

# Mary's Birthday Celebration Set

The Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated all day Sept. 8 at Holy Rosary Church. According to Mrs. Mary Kelly, the feast of the nativity will start at 9 a.m. and conclude with a 7:30 hour of prayer which will include recitation of the rosary and benediction conducted by Father Dennis Bonsignore.

She said that pictures depicting the Virgin's life will

be on display throughout the church during the day.

At the concluding rites, she said, a rite of personal consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will be held. She said the rite is similar to the consecration made May 13 by Pope John Paul II.

A feature of that rite will be the singing of Schubert's "Ave Maria," by Johanna Valentina.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

## Attitude Changes Necessary

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 7/31-37. (R1) Is. 35/4-7. (R2) Jas. 2/1-5.

A woman and her husband interrupted their vacation to go to a dentist. "I want a tooth pulled, and I don't want gas because I'm in a big hurry," the woman said, "so just extract the tooth as quickly as possible and we'll be on our way."

The dentist was quite impressed and said, "You're certainly a courageous woman. Which tooth is it?" The woman turned to her husband and said, "Show him your tooth, dear."

Sunday's gospel and first reading are about the deaf and dumb — the handicapped. Our attitude toward them can be not unlike the woman's toward her husband. How often those who don't experience pain usually call the shots.

What can we do for the handicapped — the 36 million of them in America? Should we say, "Hang in there; in time you'll be made whole"? Do you really believe that? Or should we remind them of a Helen Keller or a Franklin Roosevelt and tell them to make the most of it? Wouldn't that sound a bit hollow, since we are not afflicted? Or should we say, "Sweet are the uses of adversity. When the Lord sends tribulation upon you, it is your duty to tribute it"? Easy enough for us to say, since we're not the sufferers. Well, then, what ought we to do in regard to the handicapped?

One thing I think we can do is to change our attitudes toward them. One tragically wrong attitude most of us seem to have is to assume that disabled people are different from us more than they are like us, that their disabilities somehow set them apart from the rest of us.

So often in fiction disabled persons are not only set apart from others but they are often cast as villains, plotting demented revenge on lily-white heroes and heroines. Physical beauty in these stories symbolizes goodness, disability evil. And it seems the evil, disabled ones are always out to destroy the pretty ones. Who has not cursed Captain Hook and cried for Peter Pan and Wendy? Who has not rooted

for the white whale against Captain Ahab? Who can remember Quasimodo, the hunchback of Notre Dame, and not wonder about the innocence of his intentions? Our memories of these and other characters often are stronger than any beautiful experience we may have had with disabled individuals in real life.

Somehow in the backs of our minds, we associate disabilities with sin, evil and danger.

And the pity of it all, countless films have exploited the problems of the disabled for dramatic effect. In "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter," a deaf man commits suicide out of loneliness. "See No Evil" revolves around the helplessness of a blind woman, pursued by a homicidal maniac. "A Patch of Blue" draws parallels between blindness and race. The disabled characters in these films often do exhibit strength and autonomy, yet the stress is on the disabilities rather than the abilities, on difference rather than on similarity.

Even our annual telethons manage to portray disabled children as static, helpless, dependent, lonely, frightened objects requiring our dollars to become human.

What is a handicap other than just a biological condition? We do not think of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a great crippled president; we think of him as a great president, who, among other things, happened to be crippled.

Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar were epileptics. Lord Byron had a club foot; Alexander Pope, curvature of the spine. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a paraplegic. Milton was blind when he wrote "Paradise Lost." Beethoven was deaf when he composed the Ninth Symphony.

To speak of these men and women as handicapped seems a contradiction in terms. A successful individual is one who can carry out certain adult functions so well that other adult functions are judged irrelevant. Do we remember FDR's wheelchair or his cigarette holder?

One of the ways, therefore, that we can best administer to the handicapped — to make the lame leap, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the dumb shout for joy — is to change our attitudes, to see them more like us than unlike us!

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