

Church And Politics



Sister Frances

The Western New York town of Attica gained nationwide recognition when 43 people were killed there Sept. 9, 1971. Attica has since become a strong symbol around which various attitudes towards crime and prisons have focused. Like so many other emotionally charged events, the facts are often little known to the general public. Emotions rule reason, passions blind judgments. Public officials sometimes fan the flames of prejudice and use the fire as a cover for their less than responsible actions. Just what are some of the facts concerning Attica?

The first indictments were handed down more than 15 months after the uprising (the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution guarantees "the right to a speedy trial").

The first trial began in November, 1974 — three years later.

Almost immediately after the uprising a special prosecutor was appointed and provided with a large staff of attorneys, investigators and secretarial help.

Money for defense purposes (needed because most convicts are without funds) was not voted until May, 1974 and even then, it was extremely limited. (The Constitution guarantees the accused the right "to have assistance of counsel in his defense.")

In the light of facts such as these, the Church's role from September, 1971 until the present has been to challenge the appropriate authorities to deal with the problems in a fair and just manner. Just one week after the uprising, Bishop Hogan issued a Pastoral letter in which he urged the State to begin reform on those conditions which brought on this desperate situation. From here, the Church moved into the area of adequate funding for the defense which culminated in a meeting with Gov. Wilson in February, 1974, attended by Bishop Hogan and other community leaders. Shortly afterward the funds began to be released.

As more and more information became available of the indictments, more questions were raised concerning the rationale behind those decisions. Why, for instance, were no state personnel indicted? Was there a fair effort by the prosecution to investigate all sides of the conflict? Also, why have more than 15 of the original indictments been dropped? This sort of inconsistency is just one of the reasons why Bishop Hogan has urged support for an ecumenical resolution calling for the dropping of all indictments and the pardoning of those convicted. He has also called for the dismissal of the two grand juries, thus taking a stand against the indictment of prison guards and the state police. This action was obviously taken to show that reconciliation is, at this point, the most important consideration.

The Church's involvement in this social/political issue to date has shown a level of understanding that is, indeed, commendable. Research and careful analysis preceded judgments and, because of this, the Church's actions have met with a good deal of support in the community at large. The call to "visit the imprisoned" must happen on many levels. Institutional reform is one very important level.

Additional Authorizations Given to Coordinators

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan expanded and redefined the role of the regional coordinator this week. In a paper that indicated five possible problem areas, he listed "additional authorizations" to help you meet the various new needs that are present in the Church of Rochester today.

The directive deals with sacramental and pastoral needs, the development of parish councils, the amalgamation of parishes, conflicts within parishes and weekend needs for priests.

The "genuine empowerments" granted to the 10 coordinators will last only as long as they are needed, the bishop said. He noted that the role of coordinator is a developing one.

Speaking of parishes with "extremely small congregations," he authorized the regional coordinator to "initiate discussions on the amalgamation of parishes, when in his estimation the situation warrants it." This authorization should be made clear, he added, to any religious orders concerned.

To help parish councils get their bearings in relation to the whole diocesan operation, coordinators are to review all council constitutions in the light of revised guidelines that are in preparation. Basic uniformity is needed, the bishop said.

When the diocese was divided into 10 regions in 1972, the regional coordinators were appointed to serve as the bishop's representatives in the development of parish councils, which were seen as fundamental to the proposed Diocesan Pastoral Council.

The coordinator now is authorized to pursue a solution to any identified sacramental need

interparochial, regional or area. The bishop mentioned the spiritual needs of the young and the elderly and the regularization of sacramental practices regarding baptism, marriage or penance.

He also directed each coordinator to attend to any conflict that arises within a parish, to analyze it for the Pastoral Office and to refer it to appropriate diocesan officials. He told them, too, that they should borrow

priests from any of their parishes to fill vacancies in emergency. This would be for a single weekend; the Pastoral Office would continue to cover extended absences.

"The regional coordinator must provide vision and spiritual leadership to the various groups in the region," Bishop Hogan stated, "by emphasizing the importance of a deep spiritual foundation for their work."

Regions Warned

Continued from Page 2

the wage-earning, child-raising, home-maintaining group of 19-64. The study concluded that in light of these statistics "supplemental and helping programs for families and parents will be quite important in the CICP" (and) compared to the city and county, youth programs should be stressed most in CICP. Through examining individual census tracts the study stated that the stress and strain of family raising would probably be greatest in Mount Carmel, St. Bridget's, and Holy Redeemer parishes.

Within the 18 and under group, the study noted a significantly higher presence of children under 5. "Programs for the under 5 age are most important of all in the CICP area e.g. pre-natal care, day care centers, baby clinics, pre-schools, and tot lots," the study recommended.

Inner-city and county both had higher percentages of children aged 5-14 than the city. Father Mulligan said that these figures show "the tragedy of the inner-

city schools closing as far as population goes."

The elderly in the CICP area are located principally in the parishes of St. Michael and Holy Redeemer and unlike the rest of the population of the inner-city are predominately white and foreign stock.

In dealing with the racial and ethnic distribution within the CICP parishes, the study found that 75 per cent of all blacks in Monroe County live in this territory.

The study concluded that Immaculate Conception and St. Lucy's come closest to being parishes called to serve one group, the blacks. St. Bridget's is also heavily black, but has a large Spanish population as well. All other parishes have such a mixture of ethnic groups that no parish can presently specialize in just one group. Bilingual programs and programs promoting inter-cultural understanding should be developed on the east side, the study reported.



Announcing... COURIER-JOURNAL Catholic Family Night

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1975
Red Wings SILVER STADIUM
RED WINGS vs. RICHMOND
GAME TIME 7:30 PM

Bishop Hogan will be on hand to throw out the first ball immediately preceding the game.

TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED AT THE RED WING BOX OFFICE PRIOR TO JUNE 17.

0000 VALUABLE COUPON 0000

0000 VALUABLE COUPON 0000

0000 VALUABLE COUPON 0000

50¢ OFF
THE PRICE OF ANY TICKET
COURIER-JOURNAL
Catholic Family Night

7:30 PM AT SILVER STADIUM

VALID JUNE 17, 1975 ONLY

50¢ OFF
THE PRICE OF ANY TICKET
COURIER-JOURNAL
Catholic Family Night

7:30 PM AT SILVER STADIUM

VALID JUNE 17, 1975 ONLY

50¢ OFF
THE PRICE OF ANY TICKET
COURIER-JOURNAL
Catholic Family Night

7:30 PM AT SILVER STADIUM

VALID JUNE 17, 1975 ONLY