



A Picture Editorial



You say you're tired of reading about the Nigeria-Biafra plight? True the Courier-Journal has been trying to call your attention to the situation for a long time — even before it became a national issue.

But when you catch yourself thinking the reports are repetitive, redundant, even boring, then pause, especially at this time of Thanksgiving, to think of the misery of a hungry child.

You can be sure that children like this one will be more than thankful for any food we can send.

So if you want to help, funds may be sent to Bishop Swanstrom, U.S. Catholic Relief Services, 350 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001.

Don't Forget Poor At Christmas Time

Have you remembered the poor in your Christmas plans this year? Bring joy and happiness to 7,000 of your brothers and sisters in Christ by donating to the Catholic Charities Christmas Fund, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

TEXT OF U.S. BISHOPS' LETTER, "HUMAN LIFE," IS PRINTED ON PAGES 11 AND 12.

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Courier-Journal, 35 Scio St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Phone 716-454-7050.

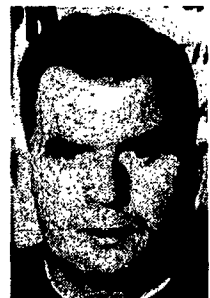
'Approximately 25,000 Will Die Of Hunger on Christmas Day'

An awesome escalation is under way in deaths by starvation in the breakaway state of Biafra, reported Father Peter Hughes, a Holy Ghost missionary sent to the United States by the Biafran Bishops Welfare Department on a "Food for Biafra" mercy mission under the auspices of Catholic Relief Services in New York City.

Father Hughes, who served five years in Biafra, left Rochester for Boston Monday after a news conference here.

"By late December the death toll will reach 750,000 people per month," said Father Hughes. "On Christmas Day alone, approximately 25,000 will die of hunger. In January and February the daily death toll will be even greater. This far exceeds the present starvation death rate of 240,000 to 300,000, mostly children, who will die this month from protein starvation. More than a million have died since the famine started."

Father Hughes reported that the besieged Biafrans are running out of staple carbohydrate foods, mainly yams and cassava, and are being forced by starvation to eat yams put aside for planting, which means there will be no harvest next season. Six to nine million people are crowded into the area encircled by Nigerian forces



and soon this area will be almost bare of food, he said.

"A cease-fire and end to the war are essential for a final solution," said the Dublin-born missionary. "A lot can be accomplished around a conference table. But even if the war ended today there would be a massive need for food and medical help for many months. And in addition to the starvation in Biafran territory, there is famine in Nigerian-held territory."

In contrast to buying food in areas distant from Africa, the "Food for Biafra Fund" will be used to buy yams and other food in Africa, he said. The food will include yam seedlings to be planted immediately, to stave off famine in months ahead. The once-a-year planting season is now beginning, said Father Hughes, but starvation is forcing people to eat the seed yams.

Fr. Hughes noted that the upwelling of the famine has been studied and confirmed by U.S. and European relief organizations including UNICEF, Caritas, Church World Service, Interchurch Relief Organization, Nordchurchaid, and others.

The diocesan Centennial Supplement, mailed to all subscribers last week, has been praised for content and style. Extra copies are available: send 35 cents to Courier-Journal, 35 Scio Street, Rochester, 14604. Get a copy for friends who are non-subscribers, for people who have moved out of the diocese, for students away at school.

Father Hughes is one of two Holy Ghost missionaries who came to America to tackle the fund raising task. While in Rochester he conferred with religious leaders, and representatives of three Nigeria-Biafran relief groups: Operation Medicorps and Emergency Relief for Nigeria-Biafra, both of Rochester, and members of a newly formed citizens' committee from Syracuse.

"American public opinion is becoming more and more vocal on the situation," noted the missionary. Political leaders have reported they are receiving a very high volume of letters, postcards, telegrams and phone calls.

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Holiday Season Warning

Don't Get 'Conned' Out of Your Money!

By CARMEN VIGLUCCI

Suppose you're an old lady, the kind who still gets excited over Christmas.

Your heart is filled with thoughts of love and charity during the holy season.

And you're being saving all year, probably at a bank Christmas Club, and soon you will go down to draw out your cash for shopping.

You are a mark.

Rochester Police Chief William M. Lombard warns that, unfortunately though it may be, this is the season to be wary of friendly-appearing strangers.

"Bunko artists, confidence men, just plain professional thieves become more prevalent at this time of the year," he warned.

Heavy shopping crowds, including

More Prelates Join Criticism Of Media's Pastoral Coverage

(NC News Service)

Many important members of the American hierarchy have protested press, radio and TV reports on the U.S. Bishops' meeting in Washington, specifically concerning the bishops' statements on contraception in their pastoral letter, "Human Life in Our Day."

The gist of the prelates' complaints is the news media gave the impression that the U.S. bishops had taken a stand in opposition to Pope Paul VI's encyclical on birth control, Humanae Vitae, reiterating the Church's opposition to use of artificial contraceptives.

At a press conference in Pittsburgh, Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh, a principal framer of the pastoral letter, and Bishop William G. Connaire of Greensburg, Pa., agreed that "early news reports (concerning the pastoral) were so misleading as to require special clarification."

Earlier John Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia and Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati deplored mass media distortions of the bishops' statement.

Bishop Romeo J. Blanchette and Auxiliary Bishop Raymond J. Vorech of Joliet, Ill., stated:

"We were surprised upon returning from Washington that some people thought the American bishops were opposing Pope Paul's encyclical. In voting our approval, we definitely stood with the Holy Father."

Archbishop William E. Cousins of Milwaukee said news media coverage of the bishops' pastoral letter tended to concentrate on "only seven lines" of the 51-page document. He asserted freedom of conscience, discussed in the statement, meant nothing if taken out of context.

Archbishop Alter said: "Through some unexplainable circumstance the news media have gravely misinterpreted the pastoral statement of the United States bishops both in respect to its content and its implications."

"The statement nowhere speaks of condoning the use of contraceptives, and at no place in the text leaves an opening for an ambiguous interpretation as to its meaning."

"There is no warrant in the text nor in the action of the bishops which would permit by implication the right for the penitent to conceal in the sacrament of Penance the sin of contraceptive usage, or permit re-

ception of the Holy Eucharist without previous absolution."

Archbishop Cousins said the mass media coverage of the pastoral gave the impression that the statement left room for married couples to break the ban against contraceptives if their conscience required.

The archbishop pointed out the bishops' letter mentioned Penance and Holy Communion together. He said: "With pastoral solicitude we urge those who have resorted to artificial contraception never to lose heart, but to continue to take full

advantage of the strength which comes from the sacrament of Penance, and the grace, healing and peace in the Eucharist."

Bishops Wright and Connaire, at their press conference, noted that the range of the pastoral letter is wide and its general theme "is the defense of life itself, its transmission and its security." They said it touches on "innumerable questions connected with peace and war, the problems of the family and the moral principles bound up with all these."

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Vatican Not Talking On Stands of Bishops

By FR. R. A. GRAHAM, S.J. Special Correspondent

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Vatican is keeping a tight-lipped silence as the various national hierarchies take their stand on the birth control encyclical.

The only formal hint of its reaction is found in a short unsigned note in the Nov. 18 issue of L'Osservatore Romano which denied that any Vatican source had approved the French bishops' declaration.

No Vatican agency and no responsible personality, it said curtly, had commented on this or any other collective statement.

These reports, said the note, no doubt go beyond the intentions of the episcopal authors who, it declared, "swear by their adherence to the teaching of the encyclical." It suggested that an interpretation of the statements is now being attempted which would, as it put it, "weaken the binding value of the law."

For the moment, Pope Paul wishes to retain his own freedom of action and reserves the right to make his own comments at the right time. If the bishops see fit to interpret his encyclical, he not illogically will find

it just as legitimate to interpret the voice of the national hierarchies in his turn.

This will not be so difficult for Paul VI to do as newspaper reports make one believe. Nearly everywhere outside of Northern Europe and North America — the developed countries — the episcopal statements give straightforward and unequivocal support to Humanae Vitae.

Even the statements emanating from Germany, Belgium, Austria, England, Canada, the Scandinavian countries and France, if they are noteworthy for the permissiveness in the light of particular consciences, nevertheless approve the basic principles enunciated in the encyclical.

The image that the "pill" is now beginning to take in the underdeveloped countries may have something to do with the readiness of the bishops of Africa, Asia and Latin America to accept the encyclical without the circumlocutions of other hierarchies. In the words attributed to Archbishop Heider, Cardinal of Recife, Brazil, "Without Humanae Vitae, the masses of Latin America, Asia and Africa will be stuffed with anti-conceptualist pills."

Local Press Coverage Skippy on Document

By FR. RICHARD TORMEY

Local newspapers in the communities of the Rochester Diocese deserve a journalistic zero for poor reporting of the Pastoral Letter of the U.S. Bishops, "Human Life in Our Day."

The 11,000 word letter, issued to the nation's press services on Friday evening, Nov. 15, covered a variety of subjects of intense importance and interest to the Catholic families who constitute between more than 30 percent of the population of the 12 counties of this diocese.

But the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle used only EIGHT sentences the next morning on page 9, to record the Bishops' words on birth control, conscience, family life, war and peace, and conscientious objection. Only ONE sentence mentioned the momentous 180-8 vote affirming that contraception is an objective evil.

The Rochester Times-Union on that Saturday evening carried only 10 sentences on the contraception issue, on page two, without a direct quote.

The Elmira Star-Gazette never mentioned the Bishops' significant

letter in either the Saturday or Sunday editions which thousands of Southern Tier Catholics read carefully.

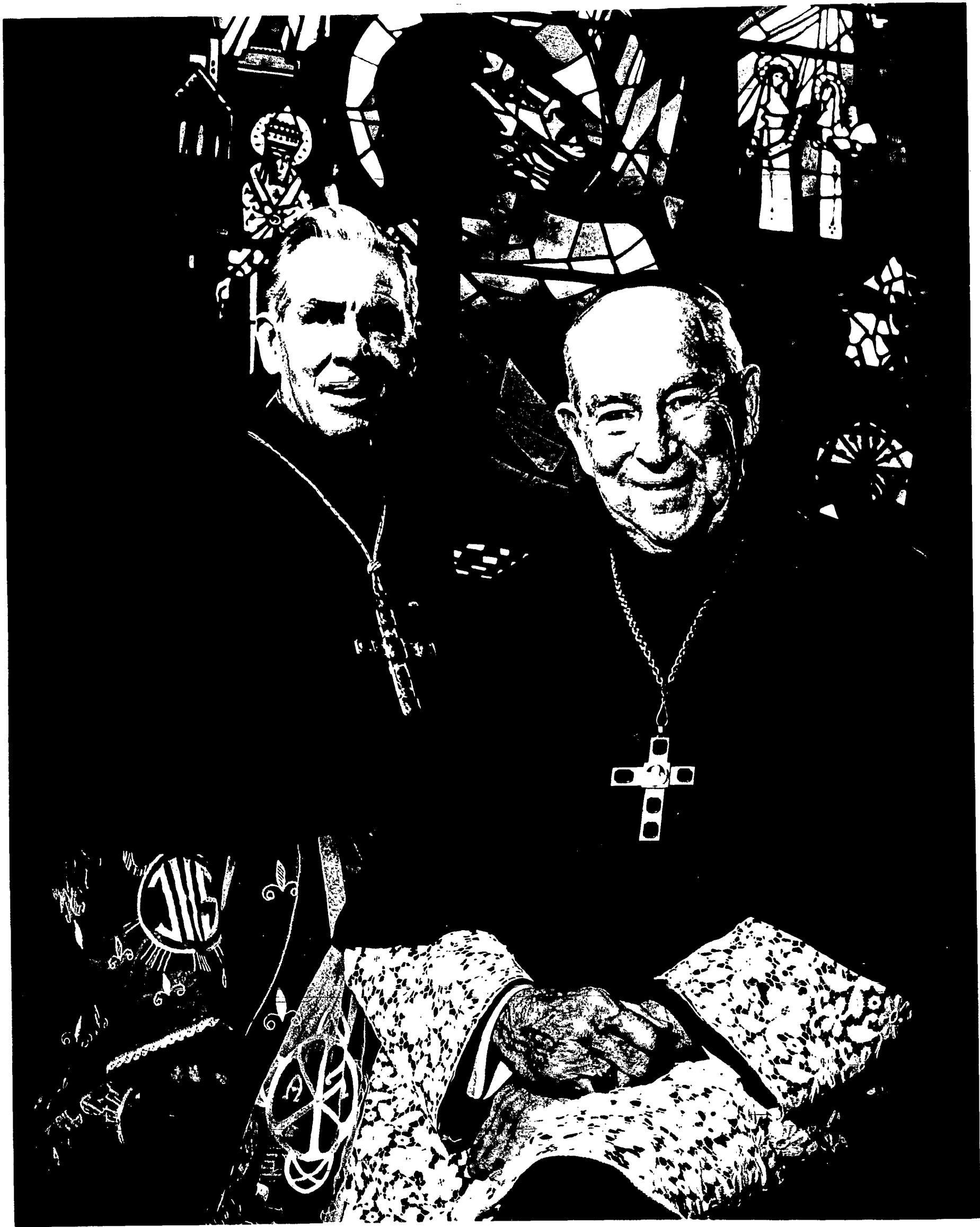
The Auburn Citizen-Advertiser did have the story on page one of its Saturday issue, but used only FIVE sentences in a 15 paragraph story to report to Auburn-area Catholic readers what the Bishops said about birth control.

The Ithaca Journal used twelve paragraphs on page one to carry the Associated Press "guess-story" on Friday evening before the Bishops' letter was issued. It summarized the whole document in less than 10 sentences on page 17 in its Saturday issue.

Two lessons seem obvious from this survey:

1. These secular papers, which had carried brief daily news reports from the Bishops' Washington meeting speculating on what the pastoral letter might say on the burning birth control question, did not like to announce that the Bishops had given strong support to Pope Paul's con-

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A PHOTO-PORTRAIT BY EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

Then Excellencies Bishops Fulton J. Sheen and James E. Kearney before the St. Jerome window at Nazareth College