

Bishop Spurs Home Ownership for Poor

By FR. RICHARD TORMEY

Bishop Sheen sat in the living-room of a crowded home on Hand Street in Rochester's inner-city last week, describing the aims of the recently incorporated Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation.

Three mothers of large families who need a better place to live listened with special interest. They are soon to be the first helped by the Foundation to move out of run-down houses they rent, into better surroundings they may someday own for themselves.

Neighbors, restless children and several priests and seminarians, crowding the neat room sensed they were sharing a momentous occasion. True, the setting had none of the cultured dignity of the Bishop's office, with bookshelves, objects d'art and massive desk. But this was the Church acting officially, with charm and sympathy.

"We are trying to give some of the poor a measure of hopeful independence," the Bishop said. "As our people respond to the appeal of this cause, the Foundation will try to finance mortgages and assist the presently helpless to better their housing."

He added that he hoped the purposes and aims of the Foundation would become more widely known and understood so that more persons would contribute to it.

It was the Bishop's first group meeting with the first families chosen to receive



"GOD LOVE BISHOP SHEEN is the consensus of four Negro mothers who were or are being assisted to obtain more adequate housing by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen and the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation. Mrs. Garrett Gordon (second from right) was aided personally by the Bishop to obtain better housing for her family last August. Mothers of families now being helped by the Foundation are also pictured. Shown from left are: Mrs. Pearl Johnson, Hand Street; Mrs. Amella Anderson, Hand Street; Bishop Sheen; Mrs. Jerome Cook, who has been assisting the Foundation in finding homes; Mrs. Garrett Gordon, now of Columbia Avenue, and Mrs. Mildred Anderson, Joseph Avenue.

Foundation monies toward down payments on larger and better homes they will now be able to undertake to purchase. It seemed proper that this conversation was in a neighborhood of unhappy housing rather than the state Pastoral Office.

None of the Foundation-funded families has moved as yet—legal complications

with banks and realtors are delaying the migration.

"But we are now moving into real action," the Bishop declared. "We are indeed pleased that you will be able to have better homes for your families."

Bishop Sheen's sensitivity to poverty and misery has been evidenced in many

ways. The housing fund is the newest and most dramatic action in his social welfare concern.

The Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation—first announced by him 20 months ago during a sermon at Immaculate Conception Church, Rochester—was incorporated in July, 1968. It is the Bishop's hope that many in the Diocese who can afford to do so will contribute to the Foundation.

During the sermon at Immaculate Conception, he said he wanted to start a "10-24-70 Club." He suggested that 10 persons, "the number of disciples of Christ," donate \$10 a week for 24 months. And to date the Foundation has provided \$7,000 for families in Rochester's inner city to enter negotiations for purchase of better housing.

The housing story, however, goes back to an incident last summer when Bishop Sheen was on Plymouth Avenue, in the predominantly Negro 3rd Ward, to appear in a documentary film on poverty.

A Negro youngster, Calvin Gordon, from a nearby street, told the Bishop his mother was praying for some means to get rid of rats in their ghetto house.

Bishop Sheen went home with Calvin. He found Calvin's parents were living with three children in two rooms. They were paying \$74 a month, the Bishop recalled, "for absolutely squalid conditions—some landlord was really gouging them."

"Get into the car; let's go out and buy a house," Bishop Sheen said to Calvin's mother.

They drove with a real estate man who showed them a house. "They wanted \$9,500," the Bishop said. "I told them the family would pay \$8,000 and it was settled."

Since that time, the plight of at least three other fami-

lies has been brought to the personal attention of the Bishop. He has arranged through the Foundation for outright grants to these families so they could make down-payment for purchase of a better home.

Assisting Bishop Sheen in researching the needs has been Mrs. Jerome Cook, 1384 Highland Ave., who has been a regular contributor to the Foundation since its incorporation. With the aid of a real estate man, she has sought homes and has assisted in negotiations.

Mrs. Cook says the Bishop seems concerned "to help people own rather than rent their homes, to give them a sense of dignity and pride."

In the three instances to date, she said, the Foundation has agreed to provide several thousands of dollars to assure that the families may be able to meet down-payments for ownership.

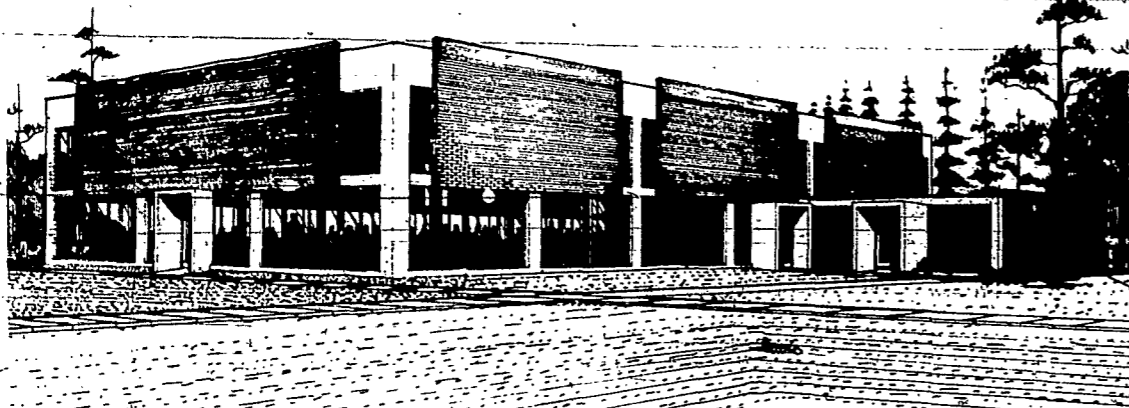
The first of the families to move will enter their new home about mid-March. The others will take several weeks longer in negotiation.

Here is thumb-nail information supplied by Mrs. Cook on three families now being assisted by the Foundation:

• Family No. 1, living in Ontario Churches Plan Discussions

Ontario—The churches of this community will sponsor a series of lecture and study courses on the Sunday evenings of March.

Under the general title "Come Alive Together," seven courses will be organized for small discussion groups. The sessions will take place in the James Benway High School, Ontario Center, from 7:30 until 9 p.m., beginning March 2. Adults and teenagers may register now with their pastors.



PROPOSED ST. JUDE CHAPEL — Rendering depicts chapel to be erected on Rochester State Hospital grounds at South and Elmwood Avenues. Concrete frame structure, to conform with institutional character of other existing and planned buildings on the grounds, will feature brick panel inserts and wide use of colored and clear glass in combination to provide vista views. Campaign for \$100,000 toward costs of building is currently under way.

Bishop Launches St. Jude Drive

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen told fund campaigners for the proposed St. Jude Chapel Tuesday night that they are "sharing the burdens of the sick."

The Bishop was principal speaker at the kickoff meeting of the committee which will seek \$100,000 in cash and pledges toward construction of the chapel on the Rochester State Hospital grounds. He addressed more than 80 men in the auditorium of the state's medical-surgical building on Elmwood Avenue.

The Bishop was presented by Dr. Guy M. Walters, director of the state hospital. Indicating his support for the chapel project, he said, it will fill an important

need for the approximately 1,500 Catholic staff and residents at the institution.

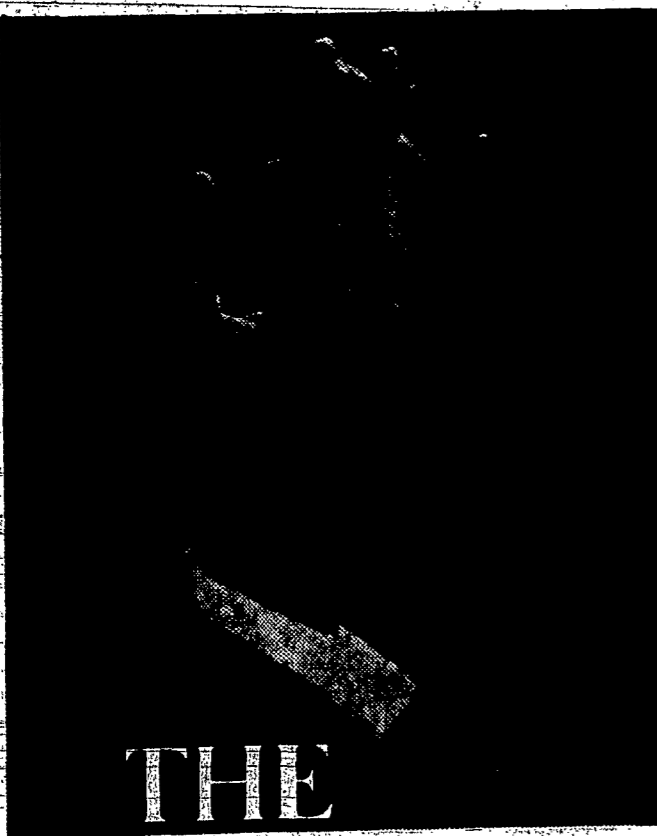
Bishop Sheen told the men that "by giving your talents, and particularly your time, you are saying to the sick, 'we want you to know we care.' You are saying to them, 'let me share your loneliness; let me share your burden.'"

Father James L. Callan, state hospital chaplain, said site preparation for the chapel is under way, and he hopes it will be available for use by autumn. It is designed to seat 407 persons.

Father Callan said 140 men have agreed thus far to serve on the solicitation committee, and he said, others are expected to enlist.

Members of Musa Caravan 25, Order of Alhambra, have agreed to help in the campaign.

Next meeting of the committee is scheduled at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, in the medical-surgical building.



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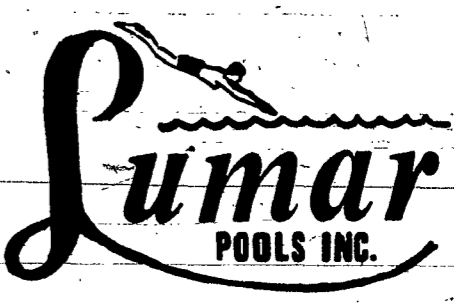
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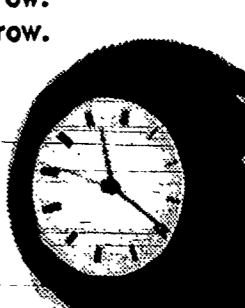
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