

Church Opens its Arms To Indochina Orphans

By BONITA BALDWIN

Catholic orphanages in South Vietnam care for 4,000 abandoned children, Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York reported last week. He urged national leaders to act quickly on President Ford's promise to evacuate the war orphans and said that preparations for reception of such children, from infants to six years of age, are under way at archdiocesan institutions.

Placement will be no problem, the cardinal said, since local Catholic Charities throughout the U.S. have received many ap-

plications from families seeking to adopt Vietnamese orphans. Bishop Edward F. Swanstom, director of Catholic Relief Services, reported in a New York City press conference that some dioceses could accept virtually unlimited numbers.

Here in the Rochester diocese, the Catholic Family Center called a special meeting to explain procedures for adopting Vietnamese orphans. Their switchboard had been so flooded with inquiries that the calls could not be handled. Nearly 150 persons attended.

was told she could expect a 15-minute wait. She had already been waiting for 45 minutes when she saw and heard a technician from another floor in the medical center come in and ask to be squeezed in for an appointment. There was no emergency involved.

An hour and a half after my friend's appointment was scheduled, she, worried about the child at home and upset by her now restless toddler, took the bull by the horns. Periodically she had told the receptionists that her time was limited. They ignored her polite requests to be seen. So finally she marched to the window told them how rude and inconsiderate they had been to squeeze in the other patient. They immediately ushered her in to see the doctor. Then she told the doctor how rude and inconsiderate he had been, that she knew there was no emergency, and that her time was not as free as his office seemed to think.

The doctor blamed the receptionists and ended up apologizing to her.

She said a great feeling of relief and self-respect rolled over her.

She is not alone, of course. Too many of us are afraid to complain to professional people, particularly doctors. Yet who is to say our time is not as valuable as theirs. Certainly no one minds waiting in a bona fide emergency. But that excuse is given again and again when it is not legitimate. Rotten scheduling on the part of such offices is simply a disdain for the patients and clients.

Nothing makes me personally angrier than to have my phone out of whack and then have the phone company tell me that the repair man will be out the next day sometime between nine and five and if I want it repaired I'd better stay home.

Next time it happens I plan to tell them when I want them to come, a power show that has worked at least once before.

Of course, one must be prepared to go without service. Obviously the phone company is more powerful than you or I. But it's good for your self-esteem, if not your service, to take a stand against an indifferent giant. I also have learned to assert myself in shopping lines. Last Christmas during the rush I got up the nerve to tell a woman who wedged in ahead of me that I had been there first.

"Well, all right," she said wistfully, "but I've been waiting for half an hour."

I apologized profusely and pushed her ahead of me.

At the meeting, Mrs. Mary Pat Dunham, supervisor of the Adoption Department at CFC, said that the Center had received no direct information about the situation and that the 2,000 orphans being brought to the country now are going to families that have been waiting at least a year.

In the past year and a half, 15 Vietnamese babies have been placed in area homes, according to Miss Catherine Wobus, casework director. Presently 15 to 25 families are awaiting children for whom they made application six months to a year ago. She said that these people will receive infants first if there are any available, but that no Rochester area couple has received word that a child is being sent to them.

To adopt a Vietnamese orphan a couple must apply to both a local and international agency. Mrs. Dunham stressed that no one knows what is going to happen, when, or how fast, but that some international agencies estimated a wait of 9 to 12 months for a girl and 2 to 6 months for a boy or child who is partly black. If an emergency situation does arise with many unadopted children being sent to this country, CFC will try to be flexible without lowering standards, Miss Wobus said. An additional staff member would be assigned to speed home studies.

Mrs. Dunham explained further that many of the children are abandoned and that very little is known about them. She told prospective parents to be honest with themselves when deciding whether or not they could accept a child of mixed blood, black, Laotian, or Cambodian with Vietnamese. She warned too that medical standards are different in Vietnam and in an emergency situation children might not receive a thorough physical examination before leaving the country.

Children usually arrive exhausted after their trip half way around the world, Mrs. Dunham continued. Accustomed to a different climate and diet they sometimes gain too much weight, have diarrhea for months, develop very dry skin, runny noses, or other difficulties. Mrs. Dunham encouraged the group, "Make sure you have the energy and the strength to cope with the child as he is when he arrives and for many years after." Miss Wobus added, "Feelings can change after the emergency."

After the meeting Miss Wobus said that there is concern that some people may be pursuing adoption for the wrong reasons, but she trusts that they will eliminate themselves by failing to follow through or will be spotted during the home study.

The present situation differs from the adoption of Korean orphans, according to Miss Wobus. The Koreans were adopted primarily by families that were well established with children already in the home. Now, however, with the marked shortage of healthy white babies, couples wishing to start a family are exploring the adoption of Vietnamese orphans.

Catholic Family Center is estimating that it will cost \$2,000 plus lawyer fees to complete the adoption.

AYM Plans Photo Class

The Area Youth Ministry will start new Beginner Photography Classes on May 6. Classes last 10 weeks and are held Tuesdays from 6:30 to 9 p.m. for youth ages 13-18 at the AYM Photographic Center in the basement of Dewey Ave. Presbyterian Church, 1261 Dewey Ave.

structor is Nicholas DiStasio, an employe of Eastman Kodak Co. and AYM photo instructor since 1972.

Cost per student is \$5 plus 25 cents per class to cover the cost of photo chemicals, paper and processing. Cameras are provided for the course. This photography program is limited to the first eight students registering with AYM. For information or to register, the Area Youth Ministry numbers are 254-6018 or 461-2121.

Participants will be taught the basic fundamentals of black and white photography including shooting, developing, and mounting of photographs. In-

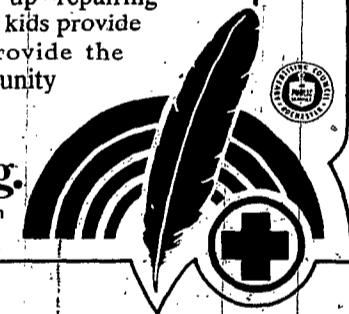
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Sarah Child

Figuratively speaking do you let people walk all over you? If so you may be a candidate for assertiveness training, a therapy which helps you change your passive behavior for positive actions.

(For those interested in a detailed account of how it works this new application of behavior modification is outlined in the April edition of "Woman's Day.")

How can you tell if you need to start asserting yourself? Well, if you have trouble telling the fifth Girl Scout that comes to your door that you have enough cookies, if you always let your husband pick the movie you both see or if you let your boss tell you what brand of Scotch to drink then you probably could stand some assertiveness training.

A friend recently confided that she had practiced assertive behavior without realizing what she was doing. She was in an eye doctor's office for what was supposed to be a "run-in" visit with her toddler. Another school aged youngster was at home, arriving there from school after she had left.

To assure that the wait would not be too long she took the precaution of calling the doctor's office before she left home. She

Bread Baking Session Set

The St. Augustine Human Development Committee has rounded up four experienced home bakers to demonstrate bread baking techniques on Saturday morning, April 19. Besides encouraging home baking, the committee hopes to develop a "core group" that will provide bread for occasional benefit sales. Proceeds from such sales — there will be one April 20 — go to the South West Ecumenical Ministry's food cupboard committee to help restock staples.

The Saturday seminar will run from 9:30 a.m. until noon, and child care will be provided. There is no charge. Reservations should be made today with Chris Schramm, 235-4863, or Mary Maher, 235-5085.

OPEN WIDE

Ask your dentist for a complete mouth checkup. It's one of the ways to detect oral cancer early when it is curable, according to the American Cancer Society.

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