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"On the Spot" Help
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The Catholic COURIER

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

Writer Meditates on
"Time For Being"—
A Series for Lent
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79th Year

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Catholic Agency Gave:

Fast Relief For Viet War Victims

By FATHER PATRICK J. BURKE, S.S.C.

Salmon — (NC) — When the Viet Cong launched their surprise offensive in Saigon at Tet (the lunar new year), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the overseas relief agency of U.S. Catholics, was able to respond immediately to the requests for emergency supplies of food and medicines.

Father Robert L. Charlebois of Gary, Ind., director of CRS in Vietnam, and his staff were able to send food and medicines to the refugee centers established in the Saigon area on the first day of the emergency (Jan. 31).

During the three weeks cov-

ered by the report CRS helped over 280,500 poor and needy Vietnamese affected by the Viet Cong offensive with 290 tons of food valued at \$217,774.

In addition, four and one-half tons of soap and 34 tons of clothing were distributed during the same period to 248 refugee centers, institutions, organizations, schools, hospitals, leprosaria and approved social agencies.

Rochester Catholics will help the Catholic Relief Services described here by answering the 22nd annual Catholic Bishops' Overseas Aid Fund Appeal in their parishes on Sunday, March 24. The national goal of the collection is \$5 million, the minimum required to maintain the world-wide program of mercy sent to 70 countries.

During the three-week period CRS gave medicines and medical equipment to 307 emergency clinics set up for civilian casualties, hospitals, medical health teams, institutions and government agencies. In the first three days of the emergency, CRS in New York was able to airlift penicillin and other antibiotics and drugs to Saigon.

A big feature of CRS help during that time was the work of its 12 Sister-nurses who staffed 23 emergency clinics in refugee centers in the Saigon area. They moved from center to center as their help was needed.

Bishop Slated For Holy Hour

Bishop Sheen will conduct a special Holy Hour for members of the Nocturnal Adoration Society on Saturday, March 9 at 9 p.m. in Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Members have been asked to be present by 8:45 p.m. according to Urban G. Kress, executive secretary of the Nocturnal Adoration Group.

Archbishop Agrees With Riot Report

Saginaw, Mich. — (NC) — Archbishop John F. Dearden of Detroit told an audience here that the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders was correct in pinpointing "white racism" as a major cause of last summer's rioting.

"The use of the ugly word 'racism' disturbs us," he said, "and yet it is the right word. It disturbs us because it conjures up memories of Buchenwald and Dachau and the deep wound of racism that is now weakening our own country."

The archbishop, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke on "The Role of the Church in the Urban Crisis" to a standing-room-only crowd at St. Paul Seminary.

The Church, he continued, must be in the forefront of the effort to "restore to our people confidence and hope and a strong desire to reestablish more solidly than ever before a spirit of unity and concord."

He also said that the Church must teach "where man's responsibilities to God and to man lie . . . and the message must be . . . clear . . . courageous . . . persistent . . . understanding and persuasive."

Archbishop Dearden warned against "slogan mentality."

"The white community hears an expression like 'black power' and immediately becomes apprehensive," he said. He pointed out that "there is much in the 'black power' movement that we must recognize as valid and good. It aims at achieving for the Negro a sense of self-identity and of pride of race . . . a desire to make use of his strength . . . to achieve just goals."

"We need to judge the issues that are involved," he said, "not the words in which they are put nor our reaction to the persons who put them."

St. Bridget's Property

Gift is Rescinded, But Benefits Remain

See Page Four for Editorial: "The Happening at St. Bridget's"

The gift that could not be given may become a blessing in disguise.

True, the property of St. Bridget's parish will not go to the federal government as a housing site for the poor.

Nonetheless, the sacrificial spirit which drove Bishop Sheen to make the original offer touched the hearts of people across the nation.

Those who lacked decent housing could take heart know-

ing their plight was not forgotten.

The very willingness to make the offer set a standard of Christian generosity and concern for the poor that will encourage similar largeness of heart.

Even the furor which followed the first announcement on Ash Wednesday had its side benefits, while simultaneously causing the Bishop to reconsider, then to rescind the unusual donation.

Those most directly affected by the proposed gift did not overlook that spirit that shaped it.

"We of St. Bridget's want to thank Bishop Sheen," stated Father Francis H. Vogt, pastor of the parish last Sunday, and "we pay tribute to his zeal and his concern for the poor."

For St. Bridget's parish, the events which followed the original announcement triggered a flood of loyal affection that flowed far and wide. The parishioners showed in a hundred ways that their worn but still vital church and school played a great part in their lives.

"We have been given a terrific lift by the response of the people of the neighborhood," Father Vogt noted. "It is reassuring to know that the very

presence of the Church in the neighborhood brings hope and comfort to so many."

Then too, the respectful but dissenting letter of the 123 priests who urged Bishop Sheen to reconsider his decision was handled as humbly as men can, who feel impelled to advise their recognized superior on a vital matter.

Father Vogt summed up the views of countless people when he told his people:

"We disagreed because we believed that the proposal would remove St. Bridget's (buildings) without accomplishing what he (Bishop Sheen) really wanted."

He likewise echoed the sentiments of thousands when he immediately added, "I think that Bishop Sheen's idea was basically a tremendous one."

The sequence of events which followed in rapid order after the Bishop's dramatic announcement on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 28) were briefly these:

Father Vogt stated the same evening that he felt the gift was a mistake, that he would urge the Bishop to reconsider his decision.

A barrage of telephone calls began to inundate the Pastoral Office and St. Bridget's rectory with a groundswell of public response, mostly supporting the retention of the parish property.

Newspaper accounts brought St. Bridget's suddenly into the public gaze. Father Vogt's 14 years of labor with the poor, the fine job being done in the school by devoted sisters and by teachers, the warm-hearted volunteers who staff the parish's various service programs—these were all described in detail.

A contemporary note of student protest was briefly struck by half a dozen Monroe Community College coeds who graced the sidewalk before the Pastoral Office with signs supporting the retention of St. Bridget's.

A group of 22 Rochester priests drafted a letter, eventually signed by more than a hundred other priests, to the bishop. While its contents were not published, it was a plea for reconsideration and for a wider consultation of all concerned in such a decision.

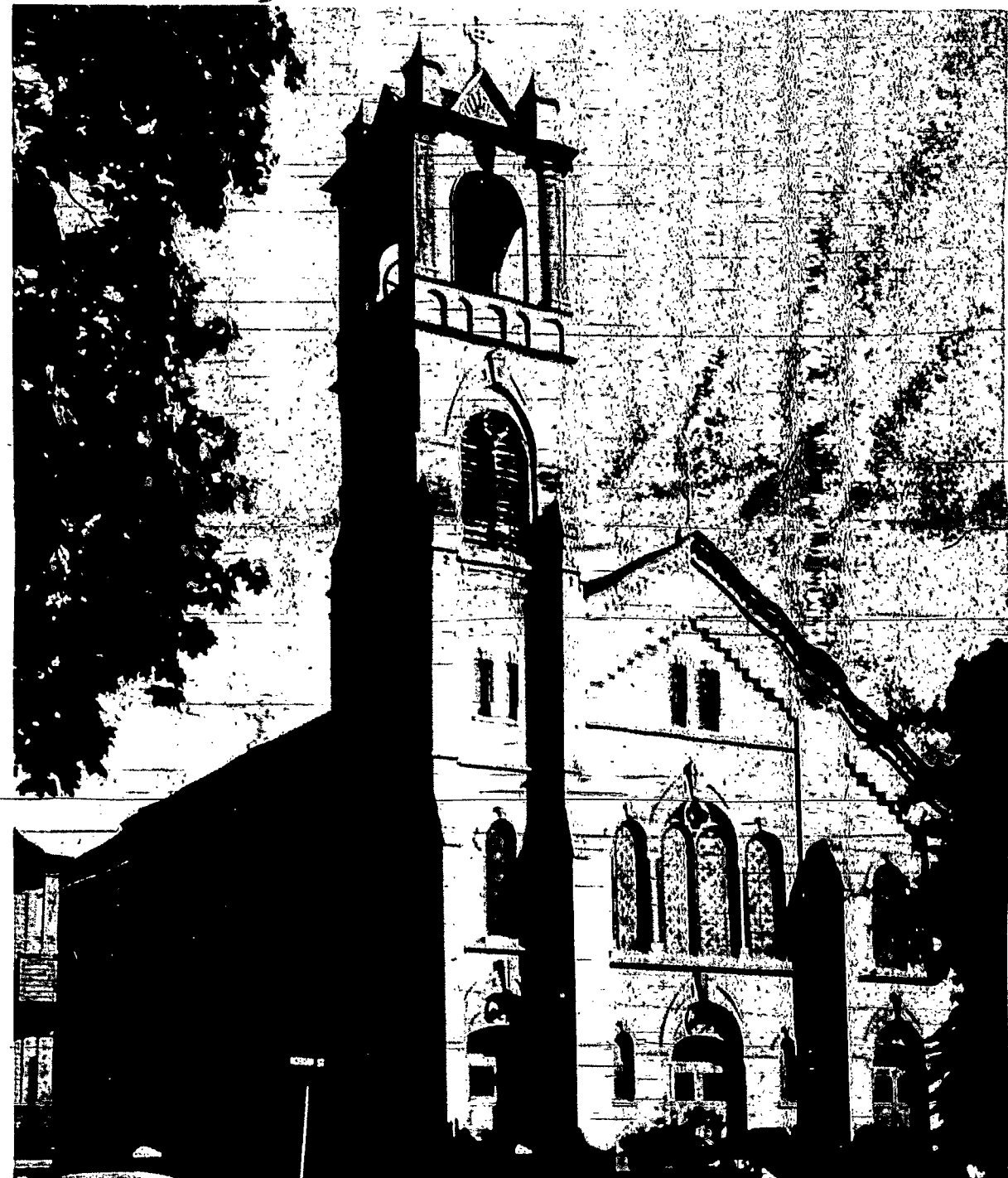
Late on Saturday (March 1), Father Vogt was notified by Monsignor Charles Boyle that the Bishop had rescinded the proposed donation.

Monsignor Boyle, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church, had been one of a three man committee who had presented the priest's letter for the Bishop's consideration. Father Genaro Ventura, Pastor of Mt. Carmel Church and Father Edward Lintz, pastor of Brockport's Church of the Nativity were the other two priest-representatives.

Thus on Sunday morning, Father Vogt was able to tell his overjoyed congregation that St. Bridget's Church would "continue to serve the people" of its neighborhood, as it had for the past 114 years.

So, the gift remained ungiven, but its benefits are still being felt.

—Father Robert Kanka



ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCH, a landmark in Rochester's 7th ward, will continue to be so, after a decision to donate it to the government for federal housing was rescinded this week.

Truce Attack Unifies Civic Resistance

By FATHER PATRICK O'CONNOR

(NC News Service)

Salmon — The shock of the communist "let truce" offensive has produced what promises to be Vietnam's most representative association of nationalist anti-communists. Important persons seem to realize that factional rivalries, regional jealousy and chronic criticism are forms of intramural athletics too costly and dangerous for the present time.

The committee for the People's Save-the-Nation Congress has been formed to unite political, religious and other groups in resistance to communism. The decision to form it was reached by prominent political personalities, some of whom opposed the present government during and after the elections of last September.

The communists have tried to capitalize on our divisions in the past," the statement said. "We want to strengthen the forces of anti-communism."

Pope Paul

Pleads For Needy Children

New York — (NC) — Pope Paul VI urged the more than six million Catholic school children in the United States "to do everything you can to help all those boys and girls who live in countries where there is hunger, suffering and sickness."

The Pope's plea was made in his annual Ash Wednesday message to American Catholic school children which opens the Catholic Bishops' Overseas Aid Fund Appeal. The Pope's address was broadcast by the nation's major radio networks.

The annual Lenten campaign in U.S. Catholic schools is the initial phase of the 22nd annual Bishops' Overseas Aid Fund Appeal. The second phase is conducted in the Catholic parishes across the country, scheduled this year from March 17 to 24, and climaxed by the traditional Lenten Sunday collection (March 24).

In his five-minute plea, recorded in Vatican City, Pope Paul reminded American children that "through no fault of theirs, these young people do not have enough to eat, many of them have no homes and only rags to wear, some have lost their fathers and mothers, even their whole families; they grow up ignorant and uneducated because they have no schools, and when they get sick, as they often do, there are no doctors or hospitals or medicine to make them well again."

"If you could see them, if you

could see the misery and poverty in which they live, we know that you would do everything possible to help them," he continued.

"During Lent, you can relieve the suffering of these boys and girls . . . you can put aside what you would spend on your own pleasures and enjoyment to make an offering to the collection which your bishops hold each year in order

to send food, clothing and medicine to these poor children," Pope Paul said.

Proceeds from the campaign support the global programs of Catholic Relief Services, overseas aid and development agency of American Catholics. Of the \$5 million national goal set each year for the appeal, approximately \$1 million is realized from the children's donations.



Pope Paul VI in Lenten Procession

Rome — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI leads a Lenten procession on Ash Wednesday at the Church of St. Sabina in Rome. The pontiff was starting his Lenten visits to Roman churches where he joins clergy and parishioners at services.

Single Press Service For Vatican Now

Vatican City — (NC) — The Holy See has closed down the press service of the Vatican City daily, L'Osservatore Romano, which has supplied the bulk of Vatican news for the past three decades.

It has merged it with a separate Press Office of the Holy See that grew out of an official

press service created for the Second Vatican Council.

Journalists specializing in coverage of Vatican affairs have always used the press service of L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican City daily. They got virtually all official communications through the paper's service and put most of their ques-

tions to Vatican authorities through the head of that press service, Dr. Luciano Casimiri.

The official announcement said: "The press office will get its information directly from the Papal Secretariat of State. Such news will be distributed impartially among all accredited journalists."

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Pope Encourages Priests In Their Inner Trials

Vatican City — (RNS) — "We know how much you need to be comforted," Pope Paul VI told a group of priests here, "and God knows how much we wish to comfort you."

Addressing parish priests of the Rome diocese, the Pope said that their need of comfort results not only from the ordinary difficulties of their ministry but also, in some cases, from "inner clergy" which are afflicting many members of the younger clergy.

"They feel their celibacy no longer as complete immolation and love but as an unnatural weight. And above all they look at the world, from which they live apart and are defended in order to make it better and evangelize and serve it, no longer with an apostolic love but with nostalgia."

A man who becomes a priest "no longer belongs to himself," the Pope said. He called on priests to convey the sanctity of Christ to all men, "not through an impersonal bureaucratic, purely canonical ministry but through a living ministry."

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