

# Catholic Parishes Help Heal Plainfield Racial Scars

Plainfield, N.J.—Scars slowly are beginning to heal a year after serious rioting rocked this city. Helping to heal them are the city's two largest Catholic parishes, one of which had been pretty much insulated to the needs of the community until recently.

Plainfield not only has been quiet this summer but whites and blacks have begun to work together.

One sign of this is the day camp being conducted at St. Mary's parish here for 5 to 12-year-olds. It is one of 21 camps in various centers under an anti-poverty campaign called Community Action Plainfield Crusade. Another camp is at St. Bernard's parish but St. Bernard's, where the Christian Family Movement is strong, is no stranger to community action programs.

The involvement of St. Mary's, however, is particularly significant for two reasons. One is that the black community had looked upon the parish as a "white island." Another is that Patrolman John Gleason, who was stomped to death during the rioting, had been a parishioner at St. Mary's.



Oliver Bartlett, Negro director of Neighborhood House, which is helping to run the day camp at St. Mary's where 65 per cent of the youngsters participating are Negro, took note of the change.

"People have been looking at it as a white institution," he said. "They've been suspicious of it. And here it opens up its school to them."

Not only did St. Mary's open up its school, but it put \$6,300 of its own funds into the program.

Bartlett was impressed with the fact that some white parents at St. Mary's deliberately enrolled their children in the day camp program because it would bring them into contact with children of a differing

culture, and to maintain a black-white balance at the camp.

And he put his finger on another result of the program.

"Middle-income blacks wanted 'in,'" he said. "They may criticize St. Mary's, but they see white kids going to that beautiful school and they

are well-dressed and supposed to be getting a very good education and now all of a sudden we're part of that school.

"The reaction was: 'I want my kid to get some of that good stuff over there.' People, you know, always criticize what they are shut out of," he added.

"Something has to happen when you have black counselors from Neighborhood House running over to St. Mary's to talk to the Fathers. And when you have Father in a sport shirt at the day camp, coming across not as somebody who just prays, but as somebody who's human," he continued.

"I don't think the Church made any converts this summer," Bartlett joked. "But that beautiful school was used during the summer when it hadn't been before. And 12-year-old boys—Baptists, Cath-

olics, black, white and what have you—got to understand each other better."

"I really feel," he added, "that it's terribly important that the Church be of service to the community. The Church hasn't made the outreach—it's been of service only to Catholics. There's a fairly necessary in the cities, that the Church is concerned with building a human community. The Church hasn't been doing this."

But attitudes are changing. A special collection at St. Mary's to raise day camp funds netted \$5,000. And, as Bartlett noted, some white parents enrolled their own children. One of them was Thomas Hammal, who had three children entered and who was instrumental in bringing the program to fruition by putting Church and

Neighborhood House officials in contact with each other.

A member of the Neighborhood House board and a CFM member at St. Mary's, he explained his own interest by noting that "as a parent I had faced the need to explain why some children don't dress as well as others . . . why there was shooting in the streets here last summer."

He said the day camp project helped bring members of the black community to a realization that "there are people who realize the Negro has problems, that people do care and want to work along with him, as we build a new society where black and white are equal."

## Non-Violent Revolution Said Still a Possibility

Washington, D.C.—(RNS)—Non-violent revolution is still possible today, but Christians must be willing to die for it, an aide to the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. told some 4,500 participants in the 1968 liturgical week here.

"Anybody celebrating the reconciliation between God and man must concern himself with the reconciliation between himself and his brother," the Rev. Andrew J. Young, executive vice president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), said in a keynote address.

Theme of the week was "Revolution: Christian Responses."

Mr. Young's address was preceded by the presentation

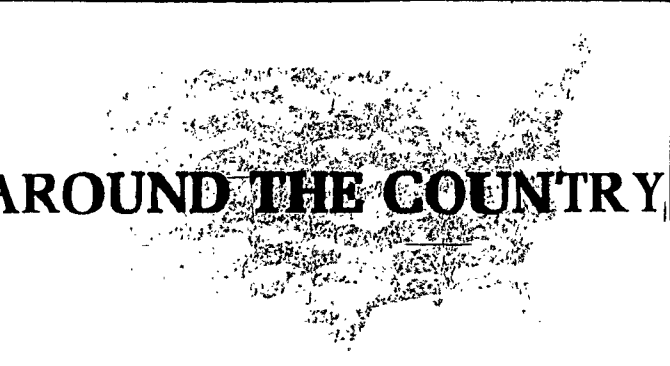
of an award to Miss Dorothy Day, founder and present-day leader of the Catholic Worker Movement. The presentation was made by Father Clarence J. Rivers, Director of the National Institute of Drama and Ritual.

In his talk, Mr. Young said, "The first thing about the liturgy is that it must be a liturgy of penance, because we pay taxes to murder people."

In the liturgy, he noted, men come together to ask God how He can use them to reconcile the world. This is the "ministry of reconciliation," Mr. Young said, which Dr. King practiced. It is a ministry that is not only to individuals; it must also cope with institutions, the

structures, the powers" of American society.

The direction the non-violent revolution should take is a practical, pragmatic course, he said, citing the examples of voting registration campaigns, boycotts of products made by quasi-slave labor, and objections to financial exploitation of small nations by larger nations.



### Ecumenical Leader Dies

Berlin, N.H.—Dr. Douglas Horton, ecumenical leader and educator, died at a Berlin hospital on Aug. 21 after suffering a heart attack at his home in nearby Randolph.

The 77-year-old clergyman of the United Church of Christ was head of the Congregational Christian Churches from 1938 to 1955, and led his denomination into the merger with the Evangelical and Reformed Church which formed the United Church.

His final years were devoted especially to Roman Catholic-Protestant relations. Dr. Horton was an observer for the International Congregational Council at all sessions of Vatican Council II. His analysis of the council was recorded in four books.

### Unit to Study Schools

Hartford, Conn.—(NC)—The Catholic Interracial Council of Greater Hartford said it plans to "survey the hiring practices of all Catholic schools in the archdiocese of Hartford and will also analyze the racial composition of their student enrollments."

The statement followed a charge by Mrs. Patricia Abeleken of Hartford that she had been discriminated against because she is a Negro, when she applied for a teaching position at St. Ann's School and St. Augustine's School, both in Hartford.

### Cardinal Gibbons To Be Remembered

Washington — (NC) — Msgr. Joseph B. Coyne, pastor of St. Andrew's church in suburban Silver Spring, Md., will preach the sermon at the traditional Labor Day Mass Sept. 2 in the Shrine of the Sacred Heart.

Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle of Washington will officiate. Following the Mass, David Sullivan, a vice president of the AFL-CIO, will give an address at the statue of James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, pioneer champion of organized labor in this country, in a small park fronting the church.

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