



A leper at the Weija Rehabilitation Center in Ghana shows Sister Jane LeFrois, SSpS, the first tomatoes grown in the Operation Feed Yourself project that Sister organized.

Letter from Ghana

# Working with Lepers Dear to Sister Jane

By MOLLY JUDGE

Since her "retirement" as a missionary teacher at St. Mary's Secondary School in Accra, Ghana, Sister Jane LeFrois, SSpS, has been busier than ever, working among the poor and the lepers.

Sister Jane, a native Rochesterian who went to Africa in 1946, has always been concerned with the lepers at the Rehabilitation Centre in Weija.

"My work with the lepers has always been very dear to me. Although this Rehabilitation Centre at Weija is small, numbering 45 to 50 patients, there is much to be done. These are discharged patients from the Ankafu Settlement. Since their families do not care for them, they are under the Social Welfare Department of Accra. And being located six miles from Accra in a rather forlorn spot, there is little activity to lighten the monotony of the long day," Sister wrote in a letter to the Courier-Journal.

Under government care, the patients find it difficult to live on the monthly allowance of \$9 in an inflationary age. The Missionary Sisters make bi-monthly visits to the center, providing bandages, medicine, vitamin tablets and ointment. The lepers also receive religious instruction and personal visits from the sisters.

The cost of food was a particular burden until Sister Jane suggested Operation Feed Yourself.

"Our plan was to start a small vegetable farm behind the quarters, a place full of stubble and trees," Sister wrote. "This was a big job to tackle, but the lepers got to work and cleared it all with pickaxes, shovels and hoes. Then they prepared a small nursery and planted tomatoes, peppers, onions, greens and cabbage. Two months later they transplanted these to the large plot and watered it daily, as the rainy season is not until April in this area."

"Last week when I went there, I was overjoyed to find they had harvested their first crop of tomatoes, lettuce and cabbage. Soon the onions and peppers will be ready for use also. Needless to say, there was great rejoicing that day at the center."

According to Sister Jane, the government provides regular medical aid, while organizations such as the Rotary Club, British Women's Club and Ladies of the Inner Wheel in Accra contribute financial assistance and materials at times. Additional help comes from benefactors in Europe and America.

"Now that the vegetable farm has been started, there is no reason it cannot be continued and even enlarged as time goes on. By their hard and persevering work, the lepers have met the challenge. God bless them!" she added.

Besides caring for the lepers, Sister Jane still teaches religion and Scripture in the school and works with the Christian Mothers by conducting study classes.

Prior to joining the Missionary Sisters, Servants of the Holy Spirit, Sister Jane was a member of St. Boniface parish. She received her first mission appointment in 1945 and taught in the Southern missions in Mississippi and in the East. She was one of the first sisters to arrive in Ghana and became the first regional superior. Between 1946-1949, more sisters arrived and soon were teaching in schools or working in clinics in Koforidua, Kröbo, Kwahu Tafo, Nkawaw and Akin Swedur. In 1950, Sister Jane began teaching at St. Mary's where she was principal for three years.

Sister Jane's brother, Father Dr. Bernard LeFrois, SVD, is currently a missionary in the Philippines. Her sisters, Sister Alphonsa Marie SSJ and Sister Rose Cecilia SSJ, are deceased.

## Bishop Names Vocations Aides

Five priests working in separate regions of the diocese have been named to help Father Gerald T. Connor of Becket Hall in his work as diocesan director of vocations.

The new associate directors, appointed last week by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, are Fathers Robert Rice, Auburn; David Callen, Ithaca; Thomas Streb, Elmira Heights; William Darling, Dansville, and William Leone, Geneva.

# Rehabilitation Seen Priority by Church Experts in Housing

By KATHLEEN POWERS  
Capitol Correspondent

Rehabilitation and preservation of already existing housing should be the primary goal of government housing programs in New York State for the rest of this decade, claimed more than 50 housing experts from state Catholic Charities organizations meeting in Schenectady last week.

Gathered together for the first time to meet one another and to study new federal housing and development legislation that went into effect last month, the representatives agreed on several points:

\*The Church, through its Catholic Charities personnel, must participate in the drafting of any local government plans to spend federal housing money. Without church advocacy for housing money for the poor, agreed the participants, the real needs of low income New Yorkers may not be met.

\*Warranty of habitability legislation protecting tenants is badly needed. Efforts to pass such legislation in the state legislature this spring should be forceful and united.

\*The bankrupt Urban Development Corporation which is asking New York State to bail it out, may not be worth saving. Church groups should study the achievements of the UDC and compare them to its cost to taxpayers, including its built-in structure of tax-sheltered investments, said the participants.

\*Redlining, the practice of identifying persons from certain neighborhoods as poor risks, is a

policy with many banks and insurance companies, despite their claims to the contrary. It is a cause of house abandonment by persons unable to get insurance, mortgages and home improvement loans at reasonable rates. Government policy could and should eliminate redlining.

About half the 65 participants were clergy. They included social workers, administrators, economists, pastors, educators, attorneys and others active in the housing field. Private agencies also were represented.

Federal, state, city and community housing leaders addressed the conference, including Cushing Dolbeare, National Rural Housing Coalition; William Green, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Commissioner Lee Goodwin, State Division of Housing and Community Renewal; David Brandon, Urban Development Corporation (UDC); Jan Farr, State Senate Select Committee on Housing and Urban Development; Michael Pittas, City of New York Planning Commission; Jean Coughlin and William Lucas, City of Syracuse; and Shel Trapp, Catholic Charities of Chicago.

Participants exchanged information on the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, a comprehensive law passed after four years of writing and trading off in Congress. Dolbeare described the law as "a lot of crumbs," which proved to be the assessment of most of the Catholic Charities participants, with the possible exception of the Ogdensburg representatives. They said they had trouble even finding crumbs for rural areas.

## Dr. Edelin Convicted In Fetus Death

Boston — Dr. Kenneth Edelin, 36, was convicted of manslaughter last Friday (Feb. 14) in that he allowed an aborted fetus to succumb by depriving it of oxygen during a hysterotomy (surgical abortion) operation performed on an unmarried 18-year-old woman in October 1973.

The 36-year-old physician was convicted by a nine-man, three-woman jury after six weeks of testimony.

His lawyer, William Homans,

said he would appeal the conviction to the Massachusetts Supreme Judiciary and to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary.

Medical testimony was complicated and sometimes contradictory concerning the nature of a fetus but jurors said photographs of the 20 to 24-week-old fetus convinced them it was a person with a right to legal protection.

Abortion as such was not the issue in the trial.

## Harvey Cox to Speak At Nazareth College

Dr. Harvey Cox, one of the country's best known writers and lecturers on religion, will be the opening speaker in a three-day symposium on "The Quest for Human Values" at Nazareth College of Rochester, March 3-5. The symposium is part of the college's special 50th anniversary program of events.

Dr. Cox, Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity at Harvard University, will speak on "The Use and Misuse of Religion in Modern Society" in the Nazareth Arts Center Auditorium at 8 p.m. Monday, March 3.

In his lecture, Cox will discuss the trends evident in modern American society away from traditional religious institutions to new centers of religious belief. He maintains that the culture of poverty, the commitment to causes by the young, the new awakening of the encounter movement and the growing

interest in Eastern mysticism are the sources of a new "peoples religion" with its own theology, symbolism and morality.

Dr. Cox — teacher, minister and theologian — has been called a man whose following transcends the limits of a single faith or belief and who represents, for many people, the voice of ecumenical faith at its most persuasive and deeply felt pitch.

An editorial board member of *Christianity and Crisis*, Cox is the author of "God's Revolution and Man's Responsibility," "The Secular City," "On Not Leaving it to the Snake," "The Feast of Fools," and "The Seduction of the Spirit."

A member of the Baptist Church, Cox was ordained in 1956 and received the Ph. D. degree in History and Philosophy of Religion at Harvard in 1963.



Life and Death

Photo by Susan McKinney

A baby keeps a watchful eye on Father Albert Delmonte as the priest distributes ashes during a special liturgy at Christ the King Church on Ash Wednesday. The liturgy featured a short play on the history of the customs surrounding the opening of the Lenten Season.