

**Poor Boy's Last Request**

**'Dear Santa, Please Bring My Sister a Doll'**

Destitute. Lonely. Sidetracked. Abused. Poor. Depressed.

Lectures aren't needed to tell what our response should be to the plight of the many people who may not be celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ this year.

The facts are encapsulated in the details of the 100 neediest cases in the diocese provided by the various agencies of Catholic Charities each year at this time.

But perhaps the recounting of the cases, all true and all from within this diocese, is a bit too cryptic. Following is a true story which did not occur within this diocese but did take place in nearby northern New York.

As did the original Christmas story, this account also concerned a young boy. He was about 8 years old when he was crossing the road in front of his home to put his letter to Santa Claus in the mailbox. He never made it. He was struck by a car and killed.

Later the letter was opened and it went something like this:

"Dear Santa, I know that things are really going bad this year and there isn't much to go around. I just wanted to let you know that I really don't need anything. But, if you can, please bring my little sister a doll. She really wants one bad. If you do, that will be my Christmas, too."

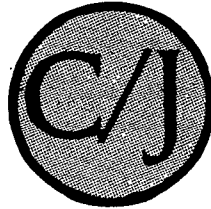
Somewhere in that letter

lies the real meaning of Christmas.

In this diocese, there are many little boys and girls who are facing an abject Christmas. And though to many they present the most touching of the deprived, they are by no means alone. Many senior citizens, people on fixed income, people who are ill, people out of work also will have bleak holidays.

Christmas is only six days off but there is still time to help by contributing to the Courier-Journal/Catholic Charities Christmas Fund.

The 100 cases listed are only representative of the many more throughout the diocese helped by your donation. Checks should be made out to the Courier-Journal/Catholic Charities



**Christmas Fund**

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**Neediest Cases . . . 21**

**Housing Foundation A Living Memorial To Archbishop Sheen**

By Michael Gröden

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen's name lives on in the diocese through the efforts of a non-profit housing organization which he began more than 11 years ago.

The Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation (BSHF), a member agency of the Office of Human Development, has provided no-interest loans for more than 100 low-income families who couldn't afford the downpayment cost of a home otherwise.

In an interview last week Georgia DeGregorio, BSHF president, said that so far this year 18 families have received loans and 4 or 5 more grants should be approved before year's end.

DeGregorio added that over the past two years housing loans have doubled from previous years, a fact she finds very encouraging.

Currently the foundation, and its committees, are investigating a merger with the Episcopal Housing Commission, working on ways to improve inner city housing and looking into the possibility of buying a mobile home in Wayne County that would provide emergency housing for people who need temporary shelter.

The merger with the Episcopal agency appears likely, DeGregorio reported. The agencies will combine assets to make more funding available. Currently BSHF assets amount to some \$90,000.

DeGregorio said that one of the most important

aspects of the merger is the addition of Episcopal Commission's expertise on providing technical assistance for other non-profit housing groups which the Sheen Foundation currently helps. The Episcopal Commission has been involved in this work for more than 10 years, she said.

The Advocacy Committee is now working with a number of bankers and community organizations in the area to find ways to improve life in the inner city through rehabilitation of homes and seeking funds for the improvements.

The purchase of the mobile home is a joint project with the Martin Luther King Fund, a Community Chest organization. The home will be used to provide temporary shelter for those who need it most, for example a family whose home had burned down.

Although Bishop Sheen retired as Ordinary in 1969, DeGregorio said that he maintained a keen interest in the Foundation's work. Foundation members have received regular correspondence from the archbishop in regard to their work, including one Mrs. DeGregorio received this year.

Bishop Sheen's letter thanked the foundation membership for their work and compared the work done by the group to finding shelter for people when there was no room at the inn, something one innkeeper did for a family from Nazareth nearly 2,000 years ago, DeGregorio said.

**Vatican Hails 'That Great Lady' Mother Teresa**

Vatican City (RNS)—Hailing Mother Teresa of Calcutta, as "that great lady who has astonished the world by her work for the poorest of the poor," Vatican Radio declared:

"Perhaps never before has the Nobel Peace Prize been given to someone who so strongly shares in her life the real authentic basis of peace — the love of one's fellow man."

Mother Teresa was interviewed by Vatican Radio on

her way to Oslo, Norway, where she was to receive the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize.

The interviewer said that 30 years ago Mother Teresa was an "unknown nun." And now, he added, "You are a world figure and everyone is talking about Mother Teresa. What are your feelings with regard to these changes in the 30 years?"

Mother Teresa replied: "For me there has been no change. But what is very

beautiful is the fact that people now have come to know the poor; they have come to be aware of their existence.

"In the past, the ordinary people did not know that there were people dying of hunger, that there were people naked, that they were suffering. But now, knowing me and my sisters, they cannot say, "I don't know."

"I think this Nobel Peace Prize has created a greater knowledge of the poor. That is why I am accepting it, but

personally I don't need it and I am unworthy of it. But because by giving it to me they have recognized the work of love, the work of peace, I shall accept it and give it to the poorest — our brothers and sisters."

The \$190,000 peace prize stipend given Mother Teresa will be used to assist the 160,000 sick people, the 175,000 babies, the 47,000 lepers, the 2,000 orphans and the 34,000 helpless and dying being cared for by Mother Teresa and the 1,700 nuns of her order, Vatican Radio said.



**Fractured Finial Finally Fixed**

It only took five months to find someone to do the work and get it fixed, but the finial that broke off Sacred Heart Cathedral when hit by lightning on July 24 has finally been replaced. Father Thomas Wheeland explained that it was very difficult to find a stonemason that could handle the job of recreating the five-foot, two-ton stone down to the finest detail. With the aid of the Genesee Building and Waterproofing Company, the Cathedral contracted the Adam Ross Cut Stone Company of Albany to do the work and the new finial was remounted last Thursday morning. Right, children in a fifth and sixth grade reading class at the Cathedral school take a break from their rigors to observe the stone-raising.

**Holy Innocents Day**

The Feast of the Holy Innocents, the Church's commemoration of the slaughter, at the orders of King Herod of Judea, of male children at the time of the birth of Christ, and, in the past few years, a commemoration of lives lost through abortion, will be celebrated at St. Nicholas Church, 20 Leo St. on Dec. 28.

Father Salem Faddoul, well known in the Rochester area for his support of the pro-life movement, will

preside at the liturgy, which will be celebrated according to the Byzantine Rite of St. John Chrysostom.

According to Margaret Finucane of the board of Rochester Area Right to Life, the observance has the support of the local pro-life movement.

Father Faddoul is pastor of the Melkite Rite Church, which, although it does not use the Roman liturgical forms, is nevertheless in union with Rome.

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