

OH CLAP YOUR HANDS ALL YE PEOPLE! SHOUT  
UNTO GOD WITH THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH.

### The Problem of Mental Illness

THE STATISTICS of mental illness in our country are indeed staggering — so much so, in fact, that mental illness can be truly called our nation's number-one health problem. Gradually, and with an almost grudging admission, Americans are becoming convinced of its extent with regard to the *adult* population. Yet there is a lesser known but correspondingly serious problem with our *children*.

As many as half a million children in the U.S. receive some sort of psychiatric care each year, including about one-third of all out-patient mental illness cases. Compared to the total population, the rate of young people under eighteen receiving such care is about 6/1000, while the adult rate is only slightly higher at 7/1000.

How does this condition develop in a child whose life is commonly described as all "sweetness and light?" The answer would seem to be a combination of both the child's physical condition at birth and the environmental influences affecting him after birth. Further complicating our understanding of the problem is the fact that an apparently normal child can suddenly, without warning, exhibit an advanced schizophrenic condition.

#### INNOCENT VICTIMS

There is always the temptation to think that mental illness in adults has been caused by some moral factor — the fruit of an immoral life. Wrong as this approach is for adults, how much worse for children! These are the innocent ones, the dependent ones. Jesus spoke of their natural qualities of sincerity, openness, and faith as being an essential part of every Christian's make-up: *Unless you become as one of these, the least of my brethren, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Can we be satisfied that children do not receive the best possible care and treatment available? Let us hope, rather, that our compassion for them will enlarge into a Christian sensitivity for all those who suffer from mental illness.

#### ABOUT THE COVER

The artist illustrates the setting of today's Gospel miracle of the miraculous feeding. The cross reminds us that His Body is our food for eternal life.



I HAVE COM-  
PASSION  
ON THE  
CROWD



Alfred, thinking that these answers were the best, then...  
remained thus until the hour of the miracle...  
When, therefore, the crowd...  
...the miracle...  
...the miracle...

Corpus Christi

JUNE 13, 1971

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