

Viet Refugees

A pleasing postscript. The U.S. Catholic Conference has reported that 60 per cent of the more than 59,000 Southeast Asian refugees sponsored by Catholic organizations are now considered "independent of further assistance."

Thus Phase I of the refugee program, begun a year ago, will melt into the second step — helping those "not on their own feet." The USCC describes these as people "underemployed, people who were perhaps bankers or businessmen in Vietnam but who now, because of language or other orientation difficulties, are in jobs not compatible with the skills and experience."

As always in calamities of this nature, when nations fall apart and human beings are left dangling, American Catholics are in the forefront of those anxious to help. As in the past, such work has proved that America still provides a beacon of hope for the oppressed and homeless around the world.

Obviously there is still a length of road to be covered before all of the Vietnamese refugees are "on their own feet." The most difficult task, however, settlement and its attendant problems, has been accomplished, thanks to the concern and efficacy of Americans, including many in our own diocese.

It is our fervent wish that those who were critical of the resettlement project, either because of fear that it couldn't work or because of prejudice, will now realize what a fine Christian job has been done. Let's hope that the future will not make remembering the lesson necessary. But knowing this world it is likely that such situations will recur. Hopefully, this chapter will help even more Americans and Catholics ready to respond when called upon in that event.

Something Big

We hope that Americans do not really need a day designated for prayer. Without attempting to cite the moral and mortal dangers abounding in today's world, we think most intelligent persons must realize the necessity for extra-terrestrial assistance.

President Ford, however, noting the "profound faith in God which inspired the founding fathers" has designated May 14 as National Day of Prayer. We pray that anyone who doesn't daily turn to heaven will mark that day down as the start of something big.

What is more interesting about the President's proclamation is that he cites some facts that show that this great country of ours is steeped in God-fearing tradition.

"The Continental Congress," he proclaimed, "recognizing the impending calamity and distress, asked each colony publicly to acknowledge the overruling Providence of God" and urged colonists to observe a designated Friday in May as a day of "humiliation, fasting and prayer."

He also reminded that the signers of the Declaration of Independence had "a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence."

In this bicentennial year it wouldn't be amiss for each of us to remember the awe and respect our forefathers had for the Almighty. It is in the blend of this nation's spirit. It helped us persevere in crises past. It will help us meet today's challenges.

Common Witness

Ecumenism is not an end in itself. Rather it is a road toward Christian unity. Of course, the road has many obstacles and pitfalls but the journey has been begun and should continue.

There are many of different faiths who do not support ecumenism for various reasons. They should ponder the words of Archbishop Jean Jadot, the apostolic delegate to the United States, who recently told a workshop of Christian unity.

"It is the hope of ecumenism that by coming together in dialogue, in common witness, in collaborative service and above all in prayer, we shall come again to know one another more deeply, more instinctively, more fully."

Opinion

Chaplain Outlines A Way to Help

Editor:

Often I am approached by individuals or groups who are genuinely interested in the residents at the Elmira Correctional and Reception Center. "What can I do to help them, Father?" is the usual query. There is a way you can help, and help very much.

Library Materials: books that would be exciting for a young man between the ages of 15 and 21; subscriptions to magazines — Time, Sign, Readers Digest, Catholic Digest, Sports Illustrated, Mechanics, Music, Outdoors, etc.; resource books, pocket dictionaries — a priority — and comic books.

Donations for Instructional Purposes: material, books and films; Father Reagan's Chapel Fund.

Instructing — To instruct in Bible classes and in the faith.

Boxes of birthday, anniversary cards, etc.

Note Well — we are not interested in books just for books' sake. Please do not send us material which you yourself would not be interested in, much less a 17-year-old young man, whose reading skills are often inadequate.

True charity consists in meeting our brother's needs no matter what they are and not giving of what we have left over.

Father Michael L. Reagan
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St. Charles Choir Lauded

Editor:

On Sunday afternoon, April 4, the St. Charles Borromeo choir sang as guests in St. Mary's Church, Rochester. The experience of their performance, to this writer, was one of profound religious meaning and deep musical satisfaction. From the very heart of Scripture, the Seven Last Words of Christ provided the basis for a sacred cantata, composed in the 19th century by Theodore DuBois, and were enhanced in this performance by slide projections depicting Christ's Passion and Death.

The choir's rendition was one of exceptional musical quality.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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Vol. 90 No. 51 April 21, 1976

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 20¢; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$7.50. Canada and Foreign, \$12.00. Offices, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. (716) 454-7000. Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

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conveying this dynamic French masterpiece with precise articulation and an exquisite sense of phrasing and tonal balance.

Under the direction of George J. Geibel, whose choral artistry and sensitive musicianship were evident throughout, this group of 45 volunteer members, the St. Charles Borromeo choir, is one of a kind which should be noted well and followed closely by local music lovers.

Here is a model for today's parish choir — a dedicated group whose efforts are channeled toward musical excellence and the promotion of the prayerful experience of those who worship. Here is a parish choir that we in the Rochester Diocese are fortunate in being able to call our very own.

Nancy LaBege
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Rochester, N.Y.

Right to Guns Insures Others

Editor:

I read your editorial (Courier-Journal 3/24/76). I was very displeased with it. I am a member of the National Rifle Association and I am proud of it. I feel that they have done more to keep our rights, namely the first and second under the Bill of Rights, more than anyone else in this country today.

The fact that I can have a rifle because of the second amendment in the Bill of Rights makes it possible for you to print anything you want under the first amendment in the Bill of Rights.

In this year of 1976 it should be remembered our forefathers fought the British at Lexington and Concord because the British were marching to these two towns to take the Americans' guns away from them.

Our forefathers thought these guns were an important right and that to take them away was to make sure they had no rights whatsoever. So they fought the first bullets which were the beginning of our country. And when they wrote the Bill of Rights they gave you the first amendment and all other citizens the second, the right to have arms, because they knew this insured that all the other rights would not be taken away from us.

Also I have taught my son to hunt and the sport of target shooting and he has grown to be a fine young man that I can be proud of. I think it's a far better sport than hanging in some pool hall or bar or smoking pot like so many of today's youth are doing.

Also in your other editorial, Prayer Day, you said our nation was founded by people seeking the right to worship God in their own way.

If we lose the right to bear arms how long do you think you would have religious freedom?

If the Jewish people in Germany had the right to have arms and fought to save themselves I am sure they would not have suffered as they did. And these same rifle and gun owners that you look down upon are the same people who sent all their guns to England free of charge to save England when the Germans were going to invade her and she had lost all her arms at Dunkirk.

So I would suggest in the future you would think of some of these things before you print anymore editorials like that one. And if you would check I am sure you would find most gun owners are conservative and your conservatives are also the people who are mostly against abortion.

Bernard J. Byrnes
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P.S. Young liberals are for abortion and they are also the people who want to take everyone's right to have arms away from them. Think about it.

Good Place For Donations

Editor:

The article on St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in the Courier-Journal (4-7-76) was beautiful. To me, this is faith.

I'd like to suggest we ask our priests to ask parishioners to donate money to a good cause like this. They might suggest such a gift instead of flowers when they die.

Don't get me wrong, flowers are beautiful but flowers from the family only are enough.

All others could donate to a cause such as St. Joseph's House.

My point is to have our priests talk this up some time and give out special cards for this cause.

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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.