

What's Coming Down In the Inner City?

Failure Means Learning from Mistakes

By CARMEN J. VIGLUCCI

Viewpoints about the worth of the now-defunct Council of Inner City Parishes (CICP) probably vary in direct relation to where one hangs his hat.

Father Anthony J. Valente, former chairman of the CICP executive committee, hangs his hat at St. Michael's Church on North Clinton Avenue in Rochester center city and from there he has a naturally favorable view of the organization. Still he has a different slant.

What did the CICP accomplish?

"The biggest accomplishment was that we learned a lot about ourselves and the Church and we learn more from our mistakes than from anything else.

"I really think we had a chance to be Church when the CICP was struggling and I think we failed in our mission as Church across the diocese when it folded."

Cdl. Raimondi, Former Legate, Dead at 62

Vatican City [RNS] — Cardinal Luigi Raimondi, a veteran Vatican diplomat who served as Apostolic Delegate to the United States from 1967 to 1973, died suddenly in Rome on June 24. He was 62 years old.

His death reduces the College of Cardinals to 124.

The prelate, named prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints upon his retirement from diplomatic service in 1973, was born at Acqui-Lussito, in the Piedmont region of northwestern Italy. Ordained to the priesthood in 1936, he received a doctorate in Canon Law at the Appollinaris Seminary in Rome and studied at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy.

Cardinal Raimondi began his diplomatic career in 1938 as secretary to the papal Nuncio in Guatemala. While there he began a study of Mayan Indian culture, a field he later pursued for professional and personal reasons in Mexico.

ALL IN THE FAMILY



Sarah Child

In an interview she gave not too long ago, Joyce Carol Oates, the award winning novelist, said that the reason she was able to accomplish so much (she teaches also) was that she had at one point made up her mind not to do anything she didn't want to.

I, for one, think her philosophy is fantastic. And so tomorrow I will not:

Make the coffee, reconstitute the juice, pour out the cereal; run the four daily loads through the washer, fold the contents of the dryer, put any clothes away; load the dishwasher, clear the table, sweep the floor; put the family room back together, take out the newspapers; wash the two living room windows, rehang the

This is one of a series of articles which will explore the situation in the inner city of Rochester. The articles will explain what has happened and why, what directions the Church will be moving toward, and how the center city problem has application throughout the diocese.

(The CICP originally was formed in 1971 with the purpose of supporting and keeping inner city parish schools. The diocese committed \$200,000 annually to member parishes but this was not enough and what began as closing of a school here and there culminated in the closing of all inner city parish schools and the eventual collapse of the CICP itself as of June 30.)

Father Valente believes that the whole situation showed "there is still strong parochialism in the Church. It also is clear that we are not sure at this stage if the diocese is serious in wanting to be of the type of Church Christ asked us to be — to share our resources totally and completely across the board. All of us have a right to whatever benefits the Church has to offer."

What sort of benefits?

"One is school. There is no reason why we should be deprived because of economic inability. Especially when the amount of money put into schools throughout the diocese shows that, although it may not be expressed that way, schools are a high priority."

The schools were the most visible sign of the presence of the Church in the inner city. Now that they are gone, the inner city parishes, workers, and the diocese will be seeking new avenues for ministry there.

So far the diocese has taken the longest step with the appointment of Msgr. George Cocuzzi to be vicar for Urban Ministry. Father Valente applauds the choice but adds, "I hope he gets the support of diocesan offices. If he doesn't, this second state of affairs will be worse than the first."

Father Valente feels that parishes throughout the diocese are or should be responsible for those in the inner city. To the proposition that many parishes are having their own financial problems, the co-pastor (with Father Paul Freemesser) of St. Michael's responds:

drapes back from the cleaners; hunt for the missing library books; return the playground chairman's call; mail our incipient kindergartener's health form, make one peanut butter and jelly sandwich for her lunch, wipe out the refrigerator when she spills her juice, sweep up the floor where most of her lunch ends up; make the beds, dust the furniture, run the vacuum cleaner; go to the store for bread and milk, plan or cook dinner, reload the dishwasher after the kids' initial try; weed around the tomato plants, get the slugs out of the strawberry patch; dig holes for the two pin oaks, I bought at the half price sale; Start packing the camping gear, bake a triple batch of chocolate chip cookies to take with us, call various stores to locate luggage rack ropes; cut off the seven year old's jeans for shorts, hem the 10-year old's new skooter skirt; take in three sizes the father's day T-shirt I make; and finally I will not repaint the laundry room with the semigloss lemon ice I bought two weeks ago; clean behind the washer where the dryer lint vented nor try to capture the horse fly that zoomed in when I was trying to let the steam out.

The day after tomorrow, however, I expect to get up very very early. I have the feeling it will be an extremely busy day.

"Many parishes, particularly in the suburban areas, have needs which rise more from luxury than from necessity and survival. So it's really a question of do we as a Church have a right to luxuries and what might be luxurious programs when there others who do not have bare necessities."

While focusing on schools, because they were the principle interest of the CICP, Father Valente favors "the Church being an advocate group to improve the public education system we have. If we have a public education system that is not doing the job it should do, the Church should work to improve it. Of course, one way to improve it is to develop an alternate school system but today we are unable to go that route."

He also sees Church action in other non-religious spheres. He thinks the Church should urge politicians to work for "equalizing of funds available for education between the city and suburban schools so that the child in the inner city is not deprived of education."

As for in-house direction, Father Valente looks to regionalism and the Diocesan Pastoral Council as a "definite help if we're ready and willing to make the commitment Christ has asked us to make" in regards to the poor.

"If regionalism will help our parishes realize that the problems in the inner city are caused by those who moved out and by those who live in the suburbs as well as those who live in the inner city and help us with our problems then we will be well on the way to becoming Church."

Although he feels that there has been a lack of inner city planning on the diocesan level, Father Valente also sees that "the bulk of planning" in the future

must come from those in the inner city.

He also sees the inner city problems "spreading out — the problems we faced with the closing of schools will be problems elsewhere."

Apparently as center city

spreads out it takes its problems with it so the idea is to solve them where they're at now — the core city.

And facing these problems together, Father Valente feels, will not only help the inner city but all of us spiritually as well as materially.

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