

The Slot Man

Dr. King: Lest We Forget

By Carmen Viglucci



It was back in April of 1968 that Pope Paul, described at the time as "visibly shaken," used the pomp and prestige of a Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Basilica to speak of "cowardly and atrocious killing."

The Pope had interrupted the traditional ritual of Holy Week to speak emotionally and personally of a Baptist preacher who had been shot down half a world away.

Bishop Sheen, in a Rochester eulogy, called it the "assassination of a King..." Linking the assassination to the previous slaying of President Kennedy, the bishop said, "The same target was telescoped before the barrel of each gun — leadership."

Perhaps spurred on a bit by the assassination of Dr. King, Congress, about a week later, passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which ensured fair housing — legally.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, who had been surprisingly sympathetic to Dr. King's civil rights movement although dismayed at his anti-Vietnam War activities, signed the bill into law.

The man Martin Luther King was lauded by many as a saint, television specials glamorized him, biographies rolled off the presses and his name was intoned by leaders round the world.

As time wore on, books began to appear (as with all great figures) showing that the man was only a human being after all. Also the FBI had been tapping his phone, worried that he was a subversive.

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 is now on the books and, oddly in a time when law and order is stressed, little is done to see that it is enforced.

Recently, a young policeman told me that he saw "college dissenters, hippies and long-hairs" as the major threat to the country. Suddenly he threw in, "And most of it is Martin Luther King's fault."

This statement revealed the paradox that a man whose main goal was equality for his people by peaceful means is almost completely misunderstood by his contemporaries and even blamed for the things he avoided.

Martin Luther King wrote his own epitaph when he said that he would like to be remembered as a "drum major for justice. A drum major for peace. A drum major for righteousness."

The anniversary of his birth is this Friday, Jan. 15. Some scattered commemorations have been arranged. Is this man to be forgotten so quickly? Have we been listening to the wrong drum beat?

Salting the Earth

No Place Like Home

By Peter T. Bayer

The Office of Human Development column that occupies this space twice a month was prepared this week by the Rev. Mr. Peter T. Bayer, a deacon attached to the office. Father John J. Hempel will resume his reports on his return from vacation.

At Christmas, children's eyes gleam and sparkle at the ornamented tree and the new assortment of toys, games and animal pets they have received. I watched with delight and fascination as my little nieces and nephews opened their Christmas presents of dolls, tea sets, racing cars and clothes. I also know of other children who received pets — gerbils, kittens, puppies. These pets generate a warm, fluffy and friendly feeling among children.

Yet there are other infants and children who have furry animals for companions — both in the urban and rural area — but not by their own choice. These furry animals are not invited guests but intruders — infectious rats which attack sleeping infants and tots. Recent newspaper accounts have vividly pictured a small infant in a crib being bitten by a rat in a substandard and deteriorated house.

While reading the Gospel of Luke at Midnight on Christmas, I realized that the housing crisis had hit Bethlehem, for there was no adequate housing where our Saviour could be born. Many people today are living under conditions unfit for humans. A teacher I know was surprised to find that his pupils wanted to continue classes during Christmas vacation. When he asked the reason for this unexpected enthusiasm the pupils responded that the school was at least warm while their homes were not.

Just as large an issue as inadequate housing — whether it be low, moderate, or units for senior citizens — is the fact that so many persons' hearts are closed to others in need. In Section 2 of the Housing Act of 1949, Congress established as a national goal the realization of "a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family."

Yet decent housing still remains a chronic problem for the rural and urban areas alike.

In reading the scriptures we realize the priority that Christ gave to the poor and suffering. As Christians we must take seriously this commitment of Christ and try to respond according to the opportunities we have. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Report) indicated that one of the greatest present-day needs is housing.

The Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation, Four Downtown Churches and the Housing Council of Monroe County are groups taking positive steps to alleviate the housing crisis throughout our diocese. Holy Name of Jesus parish has established a Housing Task Force to educate its suburban parishioners to housing needs in its own area and to create social change in this way.

The barriers set up against public housing in cities, towns and suburbs have been graphically expressed at public hearings in the past. Is it not possible for each parish to establish a housing task force to meet its Christian responsibility in this field? The solution lies within each individual's heart. People living in less than homes await our response!

Priests in Congress, Priests in Prison: 140 Years of Progress

Detroit — (CPF)—Not until Father Robert F. Drinan, SJ began making his successful bid for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives did many people ever hear of Father Gabriel Richard, the first Catholic priest ever elected to Congress.

As Father Drinan takes his seat in the new 92nd Congress as a Representative from Massachusetts, Father Richard's name will undoubtedly get lost again in the footnotes of history.

But Father Richard (pronounced "ree-SHARD," for he was French-born) was himself much more than a mere footnote.

He served in the Michigan Territory more than 125 years ago, brought the printing press to Michigan, was a founder of the University of Michigan, was one of this country's first ecumenists; and, except for an odd event, (going to jail) would have been Michigan's first Catholic bishop.

Father Richard, a member of the Society of St. Sulpice, came here an exile from the anticlericalism of the French Revolution, and was assigned to Detroit by Bishop John Carroll in 1798.

Although it was the "metropolis" of the Great Lakes re-

gion, Detroit, at the time of Father Richard's arrival, was nothing more than a stockade-surrounded military outpost and fur-trading center long under French and British influence.

The area was, according to Michigan historians Frank Woodford and Albert Hyma (in their biography Gabriel Richard, Frontier Ambassador) "indeed ready for someone to introduce those cultural foundations which would make it a more civilized community. Father Richard was the man who took the lead, a man with vision, a man with enough unselfish, steadfast devotion to accomplish what had to be done."

Father Richard quickly became involved in civic affairs. He joined the volunteer fire department and spent a great deal of time doing community organization and petitioning Congress.

In 1808, while travelling in the East seeking funds and legislative support for an Indian school project, he shipped to Detroit a printing press and coaxed a journeyman printer to be there when it arrived. The "Richard Press" turned out pamphlets, documents, books and — although it lasted just one issue — The Michigan Es-say or Impartial Observer —



FATHER RICHARD

the first newspaper published in Michigan.

In 1823, 56-year-old Father Richard's civic leadership brought him a proposal that he run for the Territorial Delegate seat in the House of Representatives. Receiving ecclesiastical permission, he ran and won — by 23 votes.

His major congressional accomplishment was promoting Federal road construction in Michigan and building of a highway between Detroit and Chicago.

Father Richard ran for reelection in 1825 — and lost by four votes — and lost again by bigger margins in 1827 and 1829.

He died in September, 1832, the victim of a cholera epidemic.



Heating tips to help you save money and be comfortable this winter

1. Replace furnace filters several times a year.
2. Throw rugs against bedroom doors, outside doors. Keeps cold air from leaking in.
3. Keep draperies drawn at night and on cold windy days.
4. Weatherstrip and caulk around windows and doors to reduce heat losses, save fuel, eliminate drafts.
5. Add storm windows and doors.
6. Don't put furniture or rugs over heat outlets and returns.

RGE
ROCHESTER GAS AND ELECTRIC
89 EAST AVENUE • 546-2700