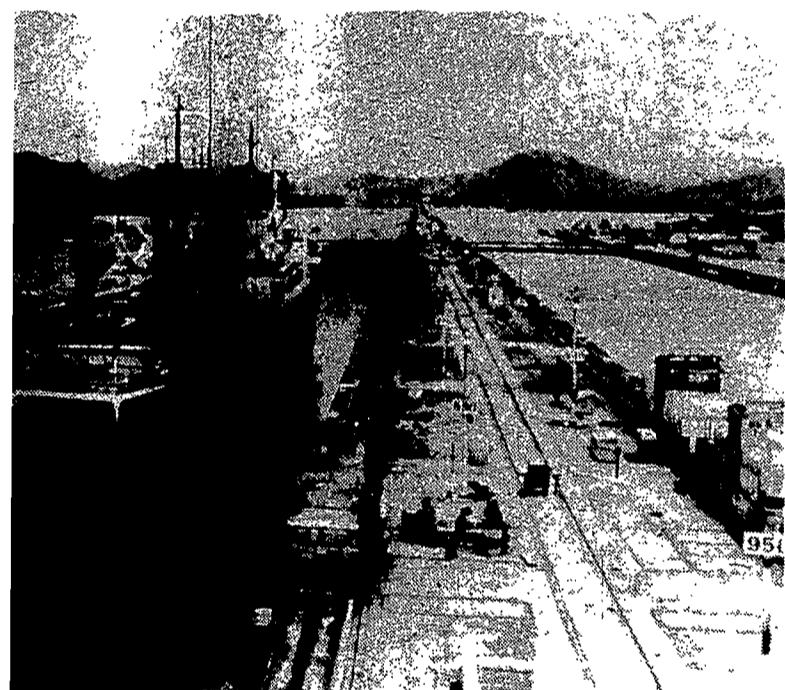


On-the-spot description of some of the factors involved in the dispute over a possible new Panama Canal treaty.

# Church in Panama



Part of the issue — the locks of the Panama Canal.

As for the future course of the Church, Archbishop McGrath talked of doing "the more basic work of creating Christian community." The fact sheet says all of the work "has overtones and projections into social needs."

The archdiocese has been short of personnel and funds for these efforts. "We are working to be self-sufficient," the archbishop said. "In 1969 we were collecting less than \$30,000 but in 1975 we had our first archdiocesan campaign and hit \$250,000. The next year \$300,000."

About 67 per cent of the archdiocesan missionary work is covered by local contributions, as contrasted with 35 per cent in 1974.

So while the canal may continue to be the focal point of life in Panama, the Church obviously has its work cut out in many spheres. As Archbishop McGrath noted, "Many of the people who come here see Latin America as the hope of the Church in the future." In Panama, the Church's people are working to turn that hope into reality.



Sister Jennifer McDonald, a Maryknoll nun from Syracuse stationed in Panama City, with Bishop Hogan and Father Joseph Sannino, a Vincentian priest from Philadelphia, and Father Oscar Brown, a Panamanian who was rector of the seminary there but who soon will be studying in the Holy Land and Rome. They are at the Miraflores Locks on the canal.

The archdiocesan center houses the offices of Education, Christian Formation, Communications, Family and Social Action.

Most of the people who work there have two or three jobs, usually in parishes. The archbishop pointed out that the archdiocesan administrator is a woman and a nun, Sister Jennifer McDonald, a Maryknoll from Syracuse.

He also noted that the Church has been doing less in the field of social action because it has often been in open conflict with the militaristic, authoritarian government. But he added that the atmosphere has shown signs of relaxing.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, who is leading the Rochester contingent, mentioned similarities in structure between the two dioceses.

"What you call vicariates, we call regions," he said. "The person in charge is a coordinator. We also develop offices on a regional level, education, for instance."

"We have much in common," Bishop Hogan noted.

**Photos by  
Anthony J. Costello**



Courier-Journal General Manager Anthony J. Costello interviews Archbishop McGrath.