

## Searching for the quiet

By Bob Dylak  
NC News Service

A police chaplain who worked in a parish and moonlighted as a hospital chaplain told me once that his busy schedule actually helped him keep in touch with God. He explained that his work was his prayer because he brought his mind and hands to the task, but looked to his heart for the reasons.

Last year I did a lot of train travel in the New York-New Jersey area. I found myself waiting on platforms on some terrific summer evenings. I would think about my day in terms of how well I had related to others and whether I had done anything to build up God's kingdom. On a lot of those days I found myself promising to do better with the next sunrise.

In the winter I rode a bus through Newark, N.J., and wondered if I had done anything during the day that had meaning for my fellow passengers.

Each person lives 10,080 minutes a week. No more, no less. While most of us tend to be relatively careful money managers, we are probably less careful of time, even though minutes are finite. Once they're spent they cannot be recaptured.

That's why I find it important to develop a plan for "spending" time and to consider ways of "investing" it.

Is it possible to find time for reflection and prayer in a fast-paced, action life? What chance is there for those of us living in a world of work?

Each day we are hit with a barrage of words, pictures, people, distractions, demands. A way is needed to penetrate that activity to find our inner core — the spirit that makes us unique and that moves us to act.

To do that, it's important to break with some demands of the moment. The first step is planning.

Consider leaving a little early for work. Drive to your destination without playing the car radio. Park the car and give yourself a few minutes to think, to pray.

Are there a few minutes before or after lunch? What about the end of the day, while others rush home? Could this be a time to linger a few minutes in thought?

Using such times for prayerful reflection can be habit-forming. Once a habit develops it is easier to find time for it.

The key to capturing time is an ability to focus.

The blaring radios, the hustle of activity all around need to be put aside. Focus on what you are about and where you are really going. Ask yourself those questions regularly; the answers may begin to surprise you.

Find ways to save time, ways that remind you to pray. Just setting the breakfast table before going to bed at night can yield an extra free minute in the morning.

Check out different methods of prayer until you find one that appeals to you and helps you develop a perspective. That prayer style is probably right for you.

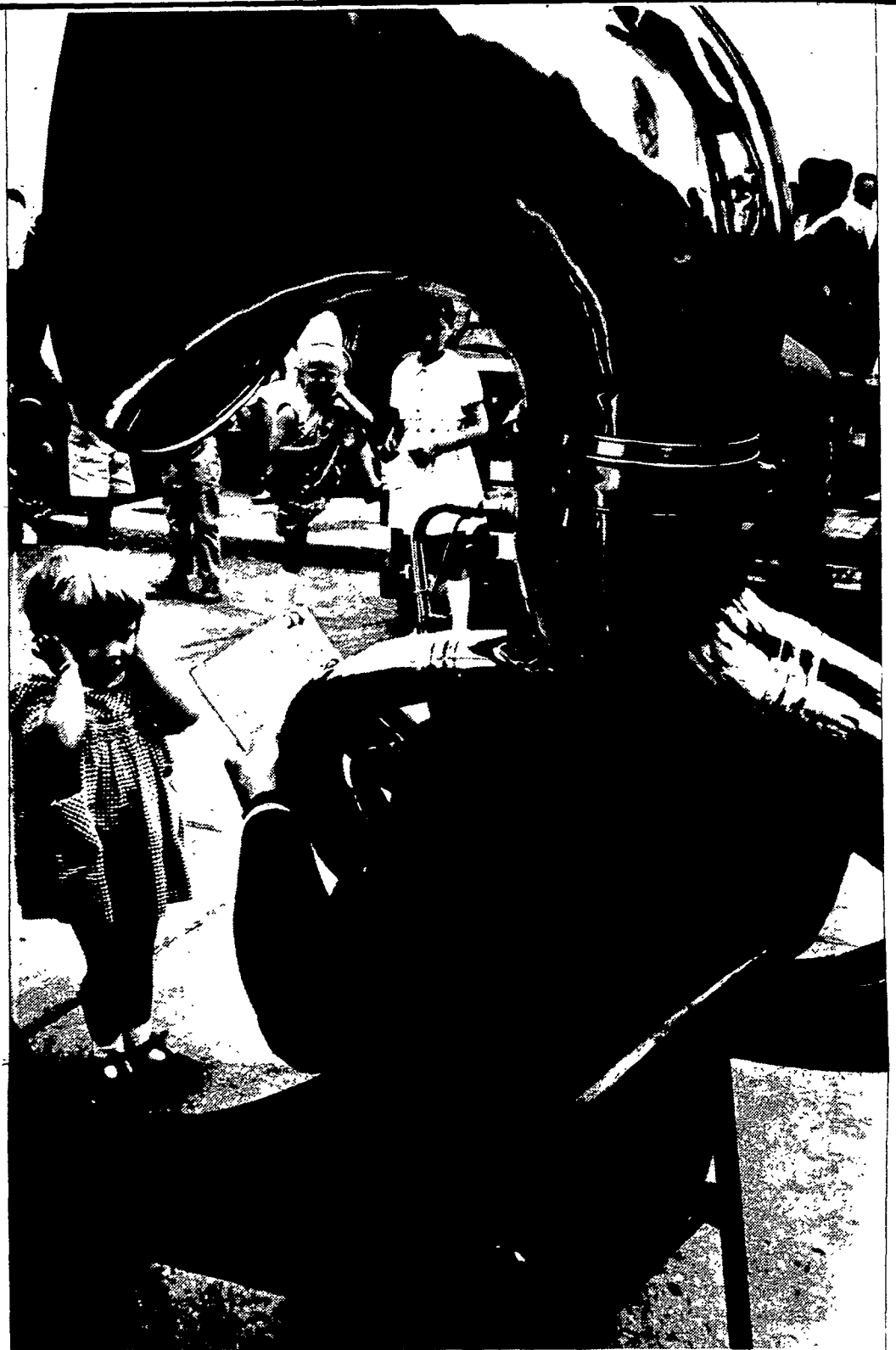
The key is to make the time. Then attempt to move closer to God, or perhaps just allow God to move closer to you.

Try to place yourself in the presence of the Lord. Don't work at feeling anything in particular. Listen. Don't expect anything dramatic. God doesn't work that way — with most of us anyway.

But if you are consistent, I think you will find yourself being restored.

And you may well find that this reminds you how much you are worth, in light of God's care for you, just as it reminds you of the worth of everyone else you encounter from the shopping-bag woman to the executive to the president of the country.

(Dylak is editor of *The Advocate*, Newark, N.J.)



## An epic story of sin and conversion

By Father John Castelot  
NC News Service

One evening King David decided to take a stroll on the roof of his palace and enjoy the cool breeze. The events that took place after that stroll constitute one of the Bible's great stories of sin and conversion.

From the roof, David happened to see a beautiful neighbor. Consumed with desire, he sent for her. "When she came to him, he had relations with her" (2 Samuel 11,4).

Some time later, the woman, whose name was Bathsheba, sent word to David that she was pregnant. This presented a dilemma. For her husband was away, fighting in David's army. It would eventually become obvious that Bathsheba had been unfaithful during his absence.

David dispatched a message to his general mandating a furlough for the husband, Uriah, who could stay with Bathsheba while home. Her condition then would not need explanation.

However, David did not reckon with Uriah's character. Uriah refused to enjoy the comforts of home while his friends were fighting and dying. He insisted on camping at the palace gate with the officers stationed there.

David was cornered. He decided on a desperate plan.

Uriah was sent back to the battlefield with a message instructing his commander to put him in the front line where he almost certainly would be killed. And he was.

The king now had compounded adultery with murder, but had saved face.

One man was not fooled by

these maneuvers. That was the prophet Nathan. He came to David with a little parable.

It concerned a man who had only one little lamb, a cherished pet. His rich neighbor had "herds in great numbers." One day the rich man had a visitor and, instead of slaughtering one of his lambs for dinner, "he took the poor man's ewe lamb and made a meal of it."

On hearing that, David shouted, "The man who has done this deserves death!" Nathan responded: "You are the man!" He went on to predict dire punishments for the king.

"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'" Nathan answered: "The Lord on his part has forgiven your sin; you shall not die" (2 Samuel 12:13).

David suffered for his sin. But he had the strength of character

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