

Malagasy and You

Malagasy, or Madagascar, is one of those romantic-sounding places which seems so remote from our existence that we scarcely pay it any mind.

Yet it is closer than we think — through the work of Catholic Relief Services, the Eucharistic Congress, and parish Human Development Committees throughout the diocese.

For instance, last year two village councils in Malagasy wrote to Catholic Relief Services in Tananarive to tell of a disastrous hailstorm which badly damaged the important rice crop and the garden crops of the two villages.

"In certain regions, one could still see unmelted hailstones after three days," the letter recounted. More than 200 acres of rice fields were wiped out, leaving 700 villagers facing near famine conditions.

CRS, because of its local facilities at Tananarive was able to respond quickly. It dipped into reserves to come up with 450 bags of corn soya blend, part of the U. S. government's Food for Peace supplies entrusted to CRS. The relief agency also shipped six bales of clothing, which had come from the annual Thanksgiving Clothing Collection. Finally, it came up with funds to purchase seeds for the villagers to begin again. These came from the Annual Catholic Overseas Aid Appeal.

Thus because of the expansiveness and efficiency of this Church agency, we in our little corner of the world had a direct hand in alleviating the pains of starvation in Malagasy.

And with Operation Rice Bowl, a special Lenten program already under way in many parishes as part of the spiritual preparation for the 41st International Eucharistic Congress, taking place in Philadelphia next August, we have an ideal way of alleviating such calamity.

Operation Rice Bowl invites Catholic families to participate in a Lenten program involving the eating of one frugal meal during each week of Lent and contributing the money saved each week to the local parish for the feeding of the world hungry. Funds will then go to the Overseas Aid Appeal.

This provides a positive and easy method to help our stricken brothers and sisters even in the most sequestered parts of the world. Perhaps even more important such worthwhile programs show the expanse of our Christianity, both in depth and breadth.

P.S.

Catholic Relief Services has distributed more than 5 million black, yellow and white cardboard "rice bowls" and reports that the supply is just about depleted. It suggests that parishes or individuals devise their own because "response to Operation Rice Bowl has proved greater than we anticipated," according to a CRS spokesman.

Now that is good news!

St. Patrick's Day

True, March 17 this year, as has been the case for too many St. Patrick's Days, does not come at a particularly joyous point in history, what with the trouble in Ireland.

It may be difficult to picture in the mind's eye but it is possible that the venerable saint himself may have a tear in his eye. But somehow we feel that it would be quickly brushed away in a quick return to meaningful pursuit and the pleasure of enjoying God-given time.

Somehow we know that's the way St. Patrick's Day 1976 will be for Irish people and those who would be Irish the world over.

Opinion

'Gutsiest Woman'

Editor:

Sister Marie Louise Blaakman, formerly principal of now defunct Mt. Carmel School, wins my vote for the nomination as "Gutsiest Woman of the Year."

Anybody who takes on Bishop Hogan and his advisers over the pathetic decision to close our inner city schools has to be a special person.

In "Human Development" we talk about justice. Where is the justice in closing our schools to people who need them the most?

As somebody once said, "This is a helluva way to run a railroad!"

Bill Schneider
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We Need The CIA

Editor:

The editorial comments that appeared in the Courier-Journal (3/10/76) regarding the CIA were mostly negative despite the fact the CIA is desperately needed for our security and the security of the free world.

Therefore I fail to see why it is wrong for the CIA to enlist the help of missionaries, journalists or anyone else, provided they do not violate the laws of God.

Curiously enough, the Courier-Journal forgot to mention the circus-like atmosphere surrounding the CIA, FBI investigations, it should be self-evident that investigations involving leaks and adverse publicity can only serve to weaken these top security organizations.

Consequently it is the obligation of the non-Communist world and particularly the obligation of Catholics to help organizations like the CIA and FBI fight communism and socialism as it continues to enslave an increasing number of mankind.

Not too long ago the Courier-Journal lamented the fact that many people could be fed with the money used to build the B-1 bomber.

I suppose the same logic would apply regarding the Rochester Police department. Just dissolve the Rochester Police department and use that money to help the poor.

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Courier-Journal 1



"ANOTHER THING WOMEN PRIESTS WOULD BE GREAT WITH CHURCH BUDGETS!"

There are those who would argue that the Rochester Police department has a higher priority rating than the B-1 bomber perhaps.

However in view of the fact that the Soviet Union is now ahead of us militarily and continues to increase that lead, it would be foolhardy to weaken our already weakened military forces.

Russian novelist Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn stated that the only thing the Communists respect is military power.

We should listen to this man rather than listen to the misleading remarks of our liberal politicians and journalists.

Robert Bart
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On this or that Committee we can't always sit. And if I have a word to say, We'll dance a jig or waltz.

For we Golden Agers have a gay old time regardless of our faults.

But somehow, somewhere, we must get through. For a chore at this point is not simple to do.

We must work together to make our Senior Citizen Group grow. "Gaining Resources For Older Workers" is our motto, you know.

Frederic H. Perau
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Retired Priests' Home Needed

Editor:

It is a terrible thing not to have a home. Our retired priests who have given their lifetimes to serving God and His people need a home. How have we as a diocese neglected this responsibility for so long?

The action of Msgr. Schnacky in Mendon of reconditioning a home for retired priests encourages us to join him. We are sending a \$10 donation for this use.

It isn't much you may say. That is true. One donation isn't much. We invite others who feel so inclined to send a donation also. They also should use a "tell-a-friend" to inform others of this noble work and invite them to send contributions. This will show our retired priests in a tangible way that we do care.

Checks may be made payable to Retired Priests' Home Fund and mailed to Msgr. Schnacky at St. Catherine's Church, Mendon, N.Y. 14506.

The Ray Scheuerman Family
4 Harper Drive
Pittsford, N.Y. 14534

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

Seniors, Stay Active

It is not the policy of the Courier-Journal to print poetry but because of the hopeful theme it projects and the helpful advice in it, we make an exception to the rule in printing the following letter:

Editor:

Three score or more, is this the end?
Oh, not for you and me.

We have reached our goal but there can be

no rest you see,
Even though our good old Rocking Chair

beckons as in the past,
We've joined our Senior Citizens' Group, — at last.

Not only will we be active and concerned,
But will have a dandy time with much happiness returned.

We Senior Citizens laugh and make each other happy,
We pack away our troubles and cares and really make it snappy.

We love to visit with our friends and greet new members too.

It makes a difference when they receive a smile from you.

Yes, many friendships are renewed and former days recalled.

While new acquaintances are made, old ones are overhauled.

Let us consider it a privilege when asked to do our bit.