

Bishop Takes Stand On Social Issue

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to persons of conscience whether they be bishops, retailers placing orders, or consumers who purchase goods. A barrage of information is issued by Farah Manufacturing Company. Another barrage, issues forth from ACWA. Both are powerful nation-wide organizations. Both will be subject to all the temptations that economic power involves. Both will be tempted to stretch and shape the truth to fit their purposes. In the midst of all this, the hopes and sufferings of the ordinary man may be forgotten and become secondary. If we are to be a church that strains to hear the spirit, this should not happen. I speak in this issue as one who has the mission and challenge of listening carefully to needs which may be overlooked. I speak as a teacher saying in the midst of controversy, "Remember that the striking workers speak of real problems that should be heard in arriving at a settlement." I owe no allegiance to Farah or to the union. But I cannot serve God unless I speak clearly and try to help when there is long term human suffering as there is in this case.

After this careful examination of the issues involved, I will personally support the current nationwide boycott of Farah slacks until an equitable resolution of the issue is reached. I urge retailers and consumers to examine their roles in this dispute as a moral issue.

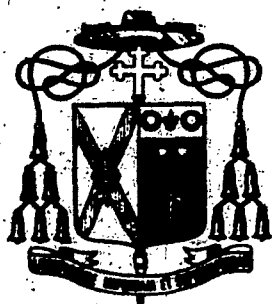
This is not the sort of stance where the Church can claim to be infallible. My support of the boycott is in no way an order to other members of the Church to take a similar stance, but rather it is a witness to the sort of concern the Gospel demands of all of us. This witness could be marred by any attempt on the part of the parties in this dispute to use my position to harass local retailers and consumers. If there is a justifiable fear that my stance may be incorrectly formed or wrongly interpreted, it is overridden by the much greater fear that by my silence I may have failed to proclaim the Gospel at all. I trust that men and women of God will understand what I mean.

We must not let this decade of grace pass by without responding. We will reap tomorrow what we sow today. May I ask you therefore to examine seriously your role as consumer in our economy, and to pray that justice in this struggle may be done. May the strikers, the men and women on the job, ACWA, and the Farah Corporation come together in peace. I pledge to all of you that I will keep you informed on this issue with the help of the church in Texas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Joseph L. Hogan
Bishop of Rochester

Diocesan Appointments



Msgr. Donald J. Mulcahy, to be administrator of Good Shepherd, Henrietta.

Father Albert Cason, from St. John's, Spencerport, to Corpus Christi, Rochester.

Father Joseph Sasso, from Holy Rosary, Rochester, to St. John's, Spencerport.

Father William McCall, from St. Boniface, Rochester, to St. Lawrence, Rochester.

Father Robert Bradler, from St. Augustine's, Rochester, to Holy Rosary, Rochester.

Father David Gaesser, from St. John's, Humboldt Street, Rochester, to Blessed Sacrament, Rochester.

Father Richard Shatzel, from St. James, Waverly, to St. Boniface, Rochester.

Father Walter Hanss, from St. Monica's to St. John of Rochester, Perinton.

Courier-Journal

Committee's Concern Explained

A document accompanying Bishop Hogan's pastoral letter on "Social Issues" explained his investigating committee's concerns in the Farah slacks case. It was released to all parties involved in the dispute.

Reasons for taking action on the issue were listed numerically, with No. 1 being: "The presence of Mexican-American farm workers in our area and the question of why they are forced to migrate. The fact there will be little work in the Rochester area in the future."

The release states, "there is an inevitable tendency to look upon labor as simply one of the factors of production or one of the resources. For 80 years the popes have denounced this as unethical and immoral in principle."

The memorandum revealed the committee's "doubts and fears" that "the Union as a power in a struggle may escalate its demands; or manipulate the situation for its own ends. Thus we might be accused of 'jumping on a bandwagon.'"

To avoid this, the committee asked the Texas Church to establish two teams in Texas, "made up of men and women from diverse backgrounds to interpret and report progress in the disagreement."

Listed as Number 2 among reasons for taking up the issue was "the fact that man's working environment and conditions deeply affect his spiritual development." The committee in conjunction with this worried about possible reduction of business for local retailers. It conducted "continued dialogue through personal visit."

The document also pointed out (Number 3) that "since 1891 (Pope Leo XIII) the Church has declared that Christians are responsible for improvement of the conditions of labor."

Laymen working for Bishops Metzger and Flores of Texas visited two Farah plants and reported their evaluations to Rochester with "the unanimous input from the Texas Church supporting the strikers."

Because "our information gathering was remote from the scene of the strike," the committee shifted "all information gathering to the teams in Texas."

The document stated that "if moral principles are to be upheld in this country, then retailers and consumers must act on these principles."

Because of "the number of employees on strike for such a long period of time" and because the committee was worried that the "obvious hard positions taken by ACWA and Farah could take forever and be insensitive to the workers" it took a position of "support of boycott based on report of independent group established by Texas Church."

The committee worried that it may "be putting ourselves in position of judge without any potential for on-hand mediation." To remedy this possibility, "the Texas team will call our shots through onsite contacts with all parties."

The committee also questioned, "Would the Church possibly sin by silence or misuse her moral influence?" The document answered, "To avoid misuse of power we conducted an exhaustive research using information from parties not involved in conflict."

The document concluded that "we affect the lives of others by what we buy and what we don't buy or sell or don't sell. Our concerns today must be national in origin and no longer strictly local."

COMMITTEE

In addition to Bishop Hogan, members of the local committee on the Farah issue are Fathers Patrick Logan and Charles Mulligan and James Noonan, diocesan communication director.

Wednesday, February 14, 1973

"Because of our history as an immigrant Church, we understand the problems of minority groups."

Step-by-Step Process In Reaching Decision

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STEP 6: The process that we had identified during this investigation was related to the National Conference of Bishops in Washington in November for their assistance.

STEP 7: Dialogue was set up and discussions with retailers in the Diocese were held to advise them what we had found out in the investigation and ask their input and cooperation.

STEP 8: We requested the Texas Church establish two investigative teams who would evaluate the situation on an ongoing basis and relay the information of their findings to Rochester. This procedure was established so that the directions the Church took would not be determined by the Union or Farah.

STEP 9: Retailers were informed that we intended to publicize our opinions.

STEP 10: Representatives from Farah and ACWA were alerted that all continued communications should be with the team in Texas.

STEP 11: Public statement was presented.

STEP 12: Follow-up communications were planned with the two teams in Texas to assure that we would be kept informed of any constructive changes in the situation.

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