

Catholic, Episcopal Housing Agencies Merge

Bishop Robert R. Spears, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, and Bishop Matthew H. Clark, bishop of the Catholic diocese, announced the merger of their diocesan housing organizations at a press conference held Monday morning.

A policy statement, issued by both bishops, said "We are delighted to accept the responsibility of becoming the trustee members of the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, Inc. We feel this represents a significant step forward in helping the Roman Catholic Church and the

Episcopal Church to use their time, their treasure and their talents to service the needs of people for housing. The ecumenism involved in the effort was achieved through a shared desire to help and a realization that by pooling our human and fiscal resources we could quite simply do better work."

The Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation was founded in 1968 by the late Fulton Sheen, former bishop of Rochester. A non-profit organization, the agency helped families find homes by providing grants for down payments. The grants were

paid back without interest over a gradual time period.

The Episcopal Diocese of Rochester Housing Commission began operation in 1971. The agency has provided "technical assistance guidelines, the training of staff in how to package loans and mortgages, and support in comprehensive planning and implementation of housing and community development," according to an information sheet provided.

The housing commission concentrated its efforts on the rural areas of the diocese.

The reason for the merger,

according to press conference moderator Victor Hadeed, was to undertake joint efforts, technical and financial, in support of specific housing programs that neither organization would be capable of undertaking alone.

The merger was formally ratified at the Sheen Foundation annual meeting held later that day.

The bishops' policy statement also pledged "continuing support" from the two dioceses and stressed the equal involvement of each. "We want to make it clear, however, that we intend by

this action to create a housing foundation that is both Catholic and Episcopal. We intend to create a joint ex-

pression of our commitment to housing as denominations. May God help us in our work," the statement said.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Disciples Bring Good News

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 10:1-12, 17-20. (R1) Is. 66:10-14. (R2) Gal. 6:14-18.

An important aspect of discipleship is mission.

Mission in the past had been understood solely in geographic terms. The world was split in two: one part in which the gospel had been preached and another in which it had not. To this other part, professional missionaries have been armed out supported by an annual and laudable mission collection.

Today we speak of evangelization. Perhaps the word reflects our attempt to reassess what is meant by mission. Evangelization is mission understood not in the geographic sense only, but as a call to all the baptized to share the Good News about Christ.

In his letter on evangelization, Paul VI wrote: "For the Church evangelizing means bringing the Good News to all strata of humanity and through its influence to make it new. The purpose of evangelization is interior change."

Not too long ago someone asked me why I was so opposed to boycotts of certain industries and to the picketing of certain institutions. I said I felt these were Marxist tactics, not gospel tactics. Marxism addresses itself to structures, not to people — it seeks revolution. The Gospel, on the other hand, addresses itself to persons, not to structures — it seeks conversion, renewal!

"The Church evangelizes," wrote Paul VI, "when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the Message she proclaims, both the personal and collective conscience of people."

The June issue of the magazine Columbia is devoted exclusively to evangelization. The articles provide a wealth of ideas and abundant inspiration on this subject.

Here are some of the principal thoughts expressed:

First, evangelization requires preparation. The evangelist must be filled with faith. Must be grateful for it. In fact so grateful as to want to share it with others as his way of saying thank you to God for it.

Besides burning zeal, the evangelist needs un-

derstanding of the Good News about Christ. He must understand Christ and His teachings and know how to describe them accurately.

Thirdly, the evangelist must realize that the most effective technique for "selling" Christ is one's way of life. Practice is more compelling than preaching. Example is more convincing than exhortation. The disciples of Jesus must live in such a way as to show the world that being His disciple is a realistic, worthwhile and relevant possibility. If we live convinced that all men and women matter, are children of the same Father, and therefore promote peace and justice and root out exploitation and poverty and immorality, then we shall upset the upsetters — those who exploit people and those who prate that topless dancing, godless education, pornography and abortion are OK.

Living this way will inevitably raise questions: Why do you do that? What's your motivation? What is the source of your power? What makes you tick? At such a moment it is time to put the cards on the table and answer: Jesus Christ!

When this concept of evangelization catches hold, we shall once again see "Satan fall from the sky like lightning."

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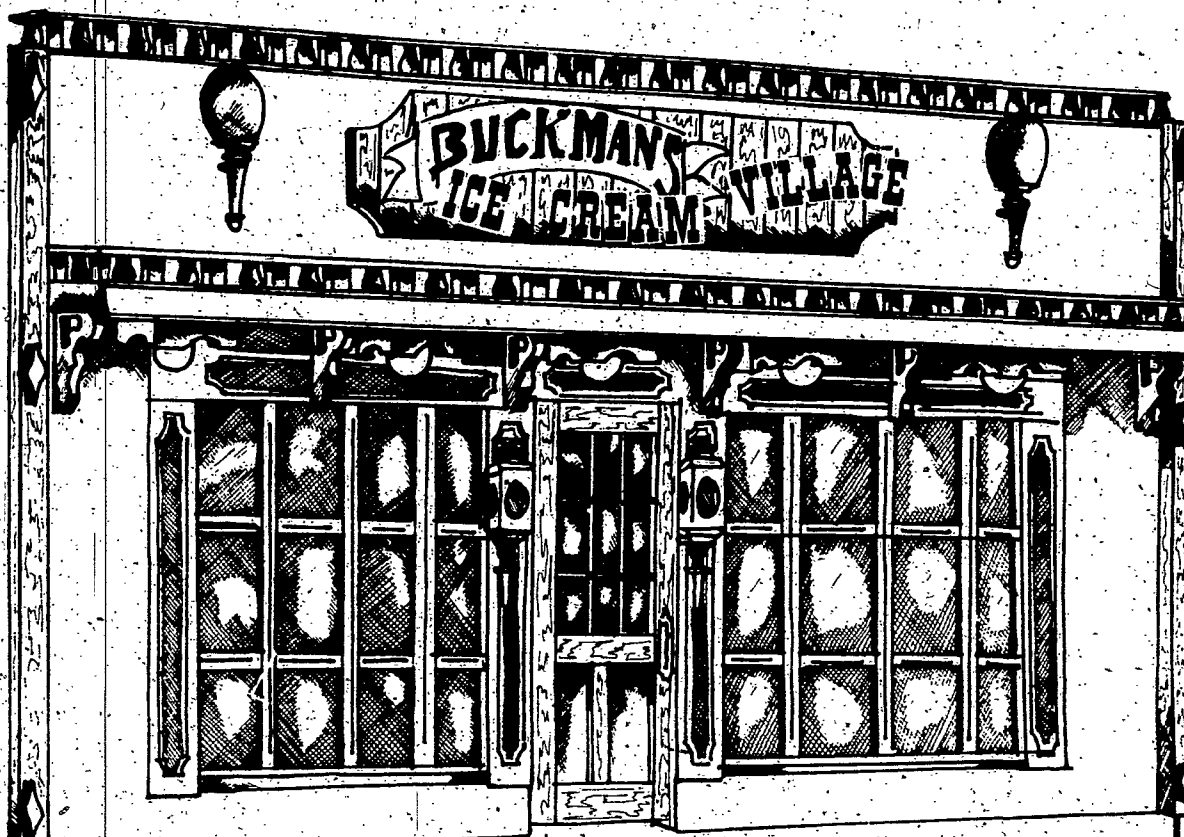
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