



The Housing Problem... Brazil Style

The U.S. Bishops issued a statement this year entitled *The Right to a Decent Home*. It is based on a study that shows a shortage of crisis proportions in housing for people outside the mainstream of affluence. Lately, the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation has held meetings on the subject in Rochester, Elmira and Auburn. It is agreed that the situation is bad in all three areas.

the diocese, in the interior of Brazil where Rochester Sisters of St. Joseph have their mission, is pictured here.

The series of snapshots at the top, sent by Sister Katherine M. Popowich, indicates what one youth group accomplished for a neighbor on Holy Saturday. The highly inflammable "rancho" at left was dismantled in one hour flat, Sister Katherine wrote, and a new framework erected, walled in and tiled roofed in a total of 12 hours.

Fire crackers announced completion of the new house at 6 p.m., she said.

Below, left, Sister Katherine visits Dona Valdeck at the New City of Sao Simao, where there are brick houses with floors, glass windows and tile roofs — and neither plumbing nor electricity. A single outdoor spigot, as shown here, provides water for eight families. "There are many," Sister Katherine wrote, "who will still live under plastic tents extended over sticks

down below the horizon of the city." She described this area in the words of a little boy who lives there, "down where they dump the rubbish."

In the center photo, Sister Carolyn Cardinal calls on Dona Maria, who lives in a remodelled pig pen outside Uberlandia. The palm-leaf roof is a common, serious fire hazard.

Sister Ellen Kuhl found the family at right in Cacu, sheltered by the


beams of a bridge and a screen of sticks.

Studies made in the parishes of Goias State show that more than 60 per cent of the people live under palm-leaf roofs, and 91 per cent have no inside water, Sister Katherine reported. Eight persons in two rooms is about average for the "rancho," she said, but there will be "brilliant flowers in front, or old pots with hanging plants decorating the doorway."

How it is in a distant extension of



The Church 1976



Fr. Andrew Greeley

And then, in what can only be interpreted as an attack not only on the Center for Concern but on much of the worldwide social action style of the Jesuits and many other Catholics, Navone describes the Maximalist at work:

"The Maximalist, basically an ideologue, tends to fasten on an ideology, a master-plan, as a panacea. Like most ideologues, he assumes that he and his fellow ideologues have no need for self-transformation; that world problems have not been solved because of all the people in the world who do not share his ideology.

"Maximalists consequently tend to approach world transformation by publishing endless documents, consisting of their ideology's basic commonplaces, platitudes, and banalities. They assume that the volume of such documentation and the repetition of their ideological commonplaces are the best means for transforming the world. In fact, new documents consist largely of quotations from previous documents, so that there is seldom any genuinely new thought in the new document."

The Christian Minimalist is not unaware of the big pictures, but "he does not allow such awareness to blind him to the concrete needs of his local community, needs which may seem trivial to the Maximalist. Like the Good Samaritan, the Minimalist actually does something of value for the desperate individual right in front of him. But since his approach is geared to action and not statement-issuing, his concern is about the here and now — the family, the neighborhoods, the ordinary people. Structures doubtless must be reformed, though this will not usually happen by drawing up a great master plan, but people must also be served. The Maximalists often exude contempt and hostility toward working-class Catholic families, accusing them of indifference to world solutions for world problems, of indifference to the poverty of the Third World, of ignorance with regard to the Big Picture, the "world crisis." (He might have added that such charges are not only unfounded but fly in the face of contrary empirical evidence about the attitudes of ordinary Catholics.)

The distinguished Jesuit theologian John Navone has launched a devastating attack on the style of social commitment practiced by many American Catholics in the current issue of *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*. They include particularly the ever present eager beavers of the Center for Concern — though Navone himself discreetly mentions no one.

He contrasts "Christian minimalism" with "ideological maximalism." The "Christian Minimalist" demands that the good which can and should be done must be done in the name of charity and justice. The "Christian Maximalist" is concerned with panaceas for world problems. Navone notes tartly, "Inasmuch as no one is capable of resolving world problems, (the Maximalist) is not really bound by any pressing moral obligation." Hence, (and Father Navone is too gentle to say it explicitly) the Maximalist discharges his obligations by going to meetings and issuing statements.

The Maximalist is filled with compassion for suffering and oppressed people. But his compassion is proportionate to the remoteness of the beneficiary and therefore comfortably undemanding. He is preoccupied with remote problems beyond his experience though not beyond his rhetoric. He knows what is good for India, for example, even if he can't work out anything for his own high school. He knows what is good for Latin America even if he has nothing to offer his own neighborhood. He constructs blueprints for the new international economic order but he is hell to live with.

'Little Ghost Appears'

Jane Doe's Abortion Article Draws Opposing Reaction

New York [RNS] — Numerous responses, both supportive and critical, followed the publication of a poignant article by a mother of three who had an "abortion of convenience" and then suffered pangs of sorrow and conscience.

The "Jane Doe" article, which appeared on the Op-Ed page of The New York Times on May 14, was headlined, "There! Just Wasn't Room In Our Lives Now For Another Baby." The article ended:

"It certainly does make more sense not to be having a baby right now — we say that to each other all the time. But I have this ghost now. A very little ghost that only appears when I'm seeing something beautiful like the full moon on the ocean last weekend. And the baby waves at me. And I wave at the baby. Of course, we have room, I cry to the ghost. Of course, we do."

Among the supportive responses, which appeared as letters to the editor of The Times on June 11, was a letter from Father John Vigilanti of St. Bartholomew's Church in Yonkers, N.Y.

"Let the haunting personal experience of Jane Doe's abortion be indelibly etched on the hearts and in the minds of those well-intentioned propagandists who so glibly pontificate that the human fetus is simply body tissue that can be excised at will," he said.

Father Vigilanti wrote that "Pope Paul VI, in issuing his controversial encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on July 25, 1968, correctly envisioned the depersonalization and dehumanization of the woman in a society where anticonceptive and abortifacient practices become au courant when he stated that there would be a loss of respect for the woman and that there would no longer be concern for her physical and psychological equilibrium."

Helen Barolini of Ossining, N.Y., objecting to the article, called it a "most objectionable contrivance."

She wants to ignore contraceptive devices and yet not have to deal with abortion as a remedy for unplanned pregnancy. "She wants to be a friend of the fetus and yet march for abortion rights," the Ossining woman wrote. "She wants to indulge in sentiment and yet be hard-nosed enough to know she prefers her career in publishing to that of the home and children. Who is she — a false front for some right-to-lifer? No honest person writes such stuff."

A woman from Fort Lee, N.J., whose name was withheld, said she had a "T.O.P. (Termination of Pregnancy)" which was a "wonderful experience." She wrote, "My husband picked me up at the hospital and the two of us walked out with smiles on our faces, knowing we were not going to have a fourth child. That we loved our other three and could support them

and send them to college. The fourth we couldn't. We made the right decision without any feelings of guilt."

Catherine Barnett of Washington, D.C., wrote that she was "sick of self-pitying stories by women who were never forced to have abortions. Sick of fanatic right-to-lifers who, in order to outlaw abortion, portray weak women figures who can't make honest decisions. Luckily, most women are more responsible than Jane Doe."

In a comment on the letters, Jane Doe said the varied responses did not surprise her. "Abortion decisions are the most personal one can ever make and each person facing them reacts in her own way."

"It is not black-and-white as the laws governing abortion are forced to be," she said. "Rather it is the gray area whose core touches our definition of ourselves, that produces 'little ghosts' in some, and a sense of relief to others."

Heart Saver Group Formed in Irondequoit

The newly formed Irondequoit Citizen Heart Savers Committee received its first big boost at the June 16 meeting of Eastridge Kiwanis.

Al Nicolini, president of the Kiwanis group, which first encouraged the program in the Town of Irondequoit, presented two "Resusci-Annie Manikins" to Irondequoit Councilman Anthony J. Costello, chairman of the Irondequoit Citizen Heart Savers. The "Annies" will be used to train Irondequoit residents in the technique of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), a life-sustaining first-aid procedure.

Councilman Costello, in accepting the "Annies," praised

Eastridge Kiwanis for being the first organization to recognize the importance of this program for Irondequoit citizens. He hopes that by Fall other service groups will have joined in this battle.

In assembling his committee, Costello invited Nicolini to be co-chairman and Mary Jo Hall secretary. Arnold Boehm, instructor with the Irondequoit Police Department, Gerald Yahn, Town Fire Prevention Officer, and Helen Kelly, with the Irondequoit schools, complete the committee.

To reach the 1-in-5 goal, the Citizen Heart Savers of Irondequoit committee is seeking 100 townspeople to learn to be instructors.