

Farmworkers Noted this Week

A number of activities this week are centering on the farmworker.

The whole week has been proclaimed Farmworkers Week, by both Gov. Hugh Carey and Rochester Mayor Thomas Ryan.

Organizing activities locally has been the Rochester Farmworker Rights Organization (RFRO), a

support and advocacy group with headquarters in the diocesan Office of Human Development.

Events already held have been a religious service at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality and a Forum on Farm Workers' Rights also at the house.

On Friday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the Rural New York Farmworker Opportunities, Inc., will collect canned and

dry foods, to be distributed farmworkers in emergency situations. Persons wishing to donate to the drive have been asked to contact Kathy Wilcox at (716) 546-7180.

Next Tuesday, Nov. 27, a benefit concert featuring John Mooney, Meteor, and the Back Woods String Band, will be held at Scorgie's Restaurant, 150 Andrew's St., at 8 p.m. Proceeds will go to the RFRO.

The Church 1979

By Father Andrew Greeley

Still No Constructive Theory

Well gentle persons, it's official. We're going back to the Counter-reformation, back to the days of Pius XII and even Pius X. The National Catholic Reporter has said so and everyone knows how careful the National Catholic Reporter is regarding both truth and facts.

The first-string NCR Vaticanologist in residence, ex-Jesuit Peter Hebblewithe, has said that the administration of John Paul II will be an administration of "restoration." It is not especially clear from Mr. Hebblewithe's lead article in the "popo" issue of the NCR what all is going to be restored. The Latin Mass? The Tridentine Seminary? The Inquisition? The old opposition to evolution? The denunciation of all modern scripture studies? Thomism as the only tolerable philosophy for Catholics?

It is much to be feared that ex-Jesuit Hebblewithe, like most of the other writers in the issue, has been carried away by his emotions. Before American readers take the Hebblewithe analysis seriously, they may want to read his book "The Year of the Three Popes" and ponder the change in his position since he wrote that book. How can a man who was so positive about John Paul II in his book turn so negative about him in such a brief period of time? More importantly, when he was so wrong in his book, how come he is so right now?

Second-string Vatican expert, the Reverend Francis X. Murphy, is the one who spread all around the world the story of the three-ballot Luciani election only to have it completely refuted (he withdrew it in a non-apologetic one line buried in the middle of an NCR article).

Matching the Hebblewithe piece of gratuitous nastiness was another commentary by NCR's former editor, Robert Hoyt, who found a survey made in a small population showing that Catholic women are less likely to have sexual orgasms than Protestant women. Somehow Mr. Hoyt managed to blame the pope for that — though he did have the decency to admit he wasn't sure how valid the survey was. Well, the survey had no representational validity at all, and there exists a very substantial literature to show that Catholic sex lives are no better and no worse than non-Catholic sex lives — neither of them being all that spectacularly good. Mr.

Hoyt isn't really interested in serious research in human sexuality. He was interested, like most of the other contributors in the NCR symposium, in kicking the pope.

In their manic enthusiasm to resurrect the Tridentine church, the National Catholic Reporter observers showed total innocence of any careful analysis of the papal texts. It was not so much that they took the pope's words out of context as that they simply ignored his words, as well as the context. They also totally ignored the context of the pope's personality and of his own philosophical, theological and literary writings.

Some of the authors were so eager to jump on the "kick the pope" bandwagon that what they wrote was barely coherent (in this they differed from commentator Colman McCarthy whose over-blown prose is always incoherent). In particular, I was dismayed by Father Charles Curran, who doesn't

seem capable of grasping that the failure of his theological colleagues to develop a positive theory of human intimacy, which both preserves traditional values and takes into account social and demographic changes, leaves the pope and other church leaders totally unequipped to address themselves to problems of human intimacy. I guess the theologians have been too busy issuing statements and abolishing sin to prepare any positive and constructive theory that might be useful to the church.

It would be foolish to try to argue with and refute each of the manic NCR commentators point by point for we are dealing with not rational arguments but collective neurosis. Facts and truths have long since ceased to be important for the National Catholic Reporter (and editor Arthur Jones' much heralded departure can't come a moment too soon). The NCR has stopped being a newspaper and has become an occasion for collective psychotherapeutic release, a sounding board for a raw, primal scream of rage.

Stroke Club

Elmira — The next meeting of the "Stroke Club" will be Wednesday, Dec. 12 at 4 p.m. in the Doctors Meeting Room at St. Joseph's Hospital. Dr. Dominic Romeo will speak on nutrition and the stroke patient.

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