

**'I expected disease and death,
I'm used to the dynamics of that.
But (this was) beyond human suffering.'**

Eyewitness to Tragedy

By John Dash

Among the many remarkable memories Sister Nancy Ventura has of Camp Khao I Dang is one of flies. Flies so large and so prevalent that as they clustered on an infant's intravenous feeding tube, they looked like nothing less than a cat's thick tail.

Life in Khao I Dang was the topic last week as two area people reminisced over lunch on their work with refugees from the war in Cambodia. Khao I Dang, a settlement in Thailand on the Cambodian border for more than 120,000 refugees was the stamping grounds this past spring and summer for Sister Ventura, a Daughter of Charity at St. Mary's Hospital, and Jerome Vaiana, a local promoter of the Cambodia Emergency Relief Fund.

That fund, the official

project of the Diocesan Missions Office, funnels donations to Catholic Relief Services which in turn buys food, medicines and other necessities for the refugees.

Father Joseph Reinhart, chief of the office, said last week that, to date, dioceses have contributed \$125,000 to the relief effort.

Sister Ventura worked as a pediatrics nurse at Khao I Dang, specializing in intensive feeding and care. She said that it frequently happened when she cared for an infant she found herself "treating the whole family" as well.

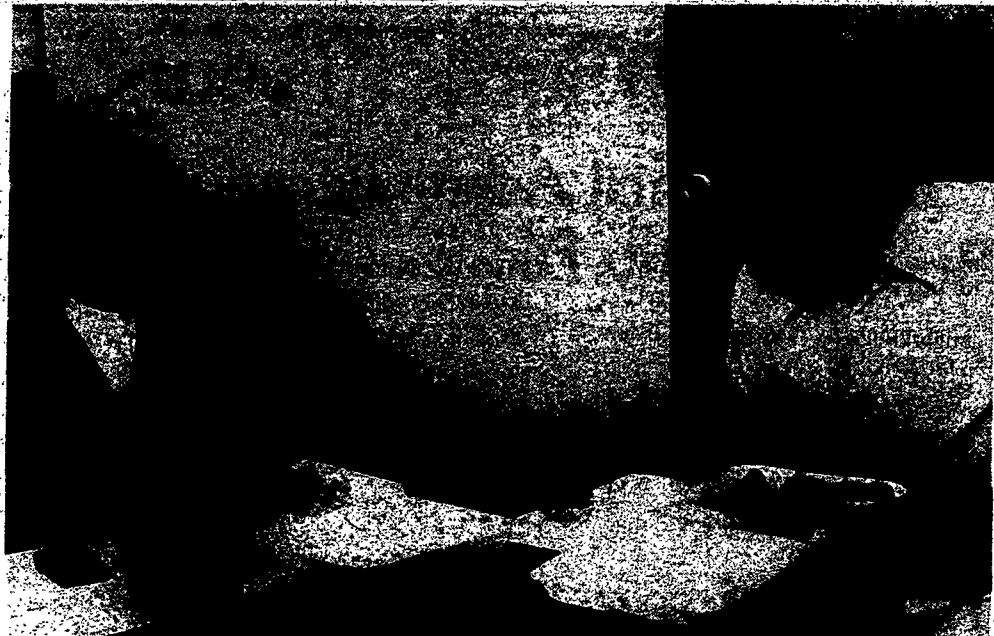
Vaiana, on his second trip to Thailand to help the refugees, worked with unaccompanied minors. In the one camp, he said, there were more than 1,000 such.

Khao I Dang is a place of

great tragedy. Sister Nancy said, "I expected disease and death. I'm used to the dynamics of that. But when I got there the suffering was beyond any human suffering. There were people abandoned, persecuted, who had seen their families destroyed — people without even a hope."

In such a situation, CRS, the largest private agency working to better the refugees, lot in Khao I Dang, has established medical facilities in the camp and has "done a lot for the environment," Sister Ventura said. "Whether it was IVs, medicines, ointments and bandages — we never wanted for those things."

CRS even "raised the roof" of one medical building, she said, and has provided insecticides and disinfectants to help keep it clean.



A luncheon reunion between Sister Ventura and Vaiana.

But much more needs to be done, they both agreed.

Vaiana has expanded his activities to promoting the Catholic Family Center's Refugee Resettlement Office. That agency, he said last week, is assisting him in the sponsorship of a child from Khao I Dang.

Sister Ventura said that, besides financial con-

tributions, dioceses can help simply by writing U.S. legislators, urging them to loosen immigration quotas and to ease the way for greater numbers of refugees to enter the country.

The present immigration quota, Vaiana said, stands at 1,400 Cambodians a month. "And that may sound like a lot; but there are 120,000 refugees in Khao I Dang

alone."

Dioceses interested in sponsorship of refugees were asked to contact Catholic Family Center Refugee Resettlement, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

Persons wishing to contribute to the Cambodia Emergency Relief Fund were asked to send donations to 123 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.



Photo Courtesy Greece Post

Our Lady of the Highways statue is rededicated Sept. 12 by, from left, Father John Gagnier, assistant pastor; Father Joseph D'Aurizio, pastor, and Father Robert O'Neill, tribunal judge.

'Highways' Statue Rededicated

The Parish Council at St. John the Evangelist in Greece began an annual workshop with an unusual ceremony on Sept. 12. A statue of Mary and the Christ Child, which had

been moved recently to a site near the new church and recently rebuilt rectory, was rededicated.

The statue, known as "Our

Lady of the Highways," was given to the parish in 1955 by Msgr. James McAuffiff who retired this year as pastor of Old St. Mary's in Rochester.

Originally dedicated by Bishop James E. Kearney and Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen on Sept. 12, 1943, the concrete statue occupied a shrine at Old St. Mary's until its replacement in 1955 by a granite copy.

The devotion to Our Lady of the Highways asks Mary's intercession for travelers. It recalls Mary's journeys to her cousin Elizabeth, to Bethlehem, the flight into Egypt and her journey to Calvary with Jesus and St. John the Evangelist.

Through the Historical Preservation Committee and various parish donors, the statue was restored and moved by Rochester Monument Co. Committee members were Carolyn Kerhaert, Gerald Corcimiglia, Dolores DeConinck and Father John Gagnier.

Jay Walsh is grand knight of the council. Ray Pfeifer is chairman of the Oktoberfest.

Oktoberfest Set By Webster K of C

A 10,000 square foot tent, Willie Adam's German Band, Bavarian Folk Dancers, German foods, beer and dancing all highlight the festivities of Oktoberfest

Karnival this weekend.

The event is sponsored by the Webster Council Knights of Columbus and will open at 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 26 and 27, in the council's tent on Barrett Drive in Webster.

Friends-Picnic

Friends, Inc., the non-profit social organization for singles ages 18-35, sponsored by St. Charles Borromeo Church, will hold a house "picnic," Saturday, Sept. 27, beginning at 1 p.m. at 111 Shumway Rd., Brockport. Entry fee is \$2 and a dish to pass. Reservations and directions are available by calling Al Phillips 1-637-8387.

Insights in Liturgy

Prayer, Presence, And Presider

By Sister Nancy Burkin, SSJ

"A presider at a Eucharistic liturgy is a leader of prayer." Not many will argue with that statement but no doubt, there are as many interpretations of it as there are presiders.

A common thread in any interpretation, though it might be called by various names, is presence. Those who preside at worship must be present to themselves, to the community, to other ministers, to the Word and to the Father to whom the praise of all the assembly is directed.

Obviously, a presence that is simply a body in a space is far from adequate. Father Eugene Walsh says, "Personal presence means nothing more — and nothing less — than paying attention to." It means being entirely in tune with the present moment, fully alive to all that it offers. Presence is a mutual sharing of myself, of attitudes, insights and ideals. In a sharing of presence, no one should feel alone.

Presence cannot be static, uninviting, or closed. Presence invites presence — it is open, alive and enticing.

A presider at Eucharist then, should be present to himself, aware of his body and comfortable with it. Hand movements, eye contacts, facial expressions and the act of walking are acts that can gather the assembly together or cause each to go his/her separate way. Rigid, non-dynamic, lifeless gestures do not invite presence or enable anyone to pray. At the same time, nonchalant, careless, half-hearted gestures are just as damaging to the spirit of prayer that ought to be present in a liturgical

celebration. A presider who is aware of the power of the statements he makes without saying a word, is well on the way to inviting presence. It is through his comfortableness with self, this presence to self, both inviting and dynamic yet real, that presence to other ministers, to the community and to the Word are best expressed.

Other ministers, like the presider, are leaders of prayer. When the assembled people join in sung prayer, all, the presider included, should be present to the song leader and to the prayer that is sung. Music is part of the celebration, not something we tolerate or somewhat impatiently "wait out" until completion. When the assembly is expected to acclaim or respond in song, the presider's responsibility to do so is as great.

Presence to the Word, as proclaimed by the lector, means "paying attention to" the Word, to quote Father Eugene Walsh again. It means taken in, gathered up in the Word as it is read. The Word becomes, or should become, a living Word when it comes forth from the being of the lector. This living word is what invites presence: the printed word in a missalette

does little to invite presence nor should it. Presiders, as well as all the assembly, should be alert to or in our present context, present to the living Word as it is proclaimed by the lector.

The Eucharistic Prayer is the "word" which gives meaning to the sacramental ritual. It is at the very heart core of the Mass. The Eucharistic Prayer is directed to the Father. It is a proclamation of praise, a statement of thanksgiving, a climatic word calling forth a strong, assenting "Amen." None of the Eucharistic Prayer is directed to the people; but each one gathers the community around bread and wine in highest praise to the Father. Gestures are important — presence in prayer, is essential.

It is not an easy task to stand as it were naked before and with the community in prayer and be comfortable in that stance. It is not easy but that is what being a presider calls for in those who serve the community in that role. Presence begets presence. An all-embracing "The Lord be with you" does more for gathering the community than cajoling or urging. As we invite others to presence, we begin to experience the now and the not yet of the kingdom. That is what liturgy is about.

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