

# U.S. Bishops Assay Nation's Conscience

We can be proud of our bishops!

In their first meeting with the new freedom given them by the recent Vatican Council, the bishops faced up to the major moral issues of our time—war and peace, poverty, racial bias—and pushed the Church in the United States towards new ways of worship and to more meaningful penitential practices.

Their decision to permit American Catholics to have meat on Fridays was headlined in daily newspapers but their other decisions are sure to have an impact deeper than the mere change in Catholic menus.

All their decisions indicated a strong ecumenical attitude—one vastly different from widespread previous attitudes of "go-it-alone" on religious and moral questions.

The U.S. bishops—more than 200 of them—met this past week in Washington. Significantly, they scheduled another meeting—rather than the usual whole year later—to be held this spring in Chicago.

In their statement on poverty and current racial tensions, the bishops asked an end to "emotionally-charged and irrational slogans"—an obvious reference to such terms as "black power" or "your home is your castle."

The bishops particularly stressed the responsibility of suburban property owners to open their neighborhoods to all people regardless of their race or ethnic origin. They thereby endorsed what is popularly termed "open occupancy."

The bishops asked for "strong and continuing support" of all programs which will aid those afflicted by discrimination and poverty. They urged "constant efforts" to improve those programs.

The statement acknowledged that the "great task of changing the hearts of men on the subject of equal rights for all requires more than laws and programs."

"It needs above all," the prelates said, "a true sense of neighborliness based on religiously inspired convictions that all men are equal before God and that all should be welcomed in our midst."



Rosalie Di Proetto, sixth grade pupil at Annunciation School, studies Emancipation Proclamation exhibit at recent "open house" which drew an estimated 1000 visitors to the school. Other exhibits illustrated science and history subjects pupils study. Emancipation Proclamation exhibit was timely background for U.S. bishops appeal to Catholics to end current racial discrimination in housing, jobs and schools.

Continuing, the statement declared that "destitution and degrading, avoidable poverty hurt family life, blight the promise of youth and lead to a bitter harvest of sickness, delinquency and crime."

The bishops emphasized that the causes of poverty, "many of which are connected with past and present discrimination, must be eradicated."

The bishops also urged a concentrated attack against poverty mounted on many fronts, utilizing the efforts of private, religious and community organizations with strong governmental intervention when necessary.

They called for a closer look at the quality of education given to the poor, including the

"quality of teachers, schools, guidance programs and the supplementary aid needed by all children."

Adult education also was stressed by the bishops as a "great necessity" in the overall anti-poverty effort.

All Americans, the bishops said, should be concerned with the type and quality of assistance to poor families. "Where welfare relief is necessary, it should be given in a context that favors family stability and respects the human dignity of those who cannot earn a living." Earlier they protested alleged pressure of welfare agencies to force people to practice birth control.

In their statement on war and

peace, the bishops said they wanted "to help magnify the moral voice of our nation"—a voice, they said that is becoming "louder and clearer because it is the voice of all faiths."

They said "every means at our disposal" must be used "to create a climate of peace" and they insisted "we must support the work of the United Nations" in its peace-making efforts, an equivalent reply to constant right-wing criticism of the world peace organization.

The bishops also linked their own peace program with that of the National Council of Churches and the Synagogue Council of America.

They also stressed the need to rise above merely national goals "to the welfare of the whole human family."

They admitted, "It is reasonable to argue that our presence in Vietnam is justified" and they said, "Americans can have confidence in the sincerity of their leaders as long as they work for a just peace in Vietnam."

"But we cannot stop here," the bishops said. "While we can conscientiously support the position of our country in the present circumstances, it is the duty of everyone to search for other alternatives. And everyone—government leaders and citizens alike—must be prepared to change our course whenever a change in circumstances warrants it."

"This can be done effectively only if we know the facts and issues involved. Within the limits imposed by our national security, therefore, we must always insist that these facts and issues be made known to the public so that they can be considered in their moral context."

"On the basis of our knowledge and understanding of the current situation, we are also bound always to make sure that our government does, in fact, pursue every possibility which offers even the slightest hope

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## Train Wreck Stalls Church

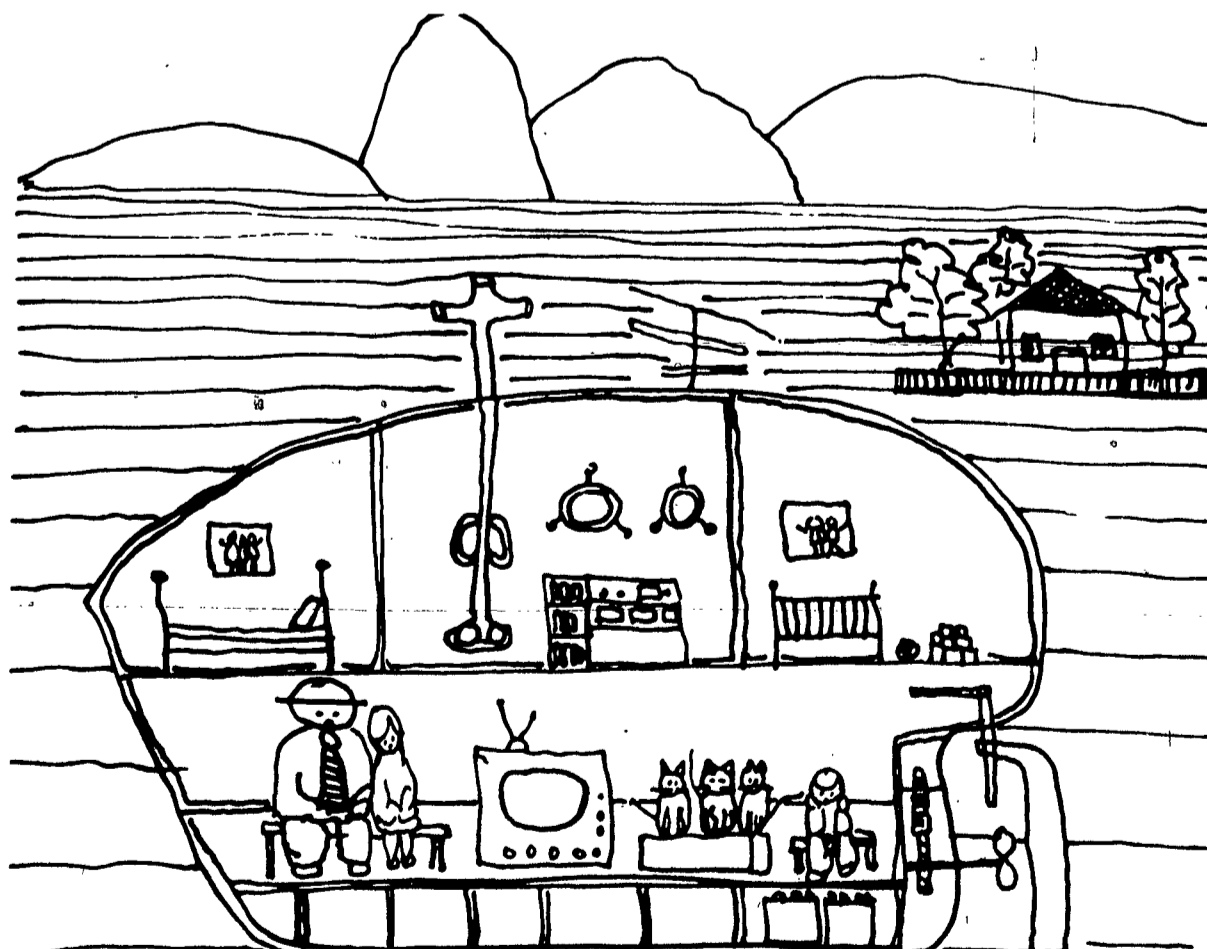
Annunciation parish is stalled in building its new church on Norton St., Rochester, because of a train wreck in Montana.

The huge laminated wood roof beams which will lift a striking spire above the church were being shipped on flat cars, part of a lengthy freight train derailed at Ethridge, near Shelby, Montana.

Monsignor Albert Simonetti, pastor, said railroad officials assured him they'd route the beams as rapidly as possible to Rochester so they can be put in place before winter.

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## Does Heaven Have a Zip Code?



— Illustration from "Children's Letters to God"

were in the form of complaints ("I got left back. Thanks a lot."), concern for God's well-being (a boy wanted to know when He took His vacation) and here and there a few suggestions, which the writers hoped God would take in the right spirit. Like this one, from Barry:

"Church is alright but you could sure use better music. I hope this does not hurt your

feelings. Can you write some new songs?"

Published by Pocket Books, a division of Simon and Shuster, "Children's Letters to God" were compiled by Eric

Hamilton & Omega Watches—Budget Terms. William S. Thorne, Jeweler, 318 Main St. East—Adv.

New York—"Dear God," the letter began. "Are you real? Some people don't believe it. If you are you better do something quick."

Not since the "God Is Dead" controversy began has anyone sought to resolve the problem in such a direct and simple manner. As may be obvious, it was a child who had the faith and trust—and, some would add, wisdom—to try it.

The letter is one of 37, culled from almost 200, that are featured in a new book called "Children's Letters to God." Now in its third printing, with 150,000 copies out, it is certain to become what the book trade calls "a runaway best-seller."

Sales will undoubtedly be helped by the book's low price (\$1) and the childlike accompanying sketches (done by a 33-year-old naval architect) but the letters themselves—ranging from cute to touching to profound—will be considered by many to be worthy additions to a spiritual reading list. For instance, this new twist on racial equality:

"I am the only one in my class who is Chinese," wrote a boy named Kim. "They all say that you are American but, I am too, so you could be Chinese, right?"

The best time to pray was what concerned a young man named Allen. "If you do all these things you are pretty busy," he wrote. "Now here's my question. When is the best time I can talk to you? I know you are always listening but when will you be listening hard in Troy, New York?"

Many of the letters, predictably, posed questions to God, one asking Him bluntly, "Do you like what you do?" Others



Bishop Kearney doesn't let retirement interfere with his usual skill at wielding a shovel to start a new construction job. He turned over the first spadeful of earth for a new three million dollar science building at St. John Fisher College Tuesday afternoon, his eighth time on such a mission at that school. He spoke to faculty and students prior to his spadework (shovel handle is at his side). Scheduled for use in 1968 for biology and physics study, the new building is financed by the recent Joint College Fund and a federal grant.



Twenty years of generosity to the seminaries of New York State are symbolized in this picture. The Catholic Daughters of America inaugurated the Marie C. Curry Memorial Seminary Fund in 1946 and have contributed \$385,000 to the state's bishops since that date. This year State Regent Miss Margaret McKearney and Mrs. Joseph Murphy of the Rochester Diocese presented the organization's contribution to Bishop Kearney.

## Thanksgiving Blessings For Two New Churches

Two new churches of the Rochester Diocese are scheduled to be solemnly blessed this holiday weekend.

St. Mark's Church on Kuhn Road in the Town of Greece was blessed by Monsignor James C. McAniff yesterday morning, Thanksgiving Day. Father Joseph Donovan is pastor of that parish.

St. Leo's Church and catechetical center in Hilton will be blessed by Bishop Kearney at a 12 noon Mass Sunday, Dec. 4. Father Jacob Rauber is pastor of the Hilton parish.

Pictures of both ceremonies will be in next week's Courier.

## Lay School Boards Now 'Order of Day'

Washington — (NC) — One of the nation's top Catholic educators said here lay school boards are "now the order of the day" in Catholic education.

Premonstratentian Father C. Albert Koob, acting executive

secretary of the National Catholic Educational Association, predicted "a much more open manner of deciding policy matters" in Catholic education in the years to come.

"Local concentration of authority will be lessened in favor of a broad approach which will include the voice of the Catholic laity," Father Koob declared. He endorsed the growing trend toward parish and diocesan school boards with strong lay representation.

The NCEA official spoke at a seminar at St. John's High School, conducted by the Christian Brothers, here. His subject was "Catholic Education: Present and Future."

PERBY FLOWERS for all occasions. Ethel M. Perry assisted by Tom Zavallo, Mgr., Edna Weingartner, Asst. Mgr., 441 Chili Ave. FA 5-7722.—Adv.

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