

Archbishop of LaPaz Pays Visit to Rochester

By CARMEN VIGLUCCI

"Don't let the padres leave!"

That was the emphatic request of Archbishop Jorge Manrique of LaPaz, Bolivia, when he visited Rochester last week.

There is no question that they will. The archbishop merely was responding to the question "just what can the people of Rochester do to help the undereducated and impoverished people of Bolivia?"

Archbishop Manrique had the highest praise for Fathers Edward Golden, Daniel Tormey and Peter Deckman and layman Tim McCloskey of Blessed Sacrament parish, who man the parish of San Jose Obrero on the outskirts of LaPaz.

"They are in good health, they work very hard and are doing a very difficult job for us," the archbishop reported. He said that Fathers Deckman and Golden at this time are at a Maryknoll mission in the Altibene (an area which translates to "out in the sticks," according to Father Paul Freemesser, who translated for the Spanish-speaking archbishop).

The biggest problem for the Church in Bolivia is the shortage



of priests, says Archbishop Manrique.

"We have 1.4 million people in our archdiocese, all Catholic, and only 34 native priests. In all, counting the missionaries we



Archbishop Manrique talks about the Church in Bolivia.

have 230 priests. In all of Bolivia, a country of some three million people, we have only 200 native priests — 900, counting missionaries."

Why the shortage of native priests?

"The fundamental problem is lack of education. Sixty per cent of our people are illiterate."

The lack of priests produces an unfortunate cycle, since there is no one available to work on developing new vocations.

There are 1.2 million children who have no schools to go to, the archbishop pointed out. Not only are there no schools, there are no teachers, no money.

Thirty-seven per cent of the high schools are run under religious auspices but they must charge tuition.

A program called Faith and Happiness, begun by the Jesuit order and coordinated by the Church and the state, has about 40,000 students enrolled and is a sign of progress.

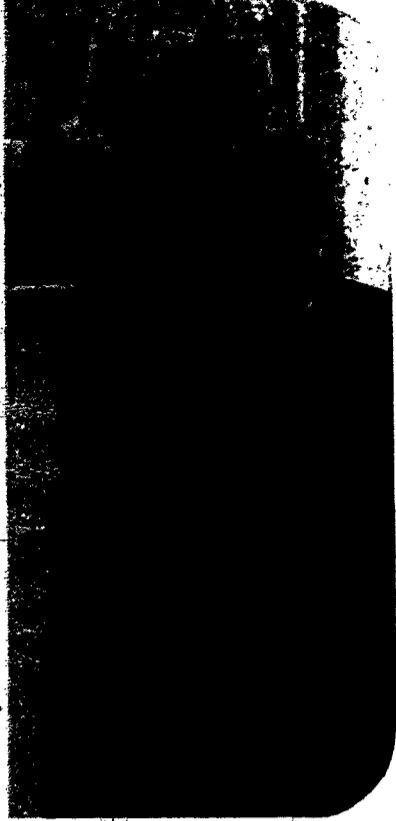
The problem is basically an economic one. The archbishop said his country is underdeveloped though it has many natural resources. It lacks roads and other means necessary to unearth its riches.

Asked what the national posture of the United States should be in relation to Bolivia, Archbishop Manrique offered the suggestion that we "should influence industries to develop the riches of Bolivia so that the people can share in them."

He also said that the U.S. trade policy should strive to keep the price of tin up. Tin is the major product of Bolivia and if it drops, it would be tragic for Bolivia.

Archbishop Manrique noted that there are Protestant missionaries at work in Bolivia and there is no inter-faith competition. In fact there is ecumenical cooperation between Catholics and Methodists on education and social questions.

The archbishop says that there are other parishes similar to San Jose Obrero run by priests from St. Louis, Kansas City and Buffalo.



Photos by Dave Witbeck

He stopped off in Rochester to visit Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and thank him for the work of the Rochester missionaries. His semibusiness, semivacation tour will also take him to other U.S. cities.

He has three brothers living in the United States, one in Miami, one in New York and one in San Francisco. He plans to visit them all before returning to LaPaz at the end of the month.

He expressed a special hope for the Rochester diocese.

"It is my hope that your people will have beautiful cities with houses, trees and gardens and that they have love and understanding for each other which will produce unity."

He added humorously, "And send Padre Caliman back to us."

Padre Caliman means Father Superman and has been applied to Father Freemesser, associate pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, who formerly served at San Jose parish in LaPaz.



Visit with Bishop Hogan

Would You Believe in Ghana . . .

The CYO, the Legion of Mary?

By CHARLES RANDISI

Would you believe that parishes in Ghana have their own parish councils, CYOs, Legions of Mary, Knights of St. John, and many other of the organizations, groups, and committees you'd find right here in the Diocese of Rochester?

It's true, says Father Charles Erb, SVD, who's home visiting and staying at the Holy Family Church rectory for the next few months.

Father Erb has been a Divine Word missionary to Ghana since 1947, when the West African country was called Gold Coast. He is presently executive director of the Department of Social Communications for the National Catholic Secretariat in Ghana.

He has brought back with him scores of photographs, films, clippings, and materials on the Church in Ghana.

The greatest strides the Church had made in that country have

been in the area of what Father Erb calls "Africanization," or the turning over of Church operations to native Ghanaian bishops, priests, sisters, and laymen.

Of the nine dioceses in Ghana, eight have black bishops. Of the 360 priests there, 125 are African. They serve 1.1 million Ghanaian Catholics, which make up 12 per cent of the population.

The 67-year-old priest, who celebrated his 40th year in the priesthood this year, said that the statistics and situation are "pretty good" in Ghana, in comparison with other mission-served countries in Africa.

He also said that the idea of depicting Ghanaians as savages, "naked and poor," was "a false way of getting other countries interested" helping Ghana.

He pointed to the many Catholic groups such as parish councils that have sprung up in Ghana as evidence of a civilized people. "They're great at running meetings," he added.

In Rome last year, Father Erb was struck by a car while walking across St. Peter's Square. He suffered a broken leg and two broken teeth, in addition to injuries to his jaw, elbows, and right hand.

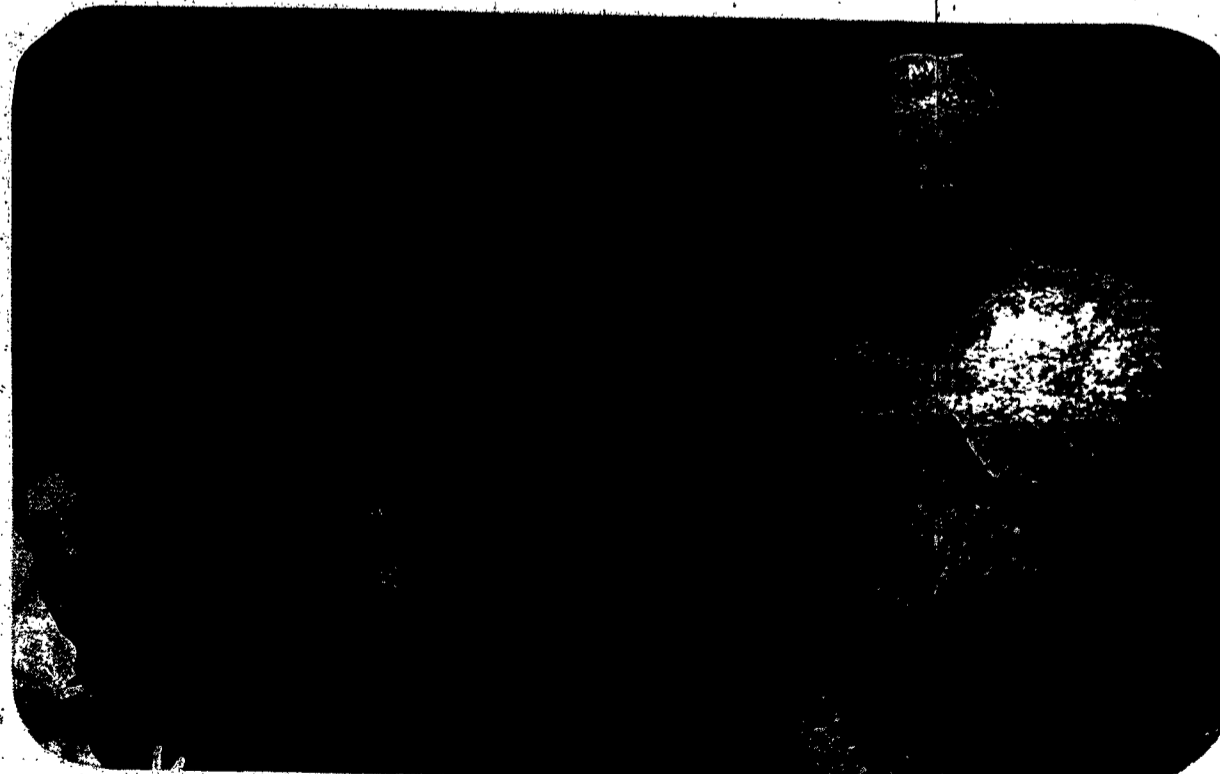


Photo by Susan McKinney

Father Erb at a recent lecture for the Holy Family Rosary Society.

He is fully recovered now and shows off the scar on his leg with as much aplomb as the late President Lyndon Johnson giving reporters a peek at his gall bladder scar.

The only thing he remembers

about the accident itself was that the driver, a female, was "the first young lady I ever fell for."

He'll be staying in Rochester until the Spring, and then it's back to Accra, the capital, where

he coordinates various media resources for use in mission work.

Except for visiting his friends around the country, Father Erb can't wait to get back to his 26-year assignment. "There's no use for me here," he said.

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