

# A smile costs nothing, but enriches so many

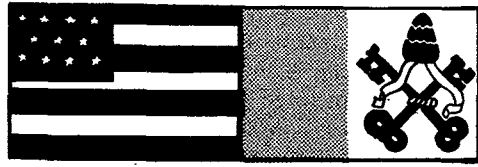
By Father Paul Cuddy  
Courier columnist

It seems to me that many of today's youngsters — ranging in age from 5 to 16 — do not normally smile. Observe them. So many walk, talk and carry a facial expression halfway between grim and gloomy.

I wonder why. Is it the impact of TV programs? Is there trouble at home between parents? Is it the frightening world news, with wars and rumors of wars seeping into conversations? Are the youngsters worried about the future?

Could it be that no one hugs them as an assurance that they are loved, an assurance everyone needs? Is it the news of murders, muggings, molestations, sometimes in their own area? Have they lost confidence in God and His providence? Have they missed the devotion to their Guardian Angel? Is religion only a weak guiding force?

Readers can speculate and add to these conjectures. But for years I have been an "apostle of the smile," to cheer people's



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

hearts, to give courage and contentment.

Many years ago I was chaplain at a state sanitarium, where patients with tuberculosis remained for months and even years. The patience of these patients was wonderful to behold. Their patience and courage were greatly reinforced by cheerful nurses, doctors, aides and hospital workers.

These patients also were reinforced by the care of relatives and friends who would visit them, send cards, little gifts, but always with good cheer. That was no place for gloomy Johns and Janes.

One afternoon I was visiting a patient, a woman about 50 years old. She was intellectually bright, deeply religious, beau-

tifully accepting a great cross — an edification to me. As we were talking, the charge nurse came in to give her medication.

I greatly admired this nurse. She was the perfection of primness, neatness and efficiency. Her hair was braided as Bavarian women used to wear their hair — every hair and braid in perfect place. Her white cap and nurse uniform were immaculately starched. Her white shoes, quiet and practical.

As she left I remarked: "That Nurse Lizette is a wonderful nurse." My friend replied: "Yes. She is." Then she paused for about 10 seconds and added pensively: "If only she would smile!"

That was the first time I realized that I had never seen Lizette smile. I think it was this chance remark which put me into the "Apostolate of the Cheerful Smile."

Two sixth-graders recently served as altar boys for me during the 7:30 a.m. Mass in Waterloo. They were fine boys, David and Andrew, but so somberly earnest. Gradually breaking the ice a little more each morning, I had them smiling a bit by Thursday.

On Friday they were smiling better. I thanked them for their good service and said: "I have a present for you. Have your mothers put it on the refrigerator in the kitchen, and have the whole family read it often."

And this is the counsel, my gift to them: "A smile costs nothing, but gives much. It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it often times lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it, and none so poor but that he can be made rich by it."

"A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and it is nature's best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until given away."

"Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile as much as he who has no more to give."

# Jacob and Esau reconcile after a 20-year separation

By Cindy Bassett  
Courier columnist

"Why are we going back to your homeland?" Rachel again asked her husband Jacob. "You haven't seen your brother or heard from him in 20 years."

"I know, but it's time," Jacob said. Leah, Rachel's sister and Jacob's other wife, added another sobering thought. "Have you forgotten what Esau said the last time he did see you?"

"I've never forgotten," Jacob said. "Esau vowed that if he ever saw me again, he would kill me."

"You are not happy here with my father?" Rachel continued her questioning. "Jacob, you are a rich man with many livestock. I just don't understand," she said, shaking her head.

"I am afraid," Jacob admitted, "and this wasn't even my idea. God told me to go back. And he promised to be with me."

Jacob set out for Canaan the next day with everyone and everything he had accumulated during his 20 years in Haran.

"Why does Esau hate his brother so much that he promised to kill him?" Jacob overheard one of his servants asking.

Jacob revealed the reason to them. "I cheated him out of his birthright. We were twins, but Esau was born a few minutes before me. Being firstborn made Esau heir to all of my father's possessions. One day, when my father was old and nearly blind, I tricked my father into giving me the bless-

ing of the firstborn. Esau and I have been enemies ever since."

When they were still several days journey away from Esau, Jacob decided to send him a message. "Dear brother, I have been living with Uncle Laban for the past 20 years. I am coming to see you and I hope you will be friendly to me."

Jacob camped in the same place in the wilderness and kept a constant vigil until his messengers finally returned.

"Well, what did my brother say?" he asked.

"He said nothing," one of the men replied.

"Your brother is en route here now with 400 men!" the other servant added.

Jacob divided his large family, his servants and his herds into two groups. "Perhaps if my brother attacks one section, the others may be able to escape and be saved."

After he had done this, Jacob prayed: "O God, I am not worthy of your mercy and kindness. It was you who told me to return to my brother and make peace. You promised to be with me. Please deliver us from destruction now!"

The next morning, Jacob decided to



## THE BIBLE CORNER

make a peace offering to present to Esau. He selected some of his best animals from his herds of goats, rams, cows, bulls and donkeys. He appointed a herdsman over each of them.

"You are to go separately before us to Esau," Jacob instructed. "When you meet my brother, tell him to accept these animals as a gift from Jacob who is coming to meet him."

The next day when Jacob looked over the desert, it looked like a dust storm in the distance. But it was the ground being churned up by the army of horses and riders that were coming toward his camp.

Jacob got on his horse and went to meet his brother alone. When they had come within sight of each other, Esau and his

men suddenly stopped. Jacob dismounted and walked toward his brother and bowed seven times.

When Jacob saw his brother running toward him, he felt certain that Esau would kill him now. But his brother embraced him warmly and they both cried for a long time together.

"Who are all of these people?" Esau finally said when he noticed Rachel and Leah and all of the children standing a few feet away.

"This is my family," Jacob said proudly. And he introduced each one of his wives and children to his brother.

They spent the entire day getting to know each other. "I'm sorry, Esau," Jacob said at last. "It should not have taken all of these years to set things right between us."

**Scripture Reference:** Genesis 31:3; 32 and 33.

**Meditation:** "If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23-24.

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