



Photos by Terrance J. Brennan



Principals at Father Nouwen's party (clockwise from top left): Father Nouwen, applauding a speech; the Nouwen sons, Henri (facing camera) embracing Laurent, as Paul stands by; Father Don McNeil, co-author of "Compassion," toting flowers to the party table, the familiarity of the face and name perhaps due to recognition that his father hosted the nationally broadcast "Breakfast Party;" L.J.M. Nouwen, patriarch of the clan.

## A Weekend in the Country

By John Dash

One plays a guessing game, dared by the man's sparkling, steady eyes, to figure his age. He helps. "Remember, my son is 50

years old." An honest assessment then. "I would say you are 68," one says. "No!" he pounces with glee. "I'm nearly 80." And with that statement,

he sweeps off to take the starring role at a party of stars, supremely sure of his place in the scheme of festivities surrounding his son's anniversary celebration.

He is L.J.M. Nouwen, retired now, once a Professor of Law at the University of Nijmegen, once a lawyer in private practice in his native Holland. He says of his eldest son, "Henri has not changed ever. He is the same. I remember when he was one year old, sitting in his box of papers, reading — always reading. I look at him now, and he has not changed."

The son, Henri, is fairly well known across this country and elsewhere. He is the author of several books, "The Wounded Healer," "In Memoriam," and "The Genesee Diary," among them.

Last week's party at the the Abbey of Our Lady of the Genesee in Piffard was to observe Henri's 25th anniversary of ordination as a priest of Utrecht. The party featured his father and



Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

## We Failed To Celebrate Mass Enough

It is almost as inevitable as death and taxes that on the occasion of a Saturday afternoon wedding, the priest will be asked, "Does this Mass count for Sunday?"

Knowing full well that the question is going to be asked, I still get a bit upset over the fact that we have done such a poor job of teaching people the meaning of the Sunday Mass obligation.

The question implies that what we are dealing with is a legal obligation and that the fulfillment of it is simply the automatic attendance at a service called Mass. While it is true that the Church recently began the celebration of Sunday on Saturday evening (as is the Jewish way of reckoning a day, sundown to sundown), nevertheless the celebrations are distinct and totally different.

The one is a celebration of the commitment of a man

and woman to each other in marriage and the Sunday Eucharist is a celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ at the beginning of a new week. So outside of the fact that both of them contain the eucharistic consecration and communion they are totally different celebrations and have no other relationship.

Now for the distressing part.

It is not that people are trying to get off easy. That is a very understandable human feeling. Rather, we have not been effective in bringing people to a sense of joy in the celebration of the Eucharist whereby they would simply want to attend and rejoice in the fact they could do it twice in one week because of the wedding. So the lament is not really directed toward the people who ask the question but toward ourselves who simply have not fulfilled our responsibility to make the celebration of the Eucharist so beautiful and so joyful and so meaningful that people will choose to come without the constraint of law.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

## It'll Be Neat But Empty

A little of this and some of that...

• When the children grow up and move away the white couch will stay white, the bedrooms neat and the kitchen floor clean, and we won't have to move bikes, soccer balls and baseball bats everytime we want to put a car in the garage. And when the children grow up and move away none of the above will mean a thing.

• My young cousin Bob who works in Pittsburgh calls his mother in Potter County every Sunday morning after he goes to Mass. On a recent sultry Sunday he called earlier than usual explaining that, yes, he'd been to church but the homily had been the shortest on record.

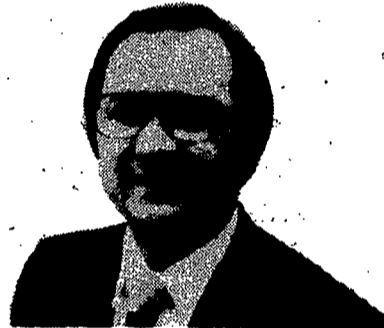
Following the gospel the

priest eyeballed the perspiring congregation for a moment and then delivered his one-line sermon: "If you think this is hot, just wait 'til you get to hell."

In relating the above story, Bob's Mom didn't say what kind of reaction the homilist got, but in our own parish recently another succinct statement garnered some guffaws when a Philippine missionary here to plead for seminary funds confessed that the pastor had advised him that "The longer I talk the less money I'll get."

• Sometimes I think the most exciting thing that happens in our block is the weekly arrival of the garbage trucks. The little boys follow them around on their tricycles, the dogs start up a chorus of barking and I, discovering yet another unemptied bathroom basket, rush to the garage, housecoat aflapping.

## THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



EDWIN SULEWSKI  
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

What should I say when I go to the funeral home?

What you say may not be nearly as important as the fact that you are willing to go to pay your respects. Saying the "right thing" is nearly impossible. In fact there may be no "right thing" to say that adequately expresses how we feel. Many bereaved persons have told us that comforting words aren't the only way to help! Presence at the funeral home is equally important to communicate your sympathy and concern. A hug or briefly holding your friend's hand is a good way to say "I care." When a friend loses a loved one, express your feelings either verbally or non-verbally in person at the funeral home or as soon as possible after the funeral.

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