

A Day to Pray and to Work for Prisoners of War

Last June, on Father's Day, we called to mind the man forgotten in the upheaval of Indochina: The prisoner of war. Now, less than eight months later, our heart is gripped with sorrow as the media daily bring to our attention the suffering endured by the more than 1500 of our American brothers listed as either missing in action or as prisoners of war in Vietnam and Laos and the suffering of better than 36,000 of our Communist brothers held as prisoners of war by the government of South Vietnam under the responsibility of the United States.

At the same time, however, these months have brought us signs of hope. We are aware of the work of many Americans who have petitioned the government of North Vietnam for better treatment of American prisoners of war. We are aware that largely because of the pressure of these petitions Hanoi has given indication of better treatment of prisoners, and has opened the channels of communication between many prisoners and their stateside families.

The time has come for an even greater drive to present the feelings of the American people to Hanoi and Washington and Saigon as well, to better the lot of not only our beloved American brothers but also the lot of our beloved Communist brothers.

We are all members of one human family under the common Fatherhood of God, despite the opposing philosophies which seem to divide us.

The time has come for us to petition all the involved governments for treatment of the prisoner of war with the dignity due him as a son of God.

We therefore designate Sunday, Feb. 14, as a day of prayer and letter writing on behalf of the prisoners of war.

Joseph L. Hagan
Bishop of Rochester



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