

COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

2 Sections

Q. and A. on Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation

BY CECELIA VIGGO

What is the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation?

The Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation (BSHF) is an incorporated organization founded by the diocese with a board of 26 directors. Its chairman is Father John Hempel, director of the diocesan Office of Human Concern. The foundation's expressed aim is "to help meet the housing needs of the poor in the Diocese of Rochester." Its underlying philosophy: to help the poor



Mrs. Cook to help themselves to better housing.

to help themselves to better housing.

When was it founded?

In May 1967, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen addressed the Catholic Interracial Council at Immaculate Conception Church. Deploring the rat-infested, overcrowded housing of Rochester's poor, many of whose homes he had visited personally, he solicited membership in what he called the "10-24-70" Club. The title signified his goal of finding 70 persons willing to give \$10 a week for 24 weeks to secure improved housing for the needy in the diocese.

What happened after that?

Not much, really. The expected torrent of contributions came, rather, in a steady drib-

ble. Also, legal complications materialized as the organization plodded to get New York State incorporation.

At this point, Mrs. Jerome Cook entered the housing scene.

Mrs. Cook, a member of Blessed Sacrament parish, and on the volunteer lay board at St. Bridget's Church, had given to the Bishop's fledgling foundation, and had seen no results.

She questioned the diocesan chancellor, Father James Moynihan, about the foundation's inactivity. Her inquiries and concern oiled the wheels of the Pastoral Office machine, and placed her in the fulltime position of helping the Bishop manage the organization.

The concerted efforts of the indefatigable Mrs. Cook and Bishop Sheen, delighted with her dedication, produced marked results. Soon, applicants were being screened, mortgages negotiated, and homes were found.

What has been accomplished so far?

A great deal. A chance for better homes and a new life has been given to 220 persons, in 26 families from careful spending of nearly \$50,000. The foundation has prospered because of the generosity of about 25 donors. Particular credit goes to the enthusiasm of Msgr. William Naughton, whose parish, St. Anne's of Rochester, has given \$15,000.

How, exactly, does the foundation work?

The Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation supplies a family with money needed to make a down payment on their own home. Often, it is this initial sum which stands between them and a better life. Gifts to individual families average \$2,200 depending on the size of the house and on how much the family has already saved for the down payment. Homes cost anywhere from \$6,000 to \$11,000.

Where do applicants come from?

Social workers at the Catholic Family Center, and pastors and religious working with the

(Continued on Page 2A)

Your Gift Will Show You Care on Christmas



...please help my brother on Christmas

ON THE INSIDE

Features

Editorial 26, 27A
Local 15A
Keeping Tabs .. . 9B
Letters 26, 27A
Entertainment 2B
Sports 10, 11A
Recipe 10B

Columnists

Considine 24A
Costa 2B
Cuddy 24A
Greeley 24A
Kennedy 11B
Shamon 26A
Doser 10A

Choir to Sing On TV Mass

The Sunday TV Mass on Dec. 20, aired at 8:30 a.m. on Rochester's Channel 10, will contain Christmas music by a small choir of Mercy High School students and a homily by the celebrant, Father John R. Whitley, CSB., of the Aquinas Institute faculty.

Wednesday, December 16, 1970

The Christmas story tells us that Almighty God pitied the fallen dignity of the human race. He sent His Son like a gift to help mankind find the joy of being in the Family of God.

Today this diocese has hundreds of families where poverty, sickness and loneliness have killed both dignity and happiness. Christians of 1970 can repeat the spirit of the first Christmas by sending gifts to these unfortunates whose troubles have smothered almost all joy of living.

Today we print the first of two lists of family-stories of misfortune found in our diocese. These people are real men and women, children and elders — who need the love of a Christmas gift to awaken their human dignity.

The identity of the unfortunate has been disguised but we have verified each situation described. We have personalized the appeal hoping you will choose the individuals whose troubles touch you most deeply.

Any gift you send — money, food or clothing, toys for the children, a promise of future concern — will be directed personally to the family you wish through the organization or individual listed under each case.

Please look over these stories of the unfortunate who are your neighbors in Christ. Move right now to help one of them. Do it this weekend: Christmas is close and the mails are slow.

Please **DO NOT SEND YOUR GIFTS TO THE COURIER-JOURNAL.** Contact the specific intermediary printed under the case you wish to help.

1. Mrs. R. and her teenage daughter live in a three-room apartment two miles from downtown Rochester. Mrs. R. has been unemployed for several years due to a nervous breakdown. She supports herself and daughter on Social Security disability benefits gained while she worked as a skilled secretary. To help out

The following cases are cited because they are typical of the problems of many at Christmas. Each of the agencies mentioned, however, cares for many more cases. Therefore contributors are reminded that they may send general contributions to any of the agencies.

with her own clothing expenses and phone and heating bills, Mrs. R.'s daughter recently secured a part-time job.

Case cared for by Catholic Family Center. Address them directly at 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y., 14604.

2. Mr. and Mrs. C. have been yearning to build a modest house since they left the migrant stream eight years ago. Mr. C. is a disabled World War II veteran; Mrs. C. spends intermittent periods in the hospital because of a chronic respiratory ailment. They live in a dilapidated farm-house, with three rooms downstairs and two up. The roof leaks, the floors sag, most of the windows are boarded up to keep in as much heat from the space-heater as possible. They have eight children, and use their 7-year-old car for a six-mile trip daily to get water from the nearest gas station.

Case cared for by Father Sebastian Falcone, OFM. Address him directly at 2260 Lake Ave., Rochester, N.Y., 14612.

3. Mrs. J., who is 68 and a retired widow, lives alone in a small home in the northwest section of Rochester. She is unable to work and depends completely on her Social Security benefits and a small supplement from Monroe County Social Services. This small monthly income of about \$110 barely covers Mrs. J.'s necessities of heat, gas and electric and food. Due to several health problems, including diabetes, she needs three meat meals and a lot of fruit and vegetables.

Case cared for by Catholic Family Center. Address them directly at 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y., 14604.

(Continued on Page 2A)