

## Lighting the Advent Wreath



One of the traditional rituals of the Christmas season is the lighting of the Advent wreath. The candles are lighted each night during Advent which begins Sunday — one for the first week, two for the second, and so forth. The candles, according to tradition, represent the ages "sitting in the darkness and the shadow of death," each candle adding more light until Christmas Day, when the Light of the World was born.

## Regents Offer Aid Plan

Albany — The state's Board of Regents recently recommended that non-profit school students be admitted to specific courses in public schools in a proposed "dual-enrollment" process.

However, according to an Associated Press story, J. Alan Davitt, executive secretary of the Catholic School Superintendents' Council, said that "dual-enrollment" is not the solution to the "fiscal crisis" in non-public schools. Davitt did commend the board for clarifying "the right of our children to participate part-time in public schools."

Under the Regents' recommendation, about 25,000 students throughout the state in private schools would become eligible to participate in public school science and vocational courses, in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades.

On the other hand, Catholic officials, including the state's bishops, have given priority to the so-called Speno-Lerner Bill, which provides tuition grants

to parents who send their children to non-public elementary and secondary schools. The grants would be up to \$250 per child, depending on the family's income.

This bill is expected to be introduced into the legislature during the 1971 session.

The dual-enrollment plan submitted by the regents also would require approval by the legislature and Gov. Rockefeller and, if adopted in the 1971 session, would take effect in September 1972. The startup cost of the regents' program is estimated at \$2 million.

The regents proposal, according to some education experts, might be expected to relieve some of the pressure placed on the state by Catholic leadership who also seek repeal of the controversial Blaine Amendment, which forbids state aid to non-public schools.

While opposition is expected from critics who advocate strict church-state separation in education, the regents reportedly

believe that a dual-enrollment or shared-time process would not be unconstitutional. They see it as benefiting the child, not the school.

### \$375,000 Pledged To Minorities

Washington — Grants of \$150,000 to the National Office for Black Catholics and \$125,000 to an organization of Spanish-speaking priests were voted by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops at their semi-annual meeting last week.

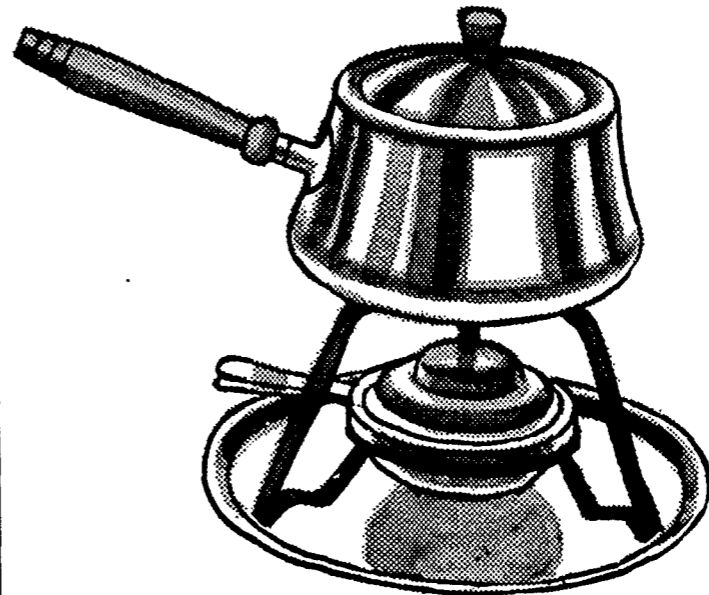
At a press briefing, it was indicated that the money would be provided through cuts in traditional budgets for foreign seminaries, ethnic groups, the military ordinariate and the bishops' emergency fund.

The black organization had asked for \$659,000 for its first year of operation. The Spanish-speaking priests, in an organization known as Padres, run a social action program in the Southwestern states.

## SPECIAL PURCHASE

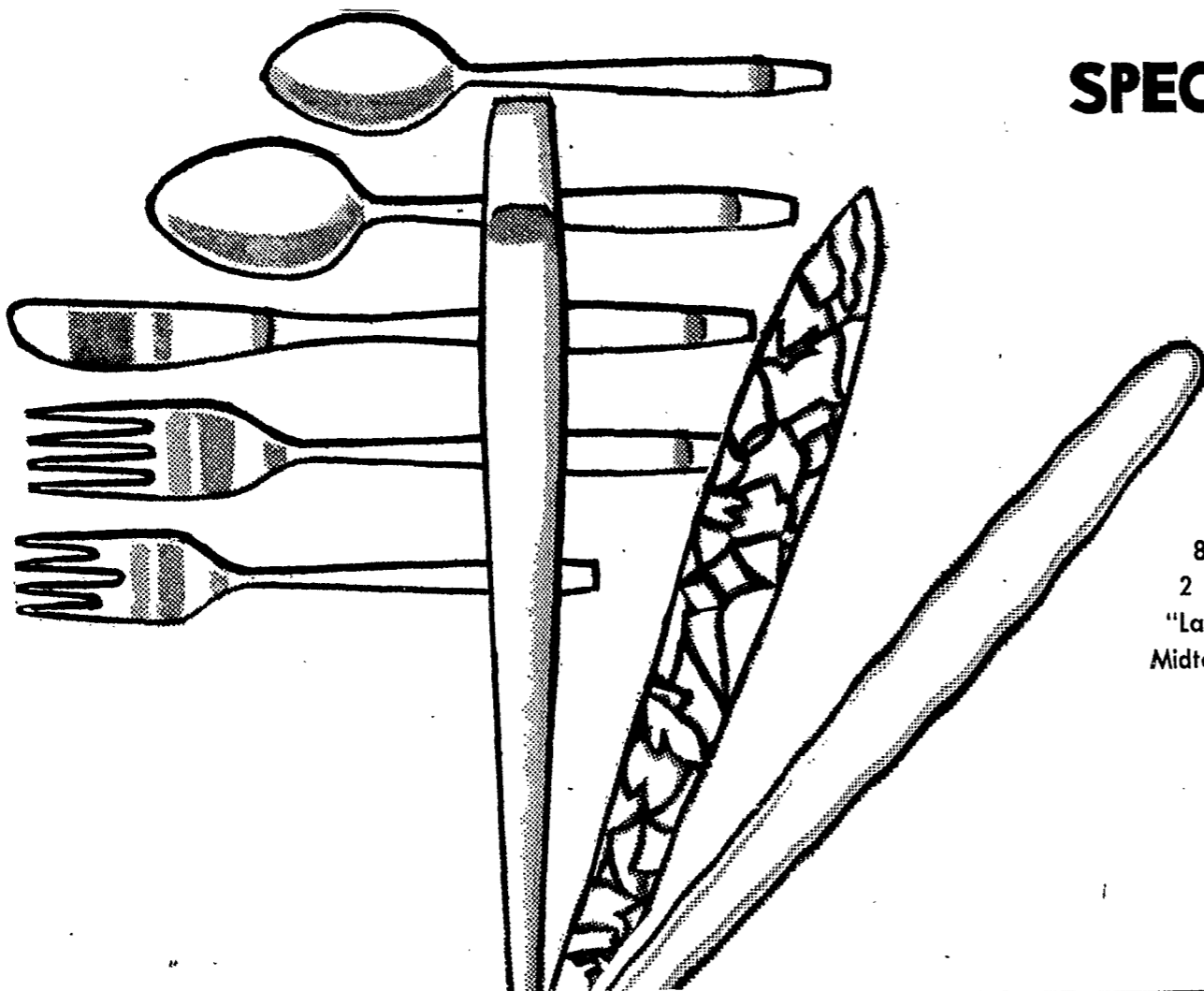
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