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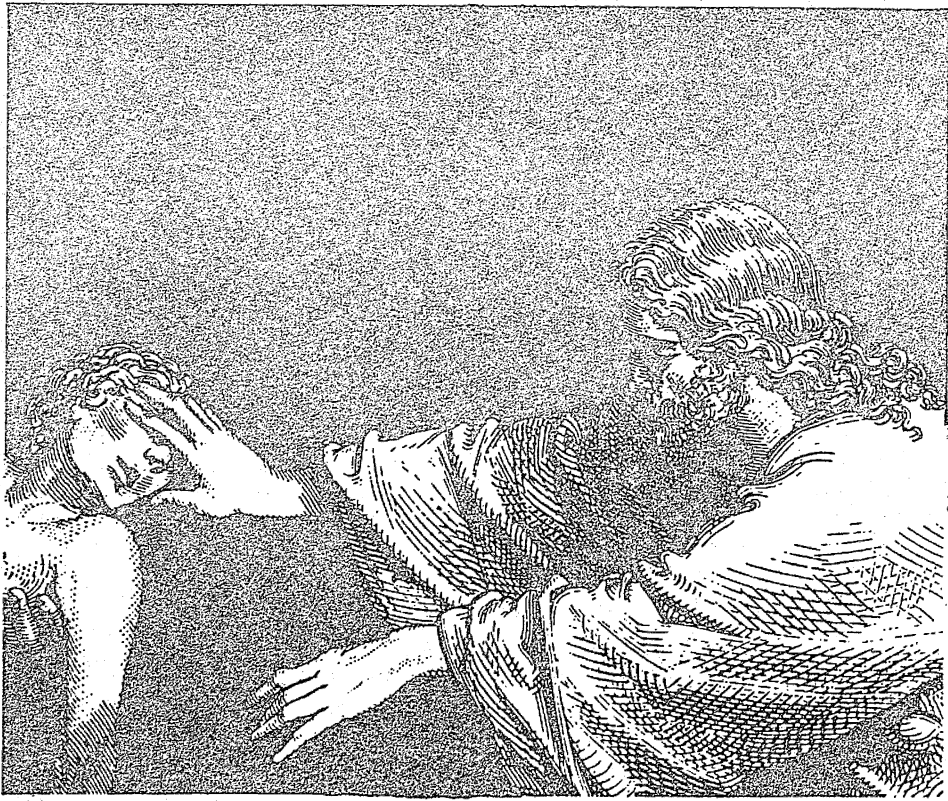
BULLETIN

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Volume II-Issue II Sept. 8, 1985

Office of University Ministry
University of Notre Dame

EPHAPHATHA



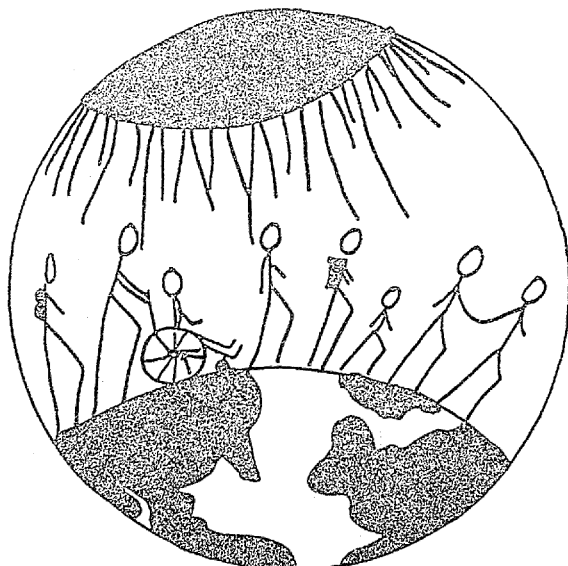
*The eyes of the blind will be opened...
ears of the deaf cleared...
dumb will sing... lame will leap...*

He looked like a 20th century Abe Lincoln; he thought clearly and deeply; he lived with courage and intense caring for this place and its people. At his funeral last April, Sacred Heart Church was filled with many of us who cared a great deal for him. Together we wept for Stephen Rogers knowing that Notre Dame would never be quite the same without him.

Others have said that despite his blindness Steve saw more than most of us. I know that his inner vision was remarkably keen. Since his death I have prayed more often to him than for him.

My recent discussions with Stephen concern our Notre Dame students who live with some kind of physical disability. His own lack of physical vision combined with his deep inner vision gifted him with a force which impacted them in a powerful way. Building upon his effective advocacy for these students, the University has recently named a Coordinator for Disabled Students. In that role I have already received perceptible guidance from Steve and have been immeasurably enriched by those newly in my concern.

Today Isaiah, James and Mark tell us forcibly that among God's favorite and most favored people are the blind, the deaf, the lame, the mute, the frightened, the hungry, the poor. That message should bring us to attention. Our natural sympathies lead us to regard these fellow travelers with a compassion born of conviction that they have suffered misfortune rather than favor. And indeed there is a human sadness in the struggle that is theirs. But the message tells us there is more.



When Isaiah reveals that "...the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will be cleared,...the lame will leap like a stag, the tongue of the mute will sing" he refers to the future---to the lifetime and the miracles of Jesus and to the final resurrection of the human family. Mark's historical account has Jesus actually curing the deaf man with a speech impediment. Other Gospel passages teach us that Jesus touched spirits as well as bodies and brought persons to a wholeness of life.

It is that wholeness of life which brings me to admire our students with disabilities. They are young people with a head start on maturity and wisdom. In dealing with their physical limits they have incorporated values it takes most of us a lifetime to learn. Realistic about what they cannot do, they also know their gifts and, with gentle self-assurance, they expect to succeed in life. They are people of courage and ingenuity of patience, optimism and appreciation. They are men and women of broad and varied interests, constantly seeking new ways to challenge themselves. It is easy to see that they are especially favored by God.

In dealing with my new friends I, in turn, have met some of their friends and family members. Even those brief meetings have confirmed what I had begun to suspect. Lending one's eyes, legs, mouth, ears, or hands to those who need them brings out the best in the 99% of us here who can dance and sing and watch the sunset. There is much that 1% of Notre Dame men and women have to teach. They are a treasure among us and understandably among God's favorites.



John Miriam Jones P. C.
assistant provost

The physically handicapped remind us of our own brokenness, our own spiritual disability.

At the root of our fear is the belief that if our inner brokenness were known we would be rejected and abandoned. That is the fear we act out when we ignore and reject them. To the extent that we humble ourselves before God we can know we are loved, simply for what we are—selfish human flesh. Our blindness keeps us from facing our need for Jesus Christ.

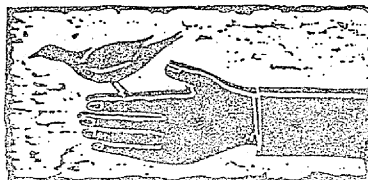
To the extent that we pride ourselves on being self-sufficient we judge those who are not. That is we discount and ignore them—the handicapped, a child of a loving God. Once freed from fear of our inner brokenness we can accept and engage those who manifest an outer brokenness in a handicap.

-Author Unknown-

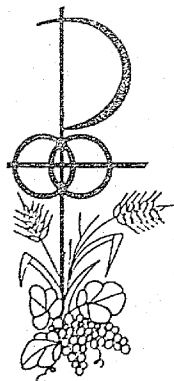
"If I don't believe that God is God of the Exodus, I should shut up short. God is in charge. He is concerned with the total liberation of all His children.

The God I worship is not a god of the status quo. He is a God of surprises. He is a God Who says, 'I make all things new.'"

Desmond Tutu

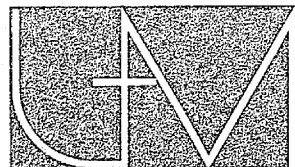


Let us remember in our prayers Bishop Tutu with his people of South Africa.



Engaged?

A Pre-Canva Information Meeting for Engaged Couples will be held September 8th at 7:30 p.m. in the Library Lounge.



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