

Diocesan Officials Hit Policy U.S. May Deny Flood Aid to Catholic Schools

Following is a statement jointly signed by Father Albert J. Shamon, diocesan vicar for education, and Father Daniel Brent, diocesan superintendent of schools.

Bishop Hogan and the staff of the Pastoral Office of the Diocese of Rochester spent the Fourth of July week assessing the damages done in the Southern Tier by hurricane "Agnes."

We learned that all the educational leaders of the area met with Federal and State commissioners regarding schools. The assembled educators were told about the availability of federal monies to look after the damages done to schools. All that was needed was that the damages be identified and the Federal Government would reimburse the community. But then there was an O. Henry twist: the speaker said, "Of course this assistance excludes Catholic schools."

Yet Catholic schools, such as Notre Dame High School, St. Mary's, St. Casimir's, Our Lady of Lourdes, Elmira, and St. Mary's, Corning, opened their doors immediately to evacuees from the flood area; Notre Dame and St. Mary's, Corning, are still serving as Red Cross centers. Over 50 sisters from the Rochester area came to join those religious already working at the disaster area. They serve all people regardless of creed or color. Many other sisters canceled their summer school work to be available to help. An Emergency Fund collection, initiated by Bishop Hogan, realized over \$87,000 for relief. The Bishop turned over \$20,000 to the Red Cross and met with the religious leaders of the disaster area to learn how best to use the remainder of the fund for the flood victims. To help over the long

months ahead, Bishop Hogan has set up a Southern Tier Flood Relief Fund. In addition to raising money, all Catholic churches in the Diocese gathered food and clothing that filled nine trailer trucks. Youth volunteers from Rochester, Geneva, Ithaca, Auburn have been organized and bused to Southern Tier under the guidance and inspiration of the Department of Human Development of the Diocese. This agency is also setting up resource banks of skilled craftsmen to help over the longhaul.

And yet, government policies callously declare "Help for all schools but Catholic schools."

How long will the un-American shibboleth "Separation of Church and State" be used to cloak glaring un-American discrimination and injustice?

Hurricane "Agnes" did not single out only public schools. Catholic schools too were hurt by this act of God. Is it reasonable and humane for government to single out only public schools as the object of public concern? To bury elemental humanitarianism under the odious blindness of legalism?

Then why, particularly in a moment of disaster, should Catholic parents not be allowed to share in the educational resources they help to make available by their school taxes?

Is it possible that a disaster such as this exposes the basic irrationality of the Church-State relationship which the courts are imposing on this nation?

(Signed by Father Albert J. Shannon and Father Daniel Brent)



George Welch, volunteer director in Elmira, addresses special meeting to coordinate diocesan activities.

Bishop Pledges Flood Help

By CARMEN VIGLUCCI

Elmira — Bishop Joseph L. Hogan told church and school officials in flood-stricken Southern Tier areas last week that he pledges his "constant and abiding support in any way you tell me I can help."

For three days, the diocesan See was virtually moved to the Southern Tier as the Bishop led a delegation of Pastoral Office and diocesan department heads in visits to the Elmira, Corning, and Hornell areas, hard-hit by the flood. Auxiliary Bishops John E. McCafferty and Dennis W. Hickey also attended.

The bishops and pastoral staff visited Elmira Monday, July 3; Corning July 4 and Hornell July 5.

CURSILLO INFORMATION

General information about the Cursillo Movement of Rochester may be obtained by writing to the movement at P.O. Box 9568, Rochester, 14604, or by calling Father Raymond Booth at (716) 232-1133.

He, however, issued a warning that the spontaneity of the relief effort may wear off and that the recovery may take months. He called for the "continual and

Bishop Hogan, speaking of the "outpouring of personnel who have tried to come and who want to aid in the cause," cited the "overall great spirit that has been generated."

"The people have risen to the challenge," he said, and noted that there is "security for us in our relationship with God and with our fellow man."

An emergency meeting of directors and representatives of Catholic Charities organizations from 15 dioceses affected by tropical storm Agnes was held the weekend of July 1 in Philadelphia. Delegates from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland reported on the extent of the disaster, and efforts made to relieve the victims.

There were also representatives from the National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee, the Office of Emergency Preparedness, the Red Cross, and the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

constant service" of everyone in the diocese.

The Bishop also noted that "Crisis brings out the worst as was as the best" in people. He spoke of looting and of entrepreneurs trying to sell services at exorbitant rates but he reiterated that overall the spirit of sharing has been laudable.

He also praised the reaction of the people who suffered in the floods. This spirit, he said, is "typified by an Elmira woman who lost all her possessions and still volunteered her services" to help others.

The meeting resulted in several recommendations for action. The representatives resolved to ask the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to make a nationwide appeal "to help the stricken dioceses." They urged social action by the National Conference of Catholic Charities to reduce percentage of interest for repayment of loans given the flooded areas by the Small Businessmen's Association.

Other recommendations included an appeal for a National Day of Prayer on behalf of victims, establishment of a better

The Bishop stressed to the groups that he and his staff were merely at the service of the people in the flood-stricken areas and that those people will decide what they need.

"Representatives of the pastoral staff are here to let you know we intend to continue our support in whatever way you decide is best," he said. "We are here to serve you."

The Bishop followed his addresses in Elmira, Corning and Hornell with personal tours of devastated areas.

relationship, particularly on the local level, between Catholic Charities and the Red Cross, and formation of a liaison between the Society of St. Vincent DePaul and dioceses that do not have local chapters, particularly for the acquisition of furniture.

Father Joseph D'Aurizio, director of Catholic Charities for the Rochester Diocese, attended the meeting. He said that response to Catholic Charities included a letter from a woman in Cincinnati who donated an entire paycheck of \$190 to Catholic Charities to be used as aid to flood victims.

Stella Maris Opening Postponed

Although flooding conditions in the Conesus Lake area forced the postponement of the opening of Camp Stella Maris, parents of campers have nothing to fear, according to Father Joseph D'Aurizio, director of Catholic Charities. The camp is operating smoothly, he said.

"During the week we were supposed to open," Father D'Aurizio said, "about half of the counselors went to Elmira to help out the badly flooded area."

Father D'Aurizio explained that because the camp is on high ground, there was no damage. Some counselors had to pull the dock out of the water, but everything is in good shape now.

"The State Department of Health has approved the water for swimming," Father D'Aurizio said. "And Sister Virginia, the resident nurse, is always there to take care of any medical problems."

A cocktail party planned for July 21 is still on at St. John Fisher College in Kearney Auditorium. Proceeds will give inner city children the opportunity to go to camp this summer.

Father D'Aurizio said that there are still some openings in the remaining weeks for children who wish to go to Stella Maris, but have not registered. Anyone interested in either the cocktail party or camping arrangements may call the camp office at 454-2636.

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