

# CATHOLIC CHARITIES REVIEW

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Catholic Charities has a service for youngsters, adults and the aged.

## How do You Put a Price Tag on a Home for a Child?

Suddenly and dramatically — and sometimes frighteningly — the future is overtaking us.

As a nation, as a city, as a diocese we are faced with changes whose pace accelerates daily.

We are faced with sharp increases in our aged population.

Chronic illness is a major health problem. Mental illness is on the rise.

Neighborhoods are shifting and placid suburban life is also threatened with disruption.

We find new tools, new techniques to confront our problems but they proliferate faster than we can find solutions for them.

In our time of relentless, rapid growth, facilities built as recently as ten years ago are in many cases already obsolete.

The magnitude of the task indicates that no one man, no single agency can meet the demands of our time in history.

Far-sighted pioneers half a century ago recognized the need to work together in building a world where people of every race, creed and color can live in dignity and decency.

Catholics of the Rochester Diocese 50 years ago incorporated what is today a diversified Catholic Charities organization. It was the same year that the Rochester-Monroe County Community Chest was also first organized — at that time solely as a war relief agency.

The two — the Charities and the Chest — have grown together since that time.

One of the individuals who has a first-hand knowledge of both the Charities and the Chest is Monsignor Donald J. Mulcahy, diocesan director of the Catholic Charities organization.

He oversees seven agencies, all aided by Chest funds, which provide services ranging from adoption of children to care of the aged, from counseling for turbulent families to recreation programs for youngsters.

Monsignor Mulcahy has devoted nearly 20 years of his priestly life to Charities work so he speaks against a background of a long experience.

We asked him who is it that translates the ancient commandment of "love thy neighbor" into the hard realities of today's complex way of life.

"It's a team of clergy, nuns and lay people," he said. "Some of them make it their life's work, others are able to volunteer only a few hours help each month, but together they do the job."

And he added, "And they do it remarkably well."

Why all this organization? we asked him.

"Our complex world these days produces many problems some people just can't solve by themselves.

Agencies like those in our Catholic Charities family are organized to help these people work out a solution for their problems."

In former times, neighbors could rally to the help of an individual or a family in need, Monsignor Mulcahy said, but, unfortunately, "good will isn't enough any more — necessary, yes, but not the only ingredient of the solution."

"Social work is more than an art, more than an on-an-occasion remedy, it's also a profession, like law or medicine or teaching, and our social workers need a specialized preparation for their jobs."

"Social work these days is also a team project with other agencies in the community. We can't just operate our own Catholic agencies and stop there," Monsignor Mulcahy said. "Our social workers are in close touch with their counterparts in other agencies and we are deeply involved in the community's efforts to alleviate poverty, improve housing, aid in finding jobs for the unemployed and increase the community's health standards. Much of this we do by serving on regional health councils, the boards of such agencies as Action for a Better Community, so we can help in over-all policy making decisions."

What are some of the specific services available from agencies of the Catholic Charities?

For the Rochester area, Monsignor Mulcahy said, there are seven Charities agencies — St. Ann's Home, Catholic Family Center, St. Joseph's Villa, Catholic Youth Organization, DePaul Clinic, the Genesee Settlement House and the Charles Settlement House.

All seven receive funds toward their operating costs from the Community Chest — last year a total of \$842,232 with a total cost of operation of \$3,340,734.

St. Mary's Hospital also receives Community Chest aid but operates as an organization separate from the Charities. There are also Charities-related units in Auburn and Elmira which receive subsidies from United Fund organizations there.

The Rochester Charities agencies, however, provide these services:

**St. Ann's Home** — A residence for close to 350 elderly people, many of whom require physical therapy or infirmary care.

**Catholic Family Center** — A "multi-function" agency which provided services to more than 3000 families this past year, arranging for the adoption of 115 children, foster homes for 343 children, providing counsel and care for 192 unwed mothers and many varied services to hundreds of other family problem situations.

**St. Joseph's Villa** — A "home away from home" for dependent children, particularly in cases where there is illness at home and parents cannot provide adequate care for their children or a widow who has to work and needs to have her child tended during the work week and similar cases.

**Catholic Youth Organization** — Recreation and

leisure-time activities for youngsters and the "young at heart" — including swimming at the CYO pool, diocesan-wide sports programs such as basketball and baseball, gymnastics, golf, volleyball, handball, summer day camps, etc.

**De Paul Clinic** — A mental health service for children of the parochial schools.

**Genesee and Charles Settlement Houses** — Neighborhood family and youth centers with programs in sports, camping, handicrafts, tutoring, citizenship instruction, excursions, cooking, etc.

Will these agencies ultimately solve the problems they're established to solve?

"Some, of course, yes," Monsignor Mulcahy replied.

"But there's no indication people are going to stop having problems or stop wanting what we can provide them — children will always want to play games, childless couples will want to adopt children, all of us are getting older. Actually, all indications point to an increase in agencies like ours in the years ahead.

"And in regard to people with problems, problems they can't cope with or solve by themselves — a few years back, people came only when they were desperate. Now they come when they detect symptoms of developing difficulties. Better education, better information about the agencies, comments of associates who were themselves helped — all these factors have broken down the old reluctance to go to a 'charity' agency for advice or counsel."

The word "charity" brings up the question of money — how can charity be paid for or bought?

"In the past many social workers survived on their own generous spirit," Monsignor Mulcahy said, "but in our time — and in communities like ours, a sound wage scale is established and social workers are assured a better future than their pioneering predecessors."

He said this "realistic viewpoint" doesn't rule out the need for "people with a sense of dedication." Adequately paid people can and do have this sense, he insisted.

And as for the three million dollar cost of operating all these seven agencies for a year — "that's the same amount our government is spending each hour for the war in Vietnam.

"How do you put a price tag on a home for a child, a disturbed child restored to normal happy living, a lonely elderly person who's made to feel wanted, youngsters with no place to play near home taken to a park for a day in the sunshine?" the Charities director asked.

There's only one answer to a question like that and it is, our response to the annual appeal of the Community Chest as it asks us in its golden jubilee year once again to be generous in fulfilling the Lord's command, "Love thy neighbor." —Father Henry A. Atwell



MONSIGNOR MULCAHY



FATHER CHARBONNEAU



WILLIAM NOLAN

### Jubilarian

Names well known in Rochester and in the field of social welfare even nationally highlight the fifty year history of Rochester Catholic Charities.

These names include Bishop Walter A. Faery of Syracuse, Monsignor Gerald C. Lambert, Monsignor Arthur E. Ratigan, the late Father John B. Crowley, all former directors of the Charities, and the perennial and genial William T. Nolan.

Mr. Nolan joined the Charities organization the year it was incorporated in 1917 and directed a fund drive that first year for a record \$77,000. He is still a familiar figure at the Charities office at 50 Chestnut St. and is a living filing cabinet of facts and statistics which a computer would have difficulty remembering.

He has seen the Charities grow from a largely volunteer status to the present specially educated professional staff. His plans for the future? "I'm here to do what I can to help," he says.

## Bishop Sheen's Letter For Chest Campaign

My dear People of God:

I write this letter in behalf of the Community Chest of Rochester and Monroe County.

Most of the year, each of us is a little rivulet running into our own lake of the Church and our religious brotherhood. But now the time has come when we pour into the great ocean of humanity and give aid to all who are in need.

We hear a summons not just to arouse our pity, but to stimulate our caring. Idle pity is unblest, but your giving hand will prove that it hears the "still, sad music of humanity".

With prayerful blessings, I am

Your servant in Christ,

*Fulton Sheen*   
Bishop of Rochester

## Panel Sunday On Need for Adoptions

The plight of children looking for loving parents will be described at a panel discussion at St. Helen's school hall Sunday, April 30, at 2 p.m.

Panelists will include Family Court Judge Joseph G. Fritsch, Miss Catherine Wobus of Catholic Family Center, Mr. and Mrs. William O'Connor, Mr. and Mrs. George Wiedemer and Robert Thompson.

The program is open to the public. Panelists will explain the local need for adoptions.



Jack Rice, with hat, plans with aide on inner city housing.

## Chest Mass This Sunday

Mass will be offered for officials of the Community Chest and workers in its annual fund campaign at St. Ann's Home chapel Sunday, April 30, at 10:30 a.m.

Bishop Sheen launched the Chest's industrial division's phase of the drive in a talk at the Sheraton Hotel Wednesday evening.

The drive's goal is over seven million dollars, largest amount in the Chest's 50-year history.

## To Make Happier Homes

One of New York State's largest adoption agencies is Rochester's Catholic Family Center.

Center director, Rev. William G. Charbonneau, stated that over one hundred couples last year applied to the Center to adopt a child.

The Family Center also places children in foster homes on a temporary basis, and aids families in need of professional counseling service, Father Charbonneau said.

Currently, there are about the same number of applicants as

there are children available for adoption, he said.

First questions asked by applicants usually are, "What do we have to do?" and "How long do we have to wait?"

A staff of specially trained social workers arranges a series of interviews and processes each application by personal visits to the home of the adopting parents.

Love and affection for the adopted child are the basic requirements sought in the applicants.

The agency has no specific requirements as to income. It seeks couples who give evidence of job satisfaction, wise money management and sound budgeting.

Applicants are also asked what kind of a child they prefer. Caseworkers will also explain what children are at that time available for adoptions. Insofar as possible, children are placed with couples they can be expected to resemble.

Family counseling service is also arranged by the Family Center to aid couples having marriage difficulties.