

Prayer, Penance to Precede Council

"A ceremony of penance" is to be held in every Catholic church around the world to mark the opening of the Vatican Council's final session Tuesday, Sept. 14, feast of the Holy Cross.

Pope Paul, in asking for the rite, also announced he would lead the world's Catholic bishops in a penitential procession through the streets of Rome the afternoon of the Council's opening.

He invited "our brothers in other Christian com-

munities" to join in penitential prayer for the Council's success.

He said the "magnitude" of the job facing the bishops at this autumn's fourth and final session of the Council "can be carried through only with the all-powerful assistance of our Lord."

For the parish ceremonies, the Pope wants pastors to invite "the innocent children, the generous-minded young men and women, the fathers and moth-

ers of families and," he emphasized, "our most cherished children who are sick." He asked them to offer their "anguish and their suffering" which he said, has "irreplaceable efficacy."

In the Rome procession, Pope Paul and the bishops will carry what the Pontiff described as "the outstanding relics of the Holy Cross."

These include a splinter of wood of the cross on which Jesus was nailed, the three-language sign

hung at the top of the cross, one of the nails and two thorns from the crown placed on Our-Lord's head. These and other relics have been kept for centuries at Rome's Church of the "Holy Cross in Jerusalem," where the procession will begin on the Council's opening day. The Pope and the prelates will walk — perhaps barefoot — to the Church of St. John Lateran, the cathedral of Rome.

Parish bulletins should be consulted next week for schedule of local ceremonies.

Concern for Poor, Labor Day Theme In Affluent U.S.

Washington — (RNS) — Personal acts of compassion and sacrifice are as essential in meeting the needs of 25 million poverty-stricken Americans as massive political programs and economic reforms, the National Catholic Welfare Conference's Social Action Department maintained in its 1965 Labor Day message.

"A purely impersonal interest in the plight of the poor and the disadvantaged is far from being adequate," said the message, prepared by Msgr. George G. Higgins, the department's director.

While support of "needed reforms in our economic system," new social legislation and contributions to organized charities are "all to the good and should in no way be discounted or underestimated," the message said, "much more is demanded of us.

"We are called upon to perform the corporal and spiritual works of mercy on a person-to-person basis and to do so with profound respect for the dignity and the sensibilities of those whom we are privileged to serve in the name of the Lord."

Asserting that "time is of the essence," the message stressed that "all of us must be prepared to make whatever sacrifices may be required to spread the benefits of our phenomenal productivity more equitably among all the people of the U.S."

Injunctions to care for the poor are as old as the law of Moses, the statement pointed out, and no people were ever more able materially to do so than Americans. "Never before have so many people enjoyed such a high standard of living," it observed.

Yet today "the most conservative estimates indicate that more than 25 million Americans are poverty stricken by any reasonable standard and that several million able bodied workers were unemployed at the last count," the message said. Negroes were described as "almost twice as poor as any other group in the United States," with an unemployment rate twice that of white workers.

Organized labor and management, the statement continued, have done much to raise America's living standard through collective bargaining, but these methods are "not sufficient, of themselves, to solve the nagging problem of abject poverty in the midst of plenty." Consequently, it said, there must be support for "new and imaginative programs of social and economic reform aimed specifically at the problems faced by the poorest of the poor."

Such programs "will require special attention to the dismal plight of our Negro fellow-citizens and the members of other disadvantaged minority groups," it said.

The statement noted that "Americans in ever increasing numbers" are answering the call "to become personally involved in helping the poor to help themselves." It commended "men and women from all walks of life who ... are giving so much of their time and energy to the highly personalized programs of the many voluntary organizations working with, and for, the poor and who are cooperating so enthusiastically in all the various phases of the federal government's crusade against poverty."

Civil rights workers were also singled out for praise, as were volunteers who work among the aged, shut-ins and disadvantaged youth. Such persons, the message said, are striving "to show their love for the poor by the true test of action."

The Catholic COURIER

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

76th Year

ROCHESTER, N.Y., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1965

Journal

Price 15 Cents

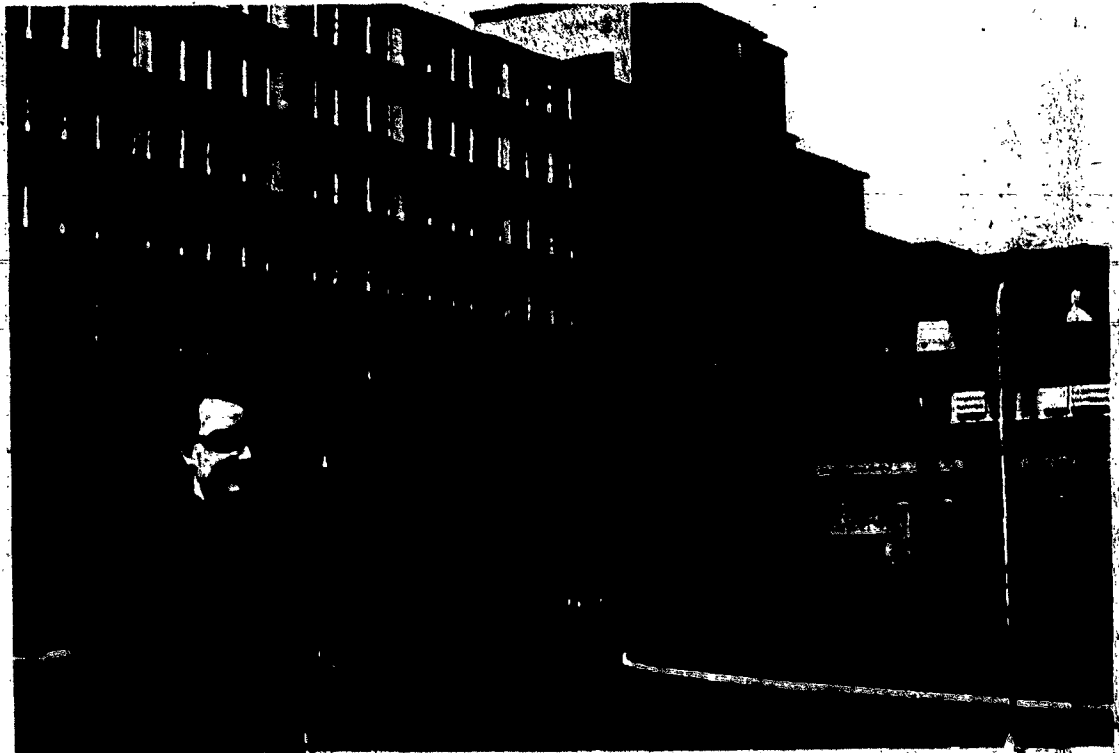
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Circulation

66,745



Deacon Nellis gives Communion ...



visits the sick at Northside Hospital

'Summer Deacon' at St. Andrew's Parish

Scripture tells how the apostles chose seven men to "serve at tables" to leave the apostles free for "prayer and the ministry of the word."

These seven were called deacons—and one of them, Stephen became the first martyr for the new Christian faith.

Their story is in the Acts of the Apostles, the New Testament book following the four gospels, in the sixth chapter.

Another chapter in the story of how deacons "serve" was written at St. Andrew's parish, Rochester, this summer.

Deacon Thomas F. Nellis, who will be ordained a priest next June, "interned" at the Portland Avenue church, helping the priests there in a formidable list of assignments.

Church law authorizes deacons to perform almost all religious rites done by priests except they can't say Mass or hear Confessions.

So Deacon Nellis baptized and gave Communion, took Communion to the sick in their homes or at nearby busy Northside Hospital, instructed prospective converts, prepared children for their First Holy Communion, taught altar boys their Latin (there's still some of that language left in the Mass for the kids to memorize), guided the parish Legion of Mary and



... and gets guidance from Father Charles McCarthy

—in whatever time there was left—visited homes of the parish, particularly where there were the sick or the elderly.

Climax of his deacon work came last Sunday when he gave his first sermon and the parish-

ioners—his neighbors—liked it. As a boy of the parish he is well known in the area. He is the son of Mrs. Lawrence Nellis and the late Mr. Nellis of 240 Lux Street.

He attended the parish

school, Aquinas Institute, St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries. He'll return to St. Bernard's in September for his final year of study for the priesthood. And he'll go back with an unusual first-hand ex-

perience of what is expected of priests today.

"I've certainly enjoyed the work," he said. "I'm sure I'll realize better the point that so many of our seminary teachers are trying to make when they give us our theology lectures."

Deacon at St. Andrew's, he is equally satisfied with his summer "internship." There are no more "summer interns" at St. Andrew's, he said, but he will help at St. Andrew's next year. He also reported parishioners told him it "seemed good" to have one of their own to serve them in their spiritual life.

The "summer deacon" arrangement is likely to become more widespread in the Rochester Diocese in years to come. In past years, the young men were ordained deacons when they returned to the Seminary in September for their final year of study. Their deacon duties were usually limited to ritual functions at the Seminary. This past June, Bishop Kearney ordained the group of twelve in June instead.

"I told Father McCarthy I'd be available to help out this summer," Deacon Nellis said, "so he told me, 'you're hired.'"

The other eleven deacons have also helped in their parish churches on Sundays but most of them were on weekday jobs varying from playground director to road repair crewman or farm helper.

Polish Mothers Vow Loyalty To Faith

Czechochowa — (RNS) — Vows of loyalty to the Church and its teachings were taken by an estimated 250,000 Polish Catholic mothers from all over the country who took part in a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Czechochowa, Patroness of Poland, in the famous monastery of Jasna Gora here.

Overcome with emotion, sev-

eral hundred women fainted as they repeated the words of the vow recited by Stefan Cardinal Wysynski, Primate of Poland, who presided.

Pledging their determination not only to live by the faith themselves, but faithfully to bring up their children in it, the women also placed themselves as squarely opposed to policies of the Communist government favoring birth control and legalizing abortion for both health and economic reasons.

"We are ready," the women intoned, "to defend all human lives in the womb. We desire that our youth be faithful to Christ, that the Word of God may ever be in us and His teaching ever present in the people."

The cardinal said the number of faithful gathered in the historic shrine would have been "a hundred times greater if the external conditions were favorable." This was an obvious allusion to anti-Church policies of the Warsaw regime.

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Neighborhood Mass Center

Rockford — (NC) — Two pastors in the Rockford diocese believe a new program is helping bring their congregations into a closer relationship with parish life.

Msgr. Thomas S. Green, of St. Mary parish, Sterling, Ill., and Father William Boland, pastor, St. Patrick's parish, Dixon, Ill., have begun to celebrate weekly "neighborhood Masses."

A social gathering follows each Mass, allowing the parishioners, their guests and the parish priests and opportunity to become acquainted.

Another advantage seen in the program is the opportunity offered those unable to attend Mass because of their physical ailments.

One woman who had been unable to attend Mass for the past 12 years in St. Patrick's parish commented, "How wonderful this is ... I thought I would never be able to hear Mass again."

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U.S. Bishops Oppose Federal Birth Control Program

'Not the Government's Business'

Washington — (NC) — Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle of Washington said here that government "has no business" promoting birth control.

Apart from sponsoring population research, Archbishop O'Boyle said, government's attitude in the field of population and family planning should be one of "strict neutrality."

He said there are "better guides to the Great Society" than the "four horsemen of birth control, abortion, sterilization and euthanasia."

Reliance on such measures is "the philosophy of defeatism and despair. It is unworthy of our heritage, unworthy of our destiny," he declared.

Archbishop O'Boyle, who is chairman of the administrative board of the U.S. bishop's National Catholic Welfare Conference, took this stand against government birth control pro-

grams in a sermon in St. Matthew's cathedral Sunday morning.

His statement came against the background of hearings by a Senate Government Operations subcommittee on legislation for increasing the federal government's role in family planning efforts.

William B. Ball, a spokesman for the NCWC and for the Pennsylvania Catholic Welfare Committee, told the subcommittee Aug. 24 that "public power and public funds" should not be used to foster birth control. He charged such programs create "serious dangers to civil liberty," particularly through coercion of the poor.

Besides opposing government birth control programs, Archbishop O'Boyle also warned Catholics and others against expecting the Church to drop its condemnation of contraception. He quoted Leo Cardinal Suenens of Belgium as saying that "what was condemned as intrinsically immoral yesterday will not become moral tomorrow."

In seeking a solution to population problems in the U.S., the archbishop said, there are "two general lines of approach, one positive, one negative."

He said a "positive attack" would include such steps as decentralization of industry to underpopulated parts of the country, improved transportation, increased distribution of surplus food to the needy, and better job training.

He commented such measures, calling them "typically American." But he strongly opposed the "negative approach" of birth control, calling it "unworthy of our American tradition."

Warning of the growing danger of government invasion of the right of privacy, the archbishop pointed to the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling invalidating Connecticut's law against birth control. The court's majority agreed that the statute violated the right of marital privacy, which it called "intimate to the point of being sacred."

"Now if the government is enjoined by this decision from forbidding the practice of birth control, it logically follows that it is likewise forbidden to promote it," Archbishop O'Boyle commented.

Citing efforts to link birth control with anti-poverty programs, he said:

"This ... is not the govern-

ment's business. The choice of how many children a couple should have is the sole personal responsibility of the spouses. It is no less their responsibility if they happen to be poor."

Archbishop O'Boyle acknowledged that in the matter of birth control Catholics "have no right to impose their own moral code upon the rest of the country by civil legislation."

But, he added, "they are obliged in conscience to oppose any regulation which would elevate to the status of public policy a philosophy of practices which violates rights of privacy or liberty of conscience. This citizen's freedom cuts to the ways."

"In a situation like this," he said, "involving serious moral issues in which people strive to form a right conscience, the role of government is clear — strict neutrality."

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