

Chile Holy Week With Rochester Sisters of Mercy

By Frederic J. Kelly, SJ
Special to the Courier-Journal

Holy Week this year will carry special memories for me. Holy Week of 1979 was spent in Santiago, Chile, with the Sisters of Mercy from Rochester.

I was at that time on sabbatical leave from Canisius College in Buffalo to study new developments in pastoral ministry in Latin America. The Sisters of Mercy in Chile were a great help and inspiration.

Two days after my arrival from Bolivia, where I had met several Maryknollers from Rochester and Buffalo, I made my first contact with the Mercy Sisters. I had attended a pastoral meeting of about 60 sisters and priests, both Chileans and foreign missionaries from 10 countries, who were discussing ways of implementing the "preferential option for the poor" which the Latin American Church had promulgated at the recently completed CELAM III Conference in Puebla, Mexico. I had attended Puebla as an accredited correspondent. I was delighted to be at a meeting which showed the seriousness of the Chilean Church in carrying out the Puebla program.

After the meeting, I met Sister Janet Korn. She invited me to visit the parish of Santa Ana where she and Sisters Kay Schwenzer and Janet Wahl were members of the pastoral team. Sister Janet (Joanie) also gave me the address of Sister Jane Kenrick at her convent in San Luis parish where she is part of the pastoral team along with Sisters Janet Caufield and Ana Gleason from Australia.

A call to Sister Jane on the Wednesday of Holy Week led to an invitation to San Luis that evening. Sisters Jane, Janet and Ana collaborate with several Columban Fathers, Irish and American, and local lay leaders in a team ministry which has the care of more than 50,000 persons in that sprawling slum parish. The majority of the adults are either unemployed or underemployed due to the present economic conditions. The huge parish is divided into seven sectors, each with a small chapel.

I met Sister Jane at about 5:30 p.m. and after a quick sandwich, we walked about 15 blocks to a chapel where she was to meet with lay leaders who were setting up the second half of a two-year program of instruction of parents who were instructing their own children for First Communion. About 30 parents were in attendance for the two-hour session. It was interesting to see how Sister Jane encouraged the participants to form their own plans. The meeting concluded with a fervent prayer meeting after which Holy Week plans were confirmed.

On the way back to the convent we dropped in on another group in their small chapel, completing a similar meeting. Later that night the entire parish team of laypersons, sisters and priests met to plan for cooperation with the Vicariate of Solidarity, the diocesan organization that oversees a very extensive children's feeding program, self-help projects and cooperative ventures. Sister Jane is directly involved in a cooperative laundry which provides employment for several mothers as well as inexpensive laundry service for neighborhood families.

On Good Friday afternoon, I had a delightful visit with Sisters Janet Korn and Kay Schwenzer at Santa Ana, another parish with more than 50,000 persons, in this case with only one priest. Sister Janet Wahl was at that time on home-leave, but was due back within the week. Sister was in charge of the traditional Good Friday services, which were concluded with a Passion Play put on by neighborhood youngsters. A late supper and talk on a great variety of topics on the church situation in Chile concluded the evening.

One familiar sight was the spread of several copies of the Courier-Journal on the small coffee table in the diminutive convent. Though I didn't have time to peruse any of them the Sisters filled me in on what was happening in the Rochester diocese.

During the next few weeks in Chile I was involved with interviewing the delegates who had actually been to Puebla to see how the Chilean Church would implement the directives for integral human liberation suggested in the final conference document. I did, however, have one last occasion to visit the Mercy Sisters to discuss their own plans and learn from them how the "grass roots" Church in Chile is facing the future.

Dr. Gerster UR Speaker

Dr. Carolyn Gerster, president of the National Right to Life Committee, will speak on "Whatever Happened to Medical Ethics?" at

the University of Rochester at 8 p.m., Wednesday, April 2 in Hubbell Auditorium, Hutchison Hall. The talk is open to the public free.

Coalition Opposes Plant Closings

A coalition of community and labor groups is calling for state legislation to require a company to notify its union and the State Department of Commerce a year before it plans to close its plant. The notification would allow the community enough time to develop an alternative plan to closing and prevent the loss of

jobs and income in the community.

The coalition made known its position at a press conference Friday in conjunction with the layoff of 160 workers at Gerber Foods.

New York State has lost 500,000 jobs in the last ten

years because of plant closings, according to a Community/Labor Coalition on Plant Closings release issued at the press conference. Rochester lost 24,000 jobs, 21 percent of its manufacturing base, between 1968 and 1972. Eight hundred people lost jobs last summer when a Rochester clothing company went out of business, the release said. Last Friday 110 Gerber Foods employees lost their jobs and 50 more were put on indefinite layoff.

notification, the bill requires a "comprehensive economic impact statement, establishes a ratio for severance pay, and provides technical and financial assistance to employees if they wish to purchase the firm," according to the release.

"We must speak for those who are powerless to speak for themselves," said Timothy McGowan, Office of Human Development staff member.

The Community/Labor Coalition on Plant Closings consists of: the Office of Human Development, Metro Act, the United Auto Workers, the Spanish Apostolate Office and Council of the Catholic Diocese, the Ibero-American Action League, North East Area Development, a neighborhood organization and United Church Ministries.

Demographers Seek Ways To Improve Census

Washington (RNS) — The U.S. Census Bureau is under increasing pressure to use demographic estimates to adjust the 1980 raw census totals, so that groups known to be undercounted in the past will be more accurately included.

Many demographers believe that techniques can be devised to provide estimated population figures that in many ways may be more accurate than the actual head counts. However, they acknowledge that the estimates are still guesses and subject to errors.

Census Bureau calculations show that 2.5 percent of the nation's population or 5.3 million people were missed in the 1970 census. The undercount varied from group to group, ranging from 1.9 percent of whites to 7.7 percent of blacks.

Census officials and many demographers are cautious

about any hasty changes in the method of obtaining final census totals. They don't believe the Constitution permits reapportionment of Congress on estimates rather than the real count.

In addition to the reapportionment of Congress, the census figures will be used to reapportion state legislatures, city councils, federal funds, and for numerous other purposes.

Emotional and social problems, including marital conflict, alcoholism, child abuse, and suicide, increase in communities where plants have closed, according to the Community/Labor Coalition on Plant Closings release.

The legislation the coalition is supporting is in the New York State Assembly and Senate commerce committees. Besides requiring prior

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Convention On Music Scheduled

The annual New York State Regional Convention of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians is scheduled for May 7 to 9. The theme of the convention, which will meet at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, will be "Musician Transposed; Parish Transformed."

Workshops will be offered on organ, choir, children's choir, folk, cantor, liturgy team, and religious education. Morning Praise and Evensong will be celebrated, and Albany's Bishop Hubbard will celebrate a closing Mass.

The convention is open to all interested in current trends in liturgical music and liturgy planning.

Charismatic Mass

Mt. Morris — The Family of God prayer group at St. Joseph Church, Perry, invites area people to a Charismatic Mass at 8 p.m. Monday, April 7.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.

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