of the congregation. A demoralizing and demeaning experience for young kids whom we hope are learning to love the Church and her priests. These negative experiences are coming at a time in their lives when they start to think for themselves — when their relationship with the men in the rectory could really make a difference in whether they decide on a career serving God, or even whether to adhere to the Faith.

Is there any way to make priests sensitive to this?

(Signed) JLJ

Dear JLJ,

I hope this article will be seen by the priest you have in mind as well as others who have a problem maintaining their equanimity in the face of the faults and failings of little boys.

I think you should speak to your son about this situation and indicate to him that it is impossible to know what this priest's problem is but that it is his problem. There could be all sorts of factors involved in a situation like this — perhaps physical pain or a bad family situation or some other factor which leads to this kind of impatience. I realize this does not excuse the impatience but it at least explains it. I think your son needs to realize that human beings do have these kinds of failings (whether they be priests or not) and that sometimes they don't realize them or simply can't help them.

Your son sounds like very fertile field for vocation and it would be a shame to damage that possibility in any way but I think you can make this a teaching moment for him, explaining that we are indeed a pilgrim Church on her way to something better, and that includes the leadership. We are all in the same boat, having our own individual faults and failings and needing the saving love of Jesus Christ. Perhaps that might be even a stronger motivation for aspiring to leadership in the Church which needs men and women who will inspire others to hasten on to the journey in the Kingdom.

It is also very possible that this priest really considers the perfect carrying out of ritual as more important than the persons involved. That is a mistake which was commonly made in ages gone by and perhaps lingers in a few of our leaders even to this day. Again, the problem is his, not your son's.

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SPECIAL MISCELLANEOUS

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

ST. JUDE: O Holy St. Jude, apostle and martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke you, special patron in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depths of my heart and humbly beg you to whom God has given such great power, to come to my assistance. Help me now in my present and urgent need and grant my earnest petition. In return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. Say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys and three Glorias. This novena has never been known to fail. SCJ

ST. JUDE: help us. G.

THANKS TO St. Jude, Jesus, Blessed Mother, St. Anthony for favor received. LDN

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