
THE AWAKENING

The morning air is rudly stirred,
The men get up, their eyes are blurred;
They grope about, they gripe and shout;
But deep inside the will is stout.

Their toilet o'er, they slowly file,
Across the walk and down the aisle;
They bow their heads and humbly pray;
St. Dunstan's men begin their day.

—DAVE KENNEDY '52

"CHRISTMAS AND THE FAMILY"

During the Christmas season families are knit closer together than at any other time of year. The bond of mutual affection of the family is stronger. Could not this bond of affection be extended to other seasons of the year? Is it not possible for parents to prove to their children and to the world that in this era of iron curtains and armed truce, the spirit of Christ in Christmas is needed to restore the bond of perpetual charity between God and His creature, man? Surely, if such an atmosphere permeated family life, human society would experience a much healthier vitality.

Christmas is particularly a time for children who must be consoled and kept happy. Even though world problems are pressing, parents cannot neglect to be always solicitous for their children's general welfare. Parents need only remember that God himself comes at Christmas as a child, a helpless Babe, utterly defenceless, needing the comfort and support of others.

The application of the Nativity to the degenerate conditions of modern family living is vitally significant. Over seventy years ago, Leo XIII lamented that family life had been overtaken by many deplorable conditions. Among those indignities, Pope Leo enumerated the violation of the dignity of Matrimony as reduced to a mere civil contract, neglect of mutual fidelity, decline in obedience and respect of children for their parents, and relaxation of the ties of domestic affection. Since the time of Pope Leo the pernicious evils assailing homes and families have greatly increased. So apparent are the vices in

domestic society during our time that any further enumeration would be superfluous. All this corruption assails directly or indirectly the unity and perpetuity of Christian Marriage which are its two fundamental properties. Christian marriage is the union of one man and one woman. Unity of marriage established by a Sacrament, is a symbol of the union of Christ and His Church.

The bond of this perpetual union is Charity. The degree of Charity determines the strength of unity. Families united in love are forces that overcome the innate selfishness of man's fallen nature as well as the degrading, disruptive influence of the secularized world. While the immediate of man's fallen nature as well as the degrading, disruptive influence of the secularized world. While the immediate cause of the disintegration of the modern home varies, the basic cause is the diminishing bond of love which binds together husbands and wives, parents and children. True love calls for common life together. It demands generous personal sacrifice by each member for the good of all, the sharing of joys and sorrows, triumph and despair.

No other time could be more ideal for the inception of real family life than at Christmas. The Christmas season has always been identified with homes and families. It has always been a home feast, a day when all the family wish to be together at home. On the first Christmas, Mary, Joseph, and the Son of God were together. This very fact impresses us with the importance of keeping Christmas a simple home feast rather than further commercializing it. As in previous years, many will not be home at Christmas. This is true for many families every Christmas. The missing members will dream of a Christmas at home, perhaps, a white Christmas. Back home, even though some places are vacant, there will be a lighted tree, tinsel wreaths, and candles in the widow. Despite the nostalgic memories of absent or departed ones, the joy of the Nativity can still ring true and permeate the family group, a joy evidenced largely by true charity and mutual hope in God.

To establish a true family spirit at Christmas, it is not sufficient only to be aware of the significance of the Nativity and the Christian concept of marriage. Homes must be made holier through a spiritual revival. To prevent our homes from becoming completely impregnated by secularism, their whole atmosphere must be saturated with genuine Christian living. The only hope for the restoration of marital unity lies in common assistance at Mass as well as the spiritual food of the Blessed Sacra-



The Nativity

ment. Souls will be drawn together as well as bodies. Cardinal Newman remarked that "The heart of every Catholic ought to represent in miniature the true Church." But much more significant is the fact that the union of all through Christ is the unity of the family circle. Besides being the fundamental unit of society, the family is also the basic link in the corporate worshipping chain of the Mystical Body.

Religion is steeped in family life. If the task of a spiritual revival is to remain solely with the priests of the Church, religion may soon be lost to a large part of humanity. Individuals and families need to take up the torch to achieve a return to spirituality. Family prayer in common and common recreation will be a big factor in strengthening the family bond in a true spiritual revival. This revival is the only hope to resolve world chaos and must come from the most important social institution.

The essential joy of a family Christmas is unruffled by political anarchy and unmarred by man's folly. In this age the wonder of the first Christmas still remains perpetually true, the glorious wonder of Christ's being born for man. Many homes may be broken by divorce, discord and dissolutionment; but contentment, happiness and peace will dwell in the family circle that finds room for Christ. Each member of that family has something deep inside him which nothing on earth can reach or destroy. The union of Love between God and each member of the family cements and perpetuates the family group, the basic unit of society, the very core of humanity.

—PETER BEATON '52

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace,
Where there is hatred, let sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled, as to console:
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

—St. Francis of Assisi.