

# Every Day 'Christmas' at Hospitality House

By PATRICK FARREN

Christmas decorations were put up last weekend at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, and just after the Saturday night meal a man was seen running down South Avenue with a statue of a pipe-playing shepherd under his arm.

Probably he would hook the statue for the price of a pint of wine.

That incident illustrates one of the crucial and difficult questions on the rationale of hospitality. The question is: are you just subsidizing the alcoholism of many of the men whom you feed and clothe?

It's a legitimate question, and for those who work at houses of hospitality, a troubling one, rather like the problem of suffering.

For at 402 South Ave. these days, as for the past 27 years, some of Rochester's forgotten people are being remembered daily, with food, with clothing, and with a sympathetic response.

Every evening except Sunday there's a 5:30 supper, with a menu which varies according to the contributions received. Usually, the meal consists of a thick, steaming soup composed of a half-dozen vegetables and perhaps some meat; several slices of raisin bread alongside the soup bowl; two bologna sandwiches, and coffee.

It's not gourmet fare, but as one of the few surviving free restaurants, where no questions are asked and no sermons delivered, St. Joseph's House



AMONG HOUSE VISITORS — Bishop Fulton J. Sheen is pictured during a visit to the House of Hospitality. The Bishop chatted with the men, helped serve the food and passed out cigars.

enjoys a good reputation among its clientele.

The waiting room is opened early these cold days, and closed late. It's a place to sit out of the cold winds and watch TV and smoke. Or just relax, away from the prying eyes of shoppers and the hos-

tile, move-on-buddy stares of the cops.

On Saturdays clothes are given out, everything from overcoats to underwear, clothing which has been donated by widows and by couples who don't want to ignore the poor. But the most asked-for items this winter — overshoes, rub-

bers, gloves, caps and thermal underwear — are in far too short supply. Many of the men must be asked to "try again in a few days."

Not all of the men who make use of the house of hospitality are "winos" — although the empty bottles of white port which litter the parking lot next to the building testify to the habitual hopelessness with which many of them coexist.

Some are retired men with cheap rooms, whose social security doesn't stretch far enough; men also whose families in suburbia don't want them or can't take them in; men too proud to go to the poorhouse but, really, too poor not to go.

Men who are veterans, who feel strangely rejected by the country which they served, men passing through town, going somewhere or nowhere and carrying little but the memory that things used to be better for them. . . men who are low-skilled and finding that there are more and more like them and fewer and fewer jobs which they can do.

Hippies and tripples, drop-outs and day laborers, wayfarers and winos, poormen and blackmen, veterans and Indians, old men, and boys who turn old too soon. These are those who come, who are received with at least some supper and some recognition of their humanness.

Many want to talk beneath the crustiness which is the universal protection against more hurt. Occasionally the stories are really tragic; usually they're merely pathetic. The seminary reject who was only

a year away from ordination. The ex-pilot who had trouble getting work after Korea because back in his home state he was just "another nigger."

The professional dishwasher who found that his experience didn't count and that too many youngsters would work for less than he could afford. The embittered Indian who puts his sandwiches into his shopping-bag for breakfast.

The lurching, white-haired deviate who always needs a new overcoat because he's hesing the one he has on, sleeping on the steampipes in the old tunnels along the river. The twenty-six-year-old who started drinking heavily when his girl friend went into the state hospital. The ex-barber who can't work because his hands shake, whose hands shake because he drinks and who drinks because he can't work. The man who lost a finger on the job and kept talking — like the character in "Of Mice and Men" — of the big "settlement" which probably won't come.

The men who go between the county pen and the county home, the penned-in, the homeless. Those called by society the underachievers, the underprivileged, the "bums."

There are other things going on at St. Joseph's House these days. A citizens' group called Emergency Relief for Nigeria, Biafra has been using the house since August as an office. A Legion of Mary group meets there very Tuesday night. Friends of the house gather every second Saturday for Mass in the upstairs chapel and breakfast discussions.

Posters from SCLC and the Resistance, on the grape strike and conscientious objection, hang on the bulletin boards. And-of course copies of the Catholic Worker newspaper and cups of hot coffee are always available to those who stop in.

But the main work is feeding the men, and as for the question of whether the house of hospitality helps subsidize alcoholism by giving them a free meal or a clean shirt, perhaps, in some cases, it does. Or perhaps, on the other hand, it helps give a man some new confidence or helps him keep some self-respect.

Perhaps some are able to buy another bottle because they've received a hot meal, but maybe the possibility of some free food helps decrease the number of muggings and petty thievery.

What it comes down to is the practicality of life, which is often impractical: whether or not it makes sense to feed the hungry, whether or not clothing the naked and counseling the doubtful are worthwhile, whether or not one is willing to see also the next man as a person, regardless of race, creed or alcoholic content.

There are problems as usual at St. Joseph's House these days, especially the frustration that so many must eventually be turned out into the cold after supper at night. But there's also a sense of progress and possibility, a joy at the reawakening of interest in the work of the house, and a satisfaction at the providing of hospitality. Daily, it feels like Christmas.



Mr. and Mrs. Eugene W. Bergin (left) are general chairmen and Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Yurgealitis honorary chairman for the Notre Dame University Alumni Club ball Dec. 27 at Oak Hill Country Club.

## Notre Dame Alumni Schedule Dance

An annual event for more than 40 years, this year's buffet and ball of the Notre Dame University Alumni Club is scheduled at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 27, at the Oak Hill Country Club.

French, and invitations were sent out in that language. Gifts for the ladies will be a French lipstick, the cuisine will feature French pastries, and a "roving French photographer" will snap candid. Music will be by Len Hawley's orchestra.

Committee includes Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Bergin, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Yurgealitis, Mrs. Jack Nye Duffy, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wurzer, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Yohon, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Sullivan, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Wilkin and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Parker.

## Teachers Plan New School

The lay teachers of the Academy of the Sacred Heart, hoping to launch a new school in September, will inspect a proposed site tomorrow.

The six teachers are planning a non-sectarian elementary school to take the place, in part, of the old Catholic private school, which will go out of business in June. Some Academy parents are working with them.

After a meeting Tuesday, Mrs. Raul Casper, one of the teachers, reported that legal requirements had been studied and

that there were "no snags as yet."

"We are optimistic for a September opening," she added. Mrs. Casper said the school about 150 girls, with no more than 20 in a class. There would be an expanded language program, "art, definitely, and possibly typing and home economics."

Nuns of the Society of the Sacred Heart have conducted the Prince Street School for 103 years. Its closing this June was announced a year ago. The new school would have no connection with the religious order.

## St. Martin Campaign At 66 P. C. of Goal

With 66 per cent of its \$100,000 goal attained by last Wednesday, efforts were continuing this week in the campaign for the St. Martin de Porres Center Development Fund.

With many cards still unreported, and solicitation through the mail continuing, Thomas H. Brenna and Alfred G. Boylan, campaign committee chairmen, expressed confidence that the goal will be attained.

A report meeting for the nearly 200 volunteers serving on the campaign committee was scheduled Dec. 19.

Aim of the drive is purchase or construction of a larger building to replace the Center's small headquarters at 537 Clinton Ave. N., as well as funds for operation during 1969-70.

Among contributions to date, Brenna said, is a \$5,000 gift from a local foundation.

Temporary campaign headquarters are open at 582 Main St. E., 454-1950.

## Fr. Contegiacomo Receives Gift From Pupils

Father Sebastian Contegiacomo, pastor of Most Precious Blood parish, let yesterday for a Christmas visit with relatives in Italy. This is Father Contegiacomo's first trip to his homeland in several decades.

He carried with him a very special Christmas gift from the 100 pupils of his parish school. When they learned that Father's voyage coincided with their school play, they decided to present him with all the proceeds from the admission price, over \$100.

The resolution said: "The ACP, in support of the statement in the recent bishops' letter which warns against continuation of the nuclear arms race, resolves to oppose the installation of Sentinel ABM missiles in the Chicago area."

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## Teens Pu

A hearty "Merry Christmas" to the students of Cardinal Mooney High School who will prepare and deliver Christmas baskets to 10 needy families; to the students who will give 20 elderly men and women at the St. Joseph Center Christmas gifts; and to the students who will host a party for the children in the ecumenical schools of St. Oliver and Emmanuel Presbyterian Churches.

Happy "Break-a-Legs" are due members of the Gle. Club of Bishop Kearney High School, who will join the Kearney Concert Band, on Sunday, Dec. 22, at 8 p.m., for a medley of Christmas music.

We extend the "Peace of the Incarnate Word" to those young men and women of Mt. Carmel High School in Auburn who sent the Carmelite Fathers in Vietnam over 1000 pairs of slippers for the shoeless in that country.

To the concert band and chorus of Cardinal Mooney High School, our "Best Wishes" for a successful performance of "A Song of Peace" to be given Saturday, Dec. 21, at 8:15 p.m.

"Christmas Greetings" to the students of Aquinas Institute, who will gather and deliver food to the city's poor on Christmas Eve.

To the students of Bishop Kearney High School who will do the same; and to those students who will be spending several days of their vacation serving the poor in Project REACH, Perkinsville, we extend our wishes for an abundance of "Christ's Blessings" at this season.

"Best Wishes" at this ho



The Cardinal Moon the Christmas conc Brother John Larre

## Hong

Dr. Wendell R. Ames, dire of the Monroe County Department of Health, has issued following recommendations: comments regarding the break of Hong Kong flu in community:

1—For the average per the illness is relatively mild and is character by fever, muscle aches, abdominal and respira upsets.

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