

### Friday morning

Father Charles Hall, a Rochesterian in a New Orleans parish, was home for a visit last week. Before Mass Friday morning at Immaculate Conception Church he chats with altar boys Phillip and Gullio Vincent and seminarian Howard Dickinson.

### Sunday afternoon

Two days later and a few blocks away the wreckage of a helicopter strewn across a parked car and burned house is symbol of tragic riots which rocked Rochester. Negroes and whites are looking for way to ease resulting tensions.

## Bishop Asks Week's Prayer For Peace, Justice to All

Bishop Kearney, in the wake of the weekend breakdown of law and order in Rochester, has directed Catholics to pray daily for a week "for peace and the just recognition of the dignity of every individual."

Parish churches will have congregations join in the prayer at all Masses this Sunday. Priests will daily add the prayer for peace at their Masses from this Sunday through the following week.

Here is the text of Bishop Kearney's statement made today at the Chancery:

The events of the last weekend are most unfortunate.

Unfortunately, first, because they create a false notion of the spirit of the Negro community in this city.

Unfortunately, also, because they injure seriously the fine relationship that has existed between white and Negro communities here.

Unfortunately, finally, because they embarrass very much the many organizations, interracial councils, human relations committees, that have been working conscientiously, sincerely and unflinchingly to prevent such a tragedy as took place last weekend.

We realize that in every community there are certain numbers who, for some reason or other, hate the policeman. It is very unfortunate that such a group should force those in charge of public safety in this community to go through the harrowing experience of the last weekend.

Everytime a policeman or fireman goes out on his tour of duty, he knows the dangers that he risks. His family, undoubtedly, prays day after day for his safe return. It is unfair that a policeman or fireman should have to go through the added terror of a weekend such as we had here.

We feel that the city officials and the members of the department of public safety who have taken the oath of office to preserve peace and order could follow no other path than the one they followed in this emergency.

We regret the entire incident and hence, for a week, we shall add the prayer for peace and for the just recognition of the dignity of every individual to the prayers of every Mass and we beg the cooperation of our congregations in this appeal to God.

The psalmist has said, "Unless the Lord guard the city, they labor in vain who try to protect it."

*James E. Kearney*  
Bishop of Rochester

## The Big Difference in a Week

Thursday evening, July 23, at St. Michael's parish hall in Rochester.

Hot, humid — but pleasant company.

About 75 white people, 25 Negroes came to hear Negro Father Charles Hall speak on the present condition and hopes of his people — here in his hometown and in his parish in New Orleans.

He said it's "sick thinking" which creates the problems.

Seminarians then conducted a brief rite of Scripture readings

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and hymns to pray for racial justice.

**THE EVENING** ended with all agreed there was still a long road ahead and needed much more work and much more prayer. It's good they didn't know how much or they might have given up right then.

Twenty-four hours later the area was world famous.

Weren't Thursday's prayers answered?

Yes, and no.

Yes—because if they weren't, we'd all be dead.

No—because if they were, we'd never have had that weekend.

And this we should remember—God usually puts the answer to our prayers in our own hands. We have to do the job He indicates.

The priest's talk and the prayers last Thursday were part of a meeting of the Catholic Interracial Council.

Today, a week later, Mrs. Alma K. Greene, Council president, made this comment:

Those who participated in the weekend activities are not the

residents of Rochester who have become oriented to an urban way of life. Nor are they Rochesterians who have enjoyed the relative freedom to exercise their civil rights. They were, instead, the natural product of the environment from which so many have so recently fled—especially the southern areas of stubborn segregation, where official defiance of the law is the rule, rather than the exception.

And it is entirely conceivable that having escaped, they thought, the restrictions of the south, and learned to their dismay that similar, though more subtle, restrictions exist in the north, they reacted in their despair and frustration in the pattern they employed in the south.

No one of us, either Negro or white, who has painstakingly earned the right to be classified a responsible citizen, can possibly condone the weekend of destruction.

But neither can we, with sanctimonious self-righteousness sit in judgment on the participants. We must, instead, search our hearts—for none of us is completely without blame. And each of us should say with deep humility, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

And we must, each and every one of us, black and white, with grieving hearts and willing hands begin to reshape our community so that never again will our city be marked with the dark night of racial eruption.

# The Catholic COURIER Journal

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## Little Time Left in City To Cure Racial Ills

How do you write an article a week after the whole world knows the story?

The sad story of the riots in Rochester last weekend has been massively told and pictured.

Maybe there are still more chapters to come.

Maybe too we'll never really know the whole story.

At this moment, here's our opinion—

The riots were not justified, they are not condoned. They weren't racial either and they weren't spontaneous.

Responsible leaders of both the Negro and white communities admit Rochester still had lots of unfinished business to do in working out a practical program of equal rights and equal opportunities, along with equal duties, for all its citizens.

Bishop Kearney this past spring said, "Slow justice is no justice." We've poked along anyway.

Negroes and whites with common sense also admit that massive mob violence is no way to reach their goal.

And it should also be clearly pointed out that the Rochester riots were not a case of white people on one side and blacks on the other.

Most of the rioters were Negroes, of course, but their targets were not white people as such.

There are countless, mostly untold incidents of good Negroes and whites coming to aid each other — and also of the bad elements in each group linked in their foolish outburst.

And, finally, there is reason to suspect that the outburst was masterminded long before it erupted last Friday night. Until this suspicion is either adequately dissipated or ultimately justified and the true culprits dealt with, we need the National Guard kept on its present active basis.

The peace we look for, however, is not the status quo of last Thursday.

The riots revealed we have a long festering problem in Rochester most of us have too long ignored or tried to white-wash away.

We don't need birth control clinics so there'll be fewer Negro babies. We do need better homes and better educational conditions and better neighborhoods for Negro children. We need some local Marshall Plan to help Americans in our city, as we helped our enemies in Europe after World War II, to learn to live as responsible, self-supporting citizens in a complicated world.

We don't need any more criticism of the police.

They showed remarkable restraint throughout the crisis time in carrying out their hazardous duties. But we obviously need an all-new, all-out effort to show the people in the crowded Negro inner-city area that the police are their servants and guardians, not their enemies or bullies.

Fifty years ago, just before the guns of August launched the agony of World War I, the London Times military correspondent started his report with unadulterated pessimism: "The general situation this morning is one of unparalleled gloom..."

Many are tempted to think the same today.

Is there then no solution to all this?

The key, we think, is somewhere in that political, economic and religious complex which Negroes call "the white power structure."

That "structure" locally has consistently failed to bolster a responsible, representative leadership which can speak for and to the "grass roots" Negro people. So now we have to strengthen what leaders there are, not shatter them more.

The burden then falls largely on the white community which needs to do now what the American Catholic bishops advised in 1958. "We hope and earnestly pray that responsible and sober-minded Americans of all religious faiths, in all areas of our land, will seize the mantle of leadership from the agitator and the racist. It is vital that we act now and act decisively. All must act quietly, courageously, and prayerfully before it is too late."

The Rochester riots showed us it's later than we thought.

—Father Henry Russell



The Word of God — ultimately where answer is to be found for nation's racial problems — is carried in procession at Catholic Interracial Council meeting. Richard Sexton of Webster and seminarians conducted prayer rite for divine help in present turmoil.

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