

# 'Torrent of Concern' for Needy Americans

## 40 Million in Massive Need

My dear People:

With the approach of Laetare Sunday, I wish to appeal again on behalf of our Catholic Bishops' Fund for the needy all over the world. This fund is administered under the direct supervision of Catholic Relief Services of our National Catholic Welfare Conference. This massive health, education and welfare program last year assisted an estimated forty million needy in every land under the sun.

The helping hands of the Catholics of America reach all over the world through this fund wherever starvation, sickness, and epidemics demand immediate help. We all know that there is vast poverty and need all over the world. The Church in America has been the Good Samaritan to millions, because of the generosity of our people to this appeal year after year. The giving of alms, to a point of self-sacrifice, is a Lenten responsibility of all of us, and your donation in this collection goes directly to the work described by Christ Himself, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, helping the sick, and all done in the name of Christ.



Our Catholic Welfare Services are now in every corner of the earth. They need your help so very badly. The response to the Laetare Sunday Appeal has been most generous year after year. I know that you will meet the challenge of 1964 with equal generosity. Bishop Swanstrom of New York, Executive Director of this program, says very appropriately, "The King's Highway of Charity, now criss-crossing the entire earth, is one of man's greatest hopes for a lasting peace. Americans, and Catholic Americans especially, to a greater degree than any other people have shown their willingness to travel it."

Thanking and blessing you in the name of God's needy all over the earth, I remain

Your devoted Shepherd in Christ,

*James E. Kearney*

Bishop of Rochester

The Bishops' Relief Collection must be taken up as a separate collection on Sunday, March 8, 1964. Any arrangements to the contrary are forbidden unless specifically approved by the Chancery.



Patron of Borneo

Apostles of the Indies... St. Francis Xavier (1566-52) was born in the Basque country of Spain. While still young, he was a popular lecturer at the University of Paris. There he met Ignatius Loyola, and was professed as one of the original seven Jesuits. St. Ignatius sent his beloved disciple to the Orient, saying, "Go and set all on fire." He proved to be perhaps the greatest individual missionary to the unbelievers since St. Paul. St. Francis Xavier died on the island of Sancian in 1552, when about to enter China. Pope Pius X named him patron of Foreign Missions and of all works for the spreading of Christianity.

## Syracuse Pastors to Study Changing Neighborhoods

Syracuse—(NC)—Bishop Walter A. Foery of Syracuse has directed 50 parishes in and around this city to establish training programs to enable them to take their place in racially changing neighborhoods.

Announcing the program, Bishop Foery said: "Problems in the interracial field are present throughout the nation, and Onondaga County is no exception. The problems are clear; the solutions are not so readily visible. The Church has a special obligation to the total community to bring about justice, harmony and true love among men."

Bishop Foery — formerly a pastor in Rochester — asked each parish to appoint a committee of 6 to 10 persons to help their pastors. All committee members will attend a training program, meeting one night a week for eight weeks starting April 6.

Following is the full text of the statement issued by the Social Action Department of the U.S. Bishops' National Catholic Welfare Conference on aid to the impoverished of the United States.

(N.C.W.C. News Service)

While the problem of poverty is as old as mankind, citizens of the United States have special reasons to be concerned over its prevalence here. We are considered to be the wealthiest nation in the world, yet one-fifth of our citizens are in want. We are compelled to spend billions for armaments, although alms and blight disgrace our cities and countryside alike.

As a matter of conscience the American people offer aid to developing and impoverished nations around the world. Such generosity is good, but it should not blind us to needs here at home. From our abundance we are able to give generously, both in distant lands and within our borders.

Our response should be from the heart, but it must not be purely emotional in nature. Sound programs will endure to the extent that they are based upon principle rather than feeling. To aid in forming lasting convictions, the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference offers the following considerations on the Christian view of poverty, our personal response to this challenge, and the function of society as it confronts the problem of want in the midst of plenty.

### Church and Poverty

There is paradox in the Christian teaching on poverty. The Holy Gospel teaches us to respect poverty, but they also oblige us to help the poor in their misery. Our Lord called the poor blessed. He asked His followers to sell what they had and follow Him, advice that was followed literally by the first Christians. Jesus Christ could say that he had not where to lay his head, and he was buried in another man's tomb. St. Paul described the followers of Christ as the poor and the powerless:

"Consider your own call, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many noble, but the foolish things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the wise, and the weak things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the strong, and the things of the world and the things that are despised has God chosen, and the things that are not, to bring to naught the things that are; lest any flesh should pride itself before him." (I Cor. I, 26-29)

St. James could say: "Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to those who love him." (James II, 5) The ministers of God were described as "having nothing, yet possessing all things." (I Cor. VI, 10). This was but a reflection of the life of the Master, "being rich, he became poor for your sakes, that by his poverty you might become rich." (II Cor. VIII, 9). The Church has been interested in the poor primarily because it sees every person as a child of God. While the world honors power, wealth, and achievement, the follower of Christ insists upon the moral worth of those who are neglected and even despised.

It does not mean worldly standards in judging personal excellence. A Saint Francis could cast aside his clothes as a symbol of complete freedom from worldly attachment. A Saint Vincent de Paul could devote his life to the destitute, and the oppressed. A Saint Camillus could wash the sores of the abandoned sick. All these have been honored, because their love of God led them to cast their lot with the least of Christ's brethren.

Istanbul on the Bosphorus, founded as Byzantium by the ancient Greeks and renamed Constantinople (Constantine's City) in the fourth century by Rome's first Christian emperor who made it his capital, was my first view of Turkey. Even before the plane hit the history is captured and a little overwhelmed by the feature that gives it character to the magnificent skyline — the graceful minarets of five hundred mosques.

Most of them were built as Christian churches, including the incomparable Santa Sophia, but that is today a mere historical footnote. What they proclaim is the triumph of Islam.

Kemal Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey after the defeat in World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, dedicated a major part of his effort to breaking the grip of Islam on the social and political life of the country. He separated church and state, confiscated most of the property of the religious foundations and brotherhoods and suppressed the powerful brotherhoods themselves, prohibited the teaching of religion in schools

The Church has endorsed poverty by demanding it from those who have entered the solemn religious life. These give up the right to use and dispose of worldly goods. They do this, not because the world that God made is evil, but in order to cut their ties to all that might turn their gaze from God and lead them to concentrate on the passing and corruptible.

### Breeding Bitterness

Yet, and herein lies the paradox of the Christian teaching on poverty, the Church also speaks of a form of poverty that hurts the soul, something totally different from religious detachment from world goods. There is a destitution that binds men to this earth, since it forces them to use every waking moment to keep body and soul together. There is want that breeds bitterness and resentment, even hatred.

Pope Pius XII, in his Christmas Message of 1952, talked of the consequences of poverty, particularly in the case of the utter destitution. For some families there is a dying daily, a dying hourly; a dying multiplied, especially for parents, by the number of dear ones they behold suffering and wasting away. . . . sickness becomes more serious, because it is not properly treated; it strikes little children because preventive measures are lacking.

Then there is the weakening and consequent physical deterioration of whole generations. When the economic life of the population are brought up as examples of law and order, so many poor girls come astray, pushed down into the bottom of the abyss because they believed that that was the only way out of their shameful poverty.

Moreover, not rare is the case where it is wretched misery that leads to crime. Those who in their works of charity visit our prisons affirm constantly that not a few men, fundamentally sane, have gone to prison because poverty has led them to commit some unpardonable act.

Pope Pius XII is but one of the great modern popes who, particularly in the last 70 years, have shown deep concern for poverty in our industrial society. There is an essential difference between the austerity of the Trappist monk who cultivates the fields and prays to God in his simple cell and the wretchedness of those who live in the slums of our large cities. The monks is poor, but he has sufficient to eat; he has adequate clothing and needed medical care. He is a respected member of society.

But there are those who do not have enough to eat. Their clothing is worn and threadbare. They are overcrowded in wretched housing. They have no privacy, not even the misery of silence. And, the greatest hurt of all, they feel rejected and unwanted. They could die and no one would shed a tear.

This poverty, in the words of Pope Pius XII, often leads to "social conditions which, whether one wills it or not, make difficult or practically impossible a Christian life." (Solennita, June 1, 1941).

Again this same pope states: "The Christian must be ever mindful that the establishment of God's Kingdom in men's hearts and in social institutions often requires a minimum of human development. . . . For this reason, the Christian will always be ready to work for the relief of every material distress. . . . In a word, he will be diligent to achieve the best treatment of the poor and the disinherited." (Address, April 25, 1957).

### Slum Life

What precisely did the Pope have in mind when he spoke of degrading social conditions? Let us listen to his description of slum living: "Dilapidated, ramshackle houses without the most necessary hygienic installations sometimes yield a siz-

able income to their owners without costing them a penny. Inevitably, they neglect to make necessary repairs in them for years on end."

"Enough can never be said about the harm that these dwellings do to the families condemned to live in them. Deprived of air and light, living in filth and in unspeakable commingling, adults and, above all, children quickly become the prey of contagious diseases which find a favorable soil in their weakened bodies. But the moral injuries are still more serious: immorality, juvenile delinquency, the loss of sense for living and working, interior rebellion against a society that tolerates such abuses, ignores human beings, and allows them to stagnate in this way, transformed gradually into wrecks."

"Society itself must bear the consequences of this lack of foresight. Because it did not wish to prevent the evil and to provide a remedy in time, it will spend enormous sums to keep up an appearance of civilized decency and to pay expenses for prolonged confinement in sanatoriums and clinics. How many millions are authorized for the cure of evils that it would be easier and less expensive to prevent?" (Address, May 9, 1957).

These words of Pope Pius XII make abundantly clear the vital distinction between the poverty blessed by the Church and the wretched destitution that endangers soul and body alike. We must view poverty as a social ailment, sickness, as an evil that must be prevented when possible and certainly cured as soon as possible.

### Christ's Compassion

Our Blessed Lord did not tell the sick that they were blind or deaf or crippled because of the unchanging laws of the universe. Rather He used His infinite power to heal, thus inspiring us to use both science and compassion in the service of the sick.

In the same way, His Holy Church views poverty as a challenge, not merely to our compassion, but also to our intelligent social action aimed at eradicating the many causes of human misery. It is a tragic commentary upon the world today that millions are forced to spend billions for ghastly weapons of war, and yet cannot find the funds to eliminate slums. Our ingenuity can cope with the almost unbelievable difficulties of sending a rocket to the moon. But we seem unable to cope with workable plans to aid human beings created in the image and likeness of Almighty God.

To face this challenge intelligently, we must make some important distinctions in regard to those who are poor. There are some persons whose poverty stems from personal conditions that cannot readily be changed. They are not able to earn a living today, nor is it likely that most of them can ever produce enough to secure a proper livelihood. In this class are many of our aged, some who are physically or mentally handicapped, or mothers who are the sole support of young children. Such persons need help given in a way that fully respects their human dignity.

On the other hand, there are those who are poor largely because of external conditions that have prevented their earning a decent living. They have both the native ability to work and the desire for a good job, but they lack either the training or the opportunity to earn a fitting salary. Such persons include the uneducated and the unskilled victims of racial discrimination, farmers without adequate resources and training, many unemployed persons over 40, and those who live in areas of declining industry. In these cases, we seek methods and techniques that will enable them to become productive members of our economic society.

Another important distinction concerns the method of afford-

ing assistance for each of these groups. There is a form of aid that is intensely personal. Here the stress is upon contact between individuals. Such help does not preclude organization and planning, yet it is basically a person-to-person apostolate.

There are other problems that must be met primarily by social action, whether this be private or governmental. Here the basic concern is the removal of social conditions that breed poverty and destitution. It is obvious, for example, that economic policies that stimulate the demand for workers will make it much easier to "train" and relocate the unemployed.

Whatever distinctions might be made, however, in the Christian understanding of poverty, in practice any attack on poverty must be universal. The heart of the true Christian goes out to all in need. For charity knows no limits. Such has been the pattern, for example, of the Catholic Relief Services. Not only is the entire world its area of operations, but all men, of all races and of all religions, are the beneficiaries of its programs of aid. The only criterion is their need. So long as a face this problem of poverty in our country, there must be no restriction of race, religion or politics. Nor should there be any inhibiting of those who seek to help the poor, whether they be individuals, or private agencies or offices of government. In the spirit of the Good Samaritan, who taught us that every man is our neighbor, we must seek the opportunity to serve the stranger wounded in the struggle of life.

We wish to illustrate these principles by noting both the individual and the social responsibilities of Americans confronted with poverty in an affluent society.

### Individual Commitment

What, then, does the Church ask of the concerned Christian, as it directs his attention to this social problem of poverty in this wealthy nation? First and above all, it asks that we make this a matter of personal concern and involvement.

In older and simpler societies, it was fairly easy for any person who wanted to help his neighbor to know what was needed. Today it is possible to live in our suburbs, rush to work without really seeing our city surroundings, spend our days in an office or factory, and never even know what life is like for 50 million fellow Americans who live in poverty. We can discuss the question in the abstract as a political, social or economic problem, and ignore the human tragedy involved.

Pope Pius XII noted that many persons are misinformed about poverty: "Persons of good faith who have only inadequate knowledge of the matter believe that the majority of those who live in slums or who must be satisfied with an income below the essential minimum were there through their own fault."

Tragic situations and urgent problems of an intimate and personal nature are continually arising which the machinery is unable to remedy or assist. There will always remain, therefore, a vast field for the exercise of human sympathy and the Christian charity of individuals. We would observe, finally, that the work of our first apostle, and of groups of priestly citizens, is definitely more effective in promoting spiritual values than is the activity of public authority." (Mater et Magistra, No. 120).

The list of possible personal projects to aid the poor and the unfortunate is long. In many of our cities, college students have formed tutoring groups to aid children in slums. Retired teachers have volunteered to give live-in evenings to help the illiterate to acquire at least a minimum of reading and writing. There are settlement houses and neighborhood projects to

or negligence, and that welfare organizations are capable of helping anyone in need of it." (Address, May 3, 1957).

Secondly, the Church asks us to form a Christian conscience about the dignity of each person and our own responsibility to do all within our power to help them. When our Saviour was asked to illustrate the law of love of neighbor, he gave the parable of the Good Samaritan as his answer. Compassion is the mark of the Christian. Christ's description of the last judgment is clear and simple.

The Lord confronts the just with these words: "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in." And the just asked in astonishment when they did these things to the Lord. He replied: "Look, as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me." (Mt. XXV, 34-40). On that day that all men as sinners shall ask mercy, they will receive it to the extent that they showed mercy toward their fellow man.

Thirdly, we must realize that the best form of help, as was said over seven centuries ago by the great Jewish physician, Moses Maimonides, is to help people to help themselves. Giving food to the hungry, clothing to those who have no clothes, and shelter to families that lack decent housing is important, but it is only a first step.

Much more necessary is intelligent concern over the causes of indigence and destitution. To the extent that racial discrimination is widely considered as an important source of poverty, the Catholic Bishops of the United States noted in their 1958 statement on discrimination:

"It is a matter of historical fact that segregation in our country has led to oppressive conditions and the denial of basic human rights for the Negro. This is evident in the fundamental fields of education, job opportunity, housing, and shelter. From these areas of neglect and discrimination are problems of health and the social train of evils so often associated with the consequent slum conditions."

Certainly no Catholic with an informed conscience will remain aloof from the struggle for civil rights which is today one of our first domestic problems. Indeed, we Catholics must go beyond civil rights and be sensitive to human rights, whether or not these fall in the province of civil law.

While we give wholehearted support to civic projects for the relief of poverty, we do not feel that our Christian duties end with such endorsement. It is not enough to vote for sound policies, to pay taxes, and to contribute in charity. The dedicated Christian must be always ready to give of himself. As Pope John XXIII noted:

"Practical Suggestions"

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MOST REV.  
JAMES E. KEARNEY, S.C.  
Bishop

Member of the Society  
of the Sacred Passion  
and the Catholic Peace  
Association. Subscriber  
to National Catholic  
Welfare Conference.

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## Istanbul's Mosques Proclaim Islam's Strength

By DR. GARY MACOIN

Istanbul on the Bosphorus, founded as Byzantium by the ancient Greeks and renamed Constantinople (Constantine's City) in the fourth century by Rome's first Christian emperor who made it his capital, was my first view of Turkey. Even before the plane hit the history is captured and a little overwhelmed by the feature that gives it character to the magnificent skyline — the graceful minarets of five hundred mosques.

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Kemal Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey after the defeat in World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, dedicated a major part of his effort to breaking the grip of Islam on the social and political life of the country. He separated church and state, confiscated most of the property of the religious foundations and brotherhoods and suppressed the powerful brotherhoods themselves, prohibited the teaching of religion in schools

and the wearing of clerical dress in public, forced men to wear hats instead of the fez, adopted the Gregorian calendar, and made Sunday the day of rest.

Another part of Dictator Ataturk's program, however, served in the long run to strengthen Islam, and that is the part which may prove most enduring. He decided to promote national unity by eliminating ethnic minorities. As is common in this part of the world, national groups tend to be defined by their religious affiliation.

About a million Armenian Catholics, members of the biggest minority, were massacred in 1920. Half a million fled to Russia and a further 100,000 to the United States. Only some 70,000 survive within the borders of Turkey.

In 1924, Ataturk shipped a million Greek Orthodox to Greece in exchange for 800,000 Turks. The net result is that 98 per cent of today's population of some 28 million is Moslem. The Greek Orthodox, the biggest non-Moslem denomination, number little more

than a hundred thousand, almost all here in Istanbul and the adjoining islands.

Ataturk's primary ambition was to westernize Turkey. It is said he believed that Christianity constituted "an integral element in Western progress, and that he planned to impose some form of the Christian religion as soon as he had broken the hold of Islam on the people. Whether he had such an intention is debatable. What is certain is that he never completed the preparatory step. Although he reduced the practice of religion, especially among the young, he failed to destroy the influence in depth of Islam.

After his death in 1938, the drive to create a lay culture slowed down. The war years saw a revival of religious practices, though accompanied by a rise in superstitions because of the expanded ignorance of religion resulting from many years of secular education. Many were named as chaplains when the army was placed on a war footing. After the war, in 1948, religious instruction in schools and colleges was again authorized, and restrictions on Moslem propaganda were lifted.

Two years later, the Democratic Party (conservative in tendency) came to power. Much of its appeal to the voter lay in its promise to "allow fuller expression to the religious feelings of the people, and since that time the influence of Islam in public life has grown steadily. Unfortunately, it sometimes expresses itself in undesirable ways, as when in 1955 mobs destroyed 60 of the 80 orthodox churches in Istanbul during the period of tension generated by the international conference to settle the political future of Cyprus.

Withdrawal from the West seems still the mood of Turkey in 1964. It has in fact been accentuated in recent times by a feeling that the country's strategic importance to the West has diminished with the development of more powerful weapons and delivery systems.

It recognized, nevertheless, that withdrawal can be at most partial. Its continuing program of modernization and industrialization needs major external financing. To look northward to the Communist bloc for help would be equally repugnant to the national and religious feeling of the nation.

(Continued on Page 5)