

JUSPAX

Prepared by the Human Rights Task Force of the Diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission.

"People starved of freedom, deprived of their just rights and humiliated in their personal and corporate dignity will not rest until a proper balance of justice is achieved. We again profess our conviction, so often repeated, that the only solution of our racial tensions consists in conceding full citizen and human rights to all persons on the republic, not by choice on the false grounds of colour, but on the grounds of the common humanity of all men, taught by Our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is part of the text of the "Statement on the Current Situation," issued on Feb. 10, 1977, by the Catholic bishops of South Africa (i.e., South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland) at the end of their plenary meeting in Pretoria. It was inspired by and so reflects the sad conditions in that land today.

What a contrast in the official "Associated Press 1976 Almanac" description of South Africa: "a shining, pleasant land. Its broad vistas of high veldt, seacoast, desert, and mountains stun the eye. It sparkles also with diamonds, gold and the other minerals and in the high towers of Johannesburg — the financial and commercial capital."

No doubt, South Africa is by far the most economically developed country in Africa. Its resources include almost every important mineral from asbestos to uranium. Its pastures and cropland produce wheat, tobacco and dairy products. Its industry—steel mills, auto plants and every branch of manufacturing—forms now the biggest sector of the South African economy.

Its racial policy, — apartheid — however, has shadowed the bright land and the great development. And now, more than ever, a strong wind is blowing throughout the whole country: the desire to live freely. This cry for freedom, for independence, for human dignity, has recently become enormously strident. Having experienced centuries of serfdom under colonial governments, all native South Africans want to shake off their shackles. They no longer want to be dominated by others. They want to be free.

Apartheid is primarily an ideology which aims at maintaining the power of the white race. This racism has become dogma. In her book, "The Effects of Industrialization on the Race in South Africa," Sheila Van Der Horst, an expert on race relations, describes the apartheid this way: "The apartheid determines everything: the place in which everyone according to his own racial group will grow up, the school he will attend and the education he will get, the status class into which he will marry, and the place in which he must live and die."

Concretely, this means separate waiting rooms, separate benches in public

offices, separate railway carriages, separate buses, taxis, separate lives.

Whites live in cities, villages and farms. Blacks live in bidonvilles, big suburbs of the industrial cities, or in "townships" which are dormitory towns, many miles away from the place of work. They also live in homelands, reserves where blacks are forced to live by law.

In June 1976 some disturbances began in Soweto (South Western Townships) with a demonstration on the part of the youth against a system of education which the students, regarded as narrowing and limiting rather than developing.

These young people challenge the celebration of Christmas, 1977 just as they challenged the celebration of Christmas a year ago, as is reported in this editorial in the December, 1976 issue of Pro Veritate:

Each year the Church sets before us, in turn, the great mysteries of Christian revelation for our celebration. And though we isolate just one, then another, all human experience, all the teaching of the Church tells us that joy and sorrow, death and life are never far from each other — perhaps never more clearly than in this year of black revolt.

For what we celebrate at Christmas is the direct intervention of God in the life of mankind. We had already been made in the image and likeness of God. As if that were not enough, God himself became man, has lived (and lives) among us. From this great truth stems the ultimate consecration of the unity, dignity and value of all men. Not in isolation, one from another, but in community, human and divine.

Perhaps the young people of Soweto can provide a key for the rest of us. The Christmas they call for is one of mourning the death of so many and also one of rejoicing in the courage of those who have laid down their lives for their

friends. Their call is for frugal celebration to enable us to return to an essential element of Christmas — friendly sharing and not conspicuous consumption. That they see a political dimension to such non-spending is perfectly right and proper; their insight is the more correct one for they see such action, like all action, in a personal context, in a political context.

For those of our community who have suffered deeply and made great sacrifices this year, may the birth of Christ continue to be a vindication of that suffering and sacrifice. May it be for them a sign of the coming in our land of God's kingdom of love, justice, peace, truth and freedom which Christ became man to proclaim. But presumably only through the way of the Cross?

For those of us, who, through blindness, hatred, the lure of material or whatever temptation, are afraid, may this Christmas help us to accept what we fear most — the uncertainty of powerlessness. But presumably, also, only through the way of the Cross.

Conference Attended

Elmira — Two representatives of St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing recently attended a five-day conference on the promotion of quality nursing care for the aging, sponsored by the Helene Fuld Health Trust at a Nebraska hospital.

The school director, Sister Remigia McHenry and Raymond Defendorf, school audio-visual coordinator were among the 150 participants from Fuld-supported schools.

St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing has received grants of more than \$100,000 from the trust since 1972. The awards, made to nursing schools, are designated for the health, education and welfare of student nurses.

Deaths

Angelo DiNieri, Active Layman

Angelo DiNieri, an active promoter of the Daily Mass League from its inception in 1951 and a longtime president of its successor, the Mass League, died Dec. 7, 1977, at the age of 80.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated last Saturday at St. Philip Neri Church.

Mr. DiNieri, who lived in Springfield Avenue, was a salesman for the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co. for 57 years. From 1953 through 1973, he sold \$1 million worth of insurance each year, the

company said. In 1974, the Rochester Life Underwriters cited him as the community's outstanding insurance man.

Born in Palermo, Sicily, Mr. DiNieri was brought to Rochester at the age of 7. He earned a high school certificate in night classes. He was a former president of the Holy Name Society of his parish and a member also of the Knights of Columbus and the Alhambra.

Survivors include his wife, Sarah, and daughter, Jane; two sons and a daughter-in-law, Joseph, Robert and Eugene DiNieri; two sisters, Mrs. Rose Vacca and Mrs. Anna Siciliano; two brothers, Arthur and Jack, both of California, and nieces and nephews.

L.M. Miller

Lester M. Miller, formerly of Rochester, died Dec. 2, 1977, in East Haven, Conn., after a long illness. The funeral was Dec. 5 at St. Vincent de Paul Church, East Haven, with burial in that city's Greenlawn Cemetery.

Mr. Miller was born here Oct. 18, 1905, a son of the late Louis and Emma Laemmel Miller. He worked as a furrier at B. Forman Company before moving to East Haven 45 years ago.

Survivors are his wife, Gertrude Gallery Miller; a daughter, Mrs. Erwin (Miriam) Saporo of New Branford, Conn.; a son, Edward G. Miller of East Haven; a sister, Sophia Miller Page of Rochester; three grandchildren and several cousins.

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