

Report from LaPaz

Autonomy Working

The following report from our missionaries in LaPaz describes the progress being made in the transfer of San Jose parish in LaPaz from Rochester administration to local rule.

What happens when people are left to make their own decisions and direct their own lives? Social scientists have always maintained that, given this opportunity, the people will ultimately make the good decisions.

In the parish of San Jose Obrero the people are responding constructively to the autonomy that is now theirs. Our parish board meets weekly to advance their own formation and tackle the problems of the parish. Directed by their full-time lay coordinator they have begun to identify and attack the problems of health, employment, education etc.

The social issues are vital in this incredibly poor neighborhood of LaPaz. Paved streets, running water, and inside plumbing are still decades away for most of our people. But the mission of the Church is also the proclamation of the Gospel. So our catechist group, one of the sub groups of the parish, is busy with its own work. For example, each Friday during Lent the catechists conducted paraliturgical services in three different locations in the parish. Instruction, a homily, prayer, and audio-visual presentation were part of these services. There were arranged and conducted entirely by the lay-catechist group.

Another sub-group in the parish structure are the Promotores de Salud — health care workers who by home visits, movies and lectures are promoting better nutrition, sanitation, pre-natal care etc. Recently they held a 5-day lecture series where local doctors gave instructions on all these subjects to more than 100 parishioners.

we celebrated our patronal feast, St. Joseph the Worker. This year a committee of the parish is arranging our Holy Year Pilgrimage to the Cathedral for that date. This will be preceded by a five-day course of instructions on the theme of the Holy Year: reconciliation and renewal.

All these things are being done on the initiative and enthusiasm of people who are still considered by many to be too poor, too simple, too illiterate to run their own lives. For 400 years their ancestors have been the victims of violence, physical and institutional. It is a real evangelical word to help them to stand tall and recover their self-esteem.

This new phase of the Rochester mission can not be evaluated yet. It is being watched carefully here by other mission groups because it is a new form of ministry. Rochester's participation in this parish is far from over. The things that money can buy, i.e., medicine, food, educational materials, still must be bought with our help. The things that money can't buy, i.e., dignity, self confidence, and our friendship, are being acquired by the people themselves.

Similar to parishes everywhere, the number of the truly committed persons is small in comparison to the total population. And these people will stumble and make some poor decisions. But in the end it will be their church, and so it will be more perfectly THE CHURCH.



Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, Father James Marvin and Father Joseph Reinhart.

San Jose Transferred

Father James J. Marvin, pastor of St. Ambrose Parish and president of the Priests Council, and Father Joseph F. Reinhart, diocesan missions director, were in Bolivia last week to complete the arrangements for the handing over of the parish of San Jose Obrero to the local community, the Parish Board and lay administrator. They are representing Bishop Joseph L. Hogan in completing a new agreement with Archbishop Jorge Manrique of La Paz.

Father Tormey will return to Rochester early this Summer. Father Deckman and McCluskey will remain in La Paz until the end of the year. McCluskey will enter Maryknoll to study for the priesthood. Father Deckman will continue his mission work in another part of Bolivia.

Fathers Marvin and Reinhart took along a portrait of Bishop

Hogan, especially autographed for this occasion, as a sign of the continuing support of Rochester. Also, a Spanish copy of the New Testament, autographed by Bishop Hogan, for the lay administrator, Jorge Jimenez, reminding him that his joy will be sharing the "good news" of Christ with the 40,000 people in the parish.

N.Y. Priests Urge Amnesty

New York (RNS) — The Senate of Priests of the New York Catholic archdiocese has approved a resolution calling for "immediate and general amnesty" for draft-resisters in the Indochina war. Amnesty on an "individual basis" was asked for deserters.

The President and Congress were urged to grant an im-

mediate and general amnesty to those who have evaded the draft, left the country, or have been imprisoned because of their opposition to compulsory military service in the Indochina war, and that amnesty be granted on an individual basis for those who have deserted the Armed Forces for reasons of conscientiousness when no other serious crime was involved.

For another example, on May 1

Diocesan priests first went to La Paz in 1966 — after a visit from Auxiliary Bishop Gennaro Prata to St. Francis Xavier Parish (pastor then Msgr. George A. Cocuzzi). Father Peter Deckman has been in La Paz from the beginning, followed by Fathers Paul Freemesser, Edward Golden, Daniel Tormey. Timothy McCluskey has worked there for two years.

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Because of problems in the shipments of materials and the temporary delay of construction, families about to make a decision may take advantage of LOWER PRE CONSTRUCTION PRICES.

The Chapel and second Garden Mausoleum wing are not completed yet. Furthermore the start of the third wing must be held off until present construction is completed, which now appears to be sometime this Spring.

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