



St. Mary's Chapel

We worry as though we have a
thousand years to live!
Let us rather strive after the
Gentle humor of the heart,
Which knows how to smile at
the world.

FROM THE CHAPLAIN'S PEW

"Oh God!" An unsuspecting person at St. Mary's might judge us to be a very religious group from the number of times this petition is heard. The optimist might assume that students at St. Mary's are vigilant in prayer, beginning sentence after sentence with cries to the Almighty.

"Oh God! Please help me pass this test! (which I didn't study for . . .)"

"Oh God! Please let him call me to-night! (or any night . . .)"

"Oh God! Help me! (or my mother, or my father, or my sister, or my brother . . .)"

Does this sound like your prayer life? When you're down and troubled, and you need a helping hand, is that the time you think of good old God?

For many of us, it is. God is someone

who can help in an emergency or a crisis. God can somehow fix things with his powerful hand, and then once everything is OK, disappears back to his heavenly throne.

This is not much of a God to take into adult life, which tends to have more difficulties day to day and perhaps fewer crises than student life. St. Paul had a sense of this need for God to "grow up." When he looked back over his youth, he realized that as a child, he had thought, spoken, and acted like a child, but when he grew up, he put away these childish things. My hunch is that God is already grown up and we're the ones who are still working on it.

For God to have any reality for us, we have to have more communication than

tense cries of "Oh God!" when things go wrong. Think of an outfit you have that you only wear for the very best occasions. When you put it on, it makes you feel like a whole new you. But the rest of the time, it just hangs in your closet. A lot of people treat God like a fancy party dress — something to have hanging around, to make you feel wonderful when you need it, but not much good on a day to day basis. Others find that God is more like the most comfortable sweater they own, something that it truly part of them, feels natural, and is used frequently.

The Bible gives us many images of God, many possibilities for finding a meaningful relationship with our creator. In some places in the Bible, the image of God the father is used to convey God's warmth and careful protec-

tion of us. In other places, God is pictured as a king, mighty and powerful over other lesser gods who might claim our attention. God is also pictured as a mother eagle, who carries her young in the shelter of her wings, so they can move from place to place without fear. God is even pictured as a human mother, loving her baby and nursing a part of people's language about God for thousands of years, are a far cry from the God who appears like some sort of divine Superman.

When a school, like St. Mary's, is affiliated with a church, it is because its founders knew God in a mature way, as protector, comforter, judge, parent, companion. St. Mary's has been, is, and we hope will continue to be for many, an answer to prayer.