

# Charity Is First the Church's Work

Following is the text of Pope John Paul's address at an audience granted to the meeting of the National Union of Charitable and Welfare Institutions (UNEBA).

Mr. President and all you participants in the eighth Congress of the National Union of Charitable and Welfare Institutions.

A sentiment of deep satisfaction and consolation fills my heart on meeting you this morning for the first time. You are gathered in Rome to discuss the important problems that concern your association. For nearly 30 years, it has been operating, as we know, in the field of charity, representing, safeguarding and promoting the welfare initiatives of all Catholic-inspired bodies which are striving to meet the needs of all citizens in serious conditions of moral, material and social difficulty.

Yours is a multiform, indispensable, providential work, which has no bounds, or has the immense and universal ones of human suffering. The importance, the effectiveness, and the great topical interest of your institution is well known. It acts in liaison with the Italian Episcopal Conference and avails itself of the collaboration of various Catholic organisms, present in the sector of social welfare.

Even if public welfare services are gradually covering tasks carried out for centuries by the charity of the Church, and even if modern society is trying to meet certain social security and welfare requirements in an institutional and organic form, the Church has not at all lost its irreplaceable function in the modern world.

Charity will always be necessary, as a stimulus and completion of justice itself; it will always remain for the Church the sign of its testimony and its credibility.

Be inwardly convinced of the necessity of your work, of the right and the duty you have to carry it out: a work that you will want to promote tirelessly, defending its meaning and urgency and its free exercise; improving its methods and services; committing yourselves also for a harmonious and unified

effort, so that the various welfare institutions, without losing their nature and autonomy, will be able to act in a spirit of sincere collaboration with one another and thus facilitate opportune and useful interventions of the public authorities and an adequate legislation.

Recently the Church has several times expressed her own teaching in the field of social work, also on the light of what the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, in the decree "Apostolicam Actuositatem," on the apostolate of the laity, said about the charitable actions of Christians. I consider it useful to recall to your attention some fundamental principles regarding this teaching.

In the first place, it must be affirmed that the center and unit of measurement of every system of social work is the human person, his dignity, his rights and duties; the human person who will have to receive from society the aids necessary for his development. On the juridical plane, this statement takes concrete shape in the citizen's right to assistance, a right that no modern state system can fail expressly to recognize.

It is opportune to specify that theoretical recognition of this right is not sufficient, but it is necessary that it should be made actually operative by means of adequate organization of social services, promoted and run by all those who are responsible for promoting the common good of society.

In this connection, it is useful to point out that the implementation of the common good in the field of welfare, as in any other sector of associated life, it is the joint task of the public authorities, the intermediaries, free institutions and associations, families, and individuals. All together they must collaborate in guaranteeing the citizen what is necessary to emerge from the condition of need in which he finds himself, and in order the better to realize and develop his own human personality. In this way, and with the contribution of all, that healthy harmonization of public and private initiatives will be realized, ensuring all energies the necessary space of action.

The opportune coordination of public and private welfare initiatives, so as to guarantee a harmonious system of social security can be carried out today through the modern instrument of territorial, regional and national programming; provided the latter is really democratic, in the sense that all those interested, social, public and private operators, as well as the

beneficiaries themselves, can make their free contribution, in the higher perspective of the common good.

In particular, as regards the Church, the possibility of promoting welfare initiatives is an element, and not a secondary one, of religious freedom; since works of charity, in their multiple forms, are a fundamental and original requirement of Christian faith, as is testified by the millenary history of Christianity, which also is the history of charity. In fact, the above mentioned conciliar decree on the apostolate of the laity says: "While every activity of the apostolate should find in charity its origin and driving force, certain works are of their nature a most eloquent expression of this charity; and Christ has willed that these should be signs of his messianic mission."

On the basis of this teaching, the same Council affirms in the same document that "the holy Church in all ages, is recognized by this characteristic mark of charity. While rejoicing at initiatives taken elsewhere, it claims charitable works as its own mission and right."

In the light of these principles I wish to encourage the well deserving action that your union has been carrying on for about 30 years in support of all the free welfare and charitable institutions, among which those promoted by the charitable impulse of Christians constitute a very considerable part in Italy.

Operating in this way, you not only increase, on the civil plane a wider pluralism of those free institutions which constitute the connective tissue of a really democratic society in which is realized the responsible participation of citizens with regard to the attainment of the common good, but at the same time you further the rights of man and of his freedoms, and particularly of religious freedom. In our times, the latter takes on particular value and significance, since it qualifies the very political system of a society.

I earnestly exhort you, therefore, not to grow weary, not to let yourselves be discouraged by difficulties, but to progress and advance with the same dedication, with the same courage, and with increased love for Christ and his Church.

With this confidence, I affectionately bless you, the institutions you represent, the persons who work in them and the beneficiaries, imploring the comfort of heavenly assistance for all.

## Family Agencies Combine Efforts With Single Phone Number

Three "family-help" agencies in Rochester have joined forces in an effort to make their services more readily available.

Catholic Family Center, Family Services of Rochester and the Jewish Family Service have set up a joint telephone

number, 325-3500, for people who need help but aren't sure whom to contact, according to Timothy Sullivan, chairman of the inter-agency committee.

Sullivan explained that the one phone number was initiated for persons who may

need counseling in "family disputes, marital and pre-marital problems, sexual problems, problems at school and the special problems of elderly family members."

An inter-agency release said "After a caller explains his or her problem, an appointment will be made with a counselor from one of the three agencies. The caller will be asked for a personal preference among the three. If there is no preference, the appointment will be allocated according to relative case loading at the agencies."

Sullivan stressed that this venture was "in no way a merger" but rather a pooling of services common to all three agencies.

James Maloney, Catholic Family Center director, added that this program would "raise our availability" and that it "would add to, not take away from" counseling services already provided by the three agencies.

Further plans for publicizing the 325-3500 phone number include advertisements in the local press and renting space on 240 buses in the city. The phone number has been in operation since last Friday, April 27.



MRS. MANION



QUESNELL



FATHER MARX

## NFP Conference Draws 130 Persons

More than 130 persons gathered last weekend at Rochester's Americana Inn-Towne House to examine the methods, the philosophy and the psychology of Natural Family Planning.

Billed as a Conference on Fertility Awareness and Natural Family Planning, the gathering drew three nationally known speakers on the subject: Father Paul Marx, Mrs. Bonnie Manion and John G. Quesnell.

The gathering was sponsored by area Knights of

Columbus, the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild and Natural Family Planning Education of Rochester, N.Y., Inc.

For three days, those who attended heard lectures, saw films, engaged in conversation and participated in panel discussion.

Mrs. Manion, a registered nurse and mother of nine, has taught Natural Family Planning to more than 1000 couples. She is a founder of Birthright of Oregon.

Father Marx, a Benedictine priest, is head of the Human Life Center at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn. Father Marx is a sociologist and an author of several books on the subject of anti-life developments in society.

John Quesnell is a prominent marriage and family counselor. He presently serves as an instructor at the St. Paul Seminary, and as a consultant to the tribunal of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.



## Appreciation

Some 250 people attended a teacher recognition night for the Religious Education teachers of the 17 parishes in the Northwest Region last Wednesday at Cardinal Mooney High School. The evening began with a celebrated eucharistic liturgy followed by a buffet dinner. The program was concluded with a talk by Sister Marie Brown, S.S.J., (above) on the "Sacraments" portion of the Diocesan Continuing Education for Religious Teachers (CERT) program.

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