

On Vacation

Sarah Child is on vacation this week. Her column will return on Wednesday, May 6.

Poor

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spending in light of the proposed cuts in social programs. "We need a solid defense but it will do us no good if it protects a community that is negligent toward fundamental human needs," Bishop Clark said.

The proposed Reagan budget calls for a 25 percent reduction in funds earmarked for social services. At the same time the budget has made a significant increase in federal funds for the armed forces. Many social agency leaders are questioning the increased military spending at the cost of social programs which help the poor and near poor.

A representative from the Regional Council on Aging said that the Reagan budget "is proposing what sounds like a policy of military offense instead of military defense."

He added that "when President Reagan tells us the truly needy will not be affected, he is lying to us. The elderly will be severely affected."

Debate on the Reagan budget is scheduled to begin after the Congress' Easter Recess.

More on Reagan Budget, page 7.

Testimony

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modest. The cut would be \$171 per month for this family. I have spent six hours in public hearings in the past months listening to the struggles of people on welfare. They spoke of the cost of medicine, clothing, boots, and food. I could hear the tension of their lives in their voices and see it on their faces. They wanted to get off welfare. Now low paying employment will leave them in the same circumstances. Please do not make decisions without fully understanding their impact on our families, our children, and our communities. A great nation is one which enhances the dignity and sense of self-worth of each citizen.

I speak on behalf of a religious tradition which is very old and yet fresh and alive in every age. I would urge you to consider three fundamental values. First, every person is created in the image and likeness of God and thus endowed with a dignity and value which is inalienable. Secondly, our tradition urges us to exercise a special care and reverence for the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Thirdly, a society which is just will exercise a strong sense of equity and fairness — all persons should share in the hardships and rewards of that society.

How does our society promote the dignity of the human person? There are certain basic needs which we all have in life: the need for adequate nutrition, shelter, medical care, opportunities for work, the ability to raise a family, and if there is a severe handicap or breakdown, some assistance from the community. A community and a nation are judged by their response to the fundamental human needs.

Because of the conscious bias of our tradition for the poor, I would like to examine very briefly the "safety net" which is proposed by the President to serve the needs of the poor. Medicare, Social Security, and Veteran's benefits make up 94 percent of the dollars that are included in the "safety net." Not one of these three programs is specifically targeted to the poor. No means test is required. The remaining four programs, School Lunch, Headstart, Supplemental Security Income, and Summer Youth Jobs are targeted. Taking the whole safety net into account 80 percent of the dollars go to people above the poverty line (\$7500 for an urban family of four) and a full 50 percent goes to people whose income is more than double the poverty line. It is obvious to me that the safety net is not designed to catch the poor.

Contrast the security of the safety net with the attack on the poor in the fundamental areas of need: Food — 400,000 households will experience a cut in food stamps; Shelter — the development of public housing will be cut in half and the renter's share of payment in subsidized housing will be raised from 25 to 30 percent of their income; Medical care — estimates currently are the \$350,000,000 will be cut from New York State Medicaid benefits; Jobs — 27,500 CETA jobs will be eliminated in New York State, 95 percent of which were held by the economically disadvantaged; Family — nearly a billion dollars of help will be withdrawn from the

Rehabilitation Is No Charity

By Martin Toombs

Elmira — Some look upon special programs for the disabled as unavoidable, expensive charity.

But it is not unusual for such programs to more than pay back their investment.



An example is the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) operated by New York State, which helps disabled persons find work. The assistance can include vocational training, college, on-the-job training, and help with equipment needed to work, such as wheelchairs.

The entire process can be a profitable one, for the client and the state. While the client is helped to get permanent employment, studies have shown that for \$1 spent by OVR, \$7 is returned through the successful employment of the handicapped person.

OVR offices in several locations each cover surrounding counties. The Rochester diocese is served by offices in Binghamton, Elmira, Rochester and Syracuse.

The Elmira office currently has 1,350 clients from Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Tompkins counties, according to Greg Jackson, a counselor and placement specialist at the office. Serving the disabled population are ten counselors and two senior counselors.

The clients' problems are so diverse that Jackson could identify only two major groups. About 20 percent are mentally retarded; another 26 percent have various orthopedic problems. The remaining 55 percent are classified "other."

There is one disability which the office does not handle. The various Associations for the Blind take care of those who have eyesight problems.

Eligibility for OVR programs is based on three criteria, Jackson explained. The perspective client must have a disability; that disability must limit employment opportunities; and there must be a reasonable expectation that the person is employable. Someone in constant pain, unable to do any work, for example, would not be a candidate for the program.

A new client is first evaluated by a doctor, and then receives job counseling. The next step depends on those results; it may be going to college, to vocational training, an on-the-job program, or a position in a sheltered workshop.

Some OVR services are based on ability to pay. Jackson pointed out that job counseling and on-the-job training are available to all.

Jackson described his work as a placement specialist as informing local employers about the "able disabled." To accomplish that, he said, he has to refute several myths common among employers about employing the handicapped.

The first myth, he said, is that a handicapped employee will increase workmen's compensation rates. Jackson said that the rates are based on work environment, not the employees; also, studies have shown that disabled workers are as safe or safer than other workers.

A similar fear that insurance rates would increase also is unfounded, Jackson stated. An assumption that a disabled worker would be late for work is common, he said, although "disabled people have proven to be dependable."

Jackson pointed out that in some positions, the disabled can be more dependable than others. He cited cases where mentally retarded persons have found jobs which would be boring to others. But for the mentally retarded, such positions provide self-worth and security they often stay many years in the same job.

He also has to counter the "myth of the right job" which he said is the assumption that each disabled person is able to do only one type of job. Increasing technology, for example, is increasing the opportunities for the handicapped.

EUCCHARISTIC LEAGUE

The Peoples Eucharistic League will celebrate a Holy Hour at 7:30 p.m., Monday, May 11, at Our Lady of Mercy Motherhouse on Blossom Road.



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Words of Our Lady

Do you wish to offer up to God all the sufferings he desires to send you in reparation for the sins by which he is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners.

PRAY THE ROSARY DEVOUTLY EVERY DAY

- LEARN • HEED
- PRACTICE and SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA
- GOD WILLS IT
- OUR LADY WISHES IT
- OUR HOLY FATHER ASKS IT
- HELP RETURN THE WORLD TO JESUS THROUGH MARY

To help spread Our Lady's message in this series of Her quotations, please send contributions to:

Mary Kelly
c/o Blue Army
7 Harwood Lane
East Rochester, NY 14445

Sonia Johnson To Speak Here

Sonia Johnson, ex-communicated from the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) for her promotion of the Equal Rights Amendment, will be present for a program on "The Dilemma of Conscience and Religious Teaching," at 5 p.m. Monday, May 4, at Our Lady of Mercy High School.

Women in the Church and a number of groups of women religious.

The agenda includes a prayer service, a potluck supper, a lecture and a panel discussion.

Further information on the event is available by calling Florence Phillips, (716) 467-5476.

The program is being presented by the Rochester Regional Task Force on

PILGRIMAGE

A bus pilgrimage to the Washington, N.J., headquarters of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima and to shrines in Allentown and Hazelton, Pa., will depart Rochester May 12. Further information on the event is available by calling Mrs. Mary Kelly, the pilgrimage organizer, (716) 586-1664.

CONTEMPLATION

Sister Rita Anne Houlihan, a Religious of the Cenacle, will lead a contemplative-style retreat at the Cenacle Renewal Center, 693 East Ave., May 15 to 17. The silent retreat will be based on Scripture, with suggestions on its use in deepening one's prayer. Reservations and further information are available at the Cenacle Ministry Office (716) 271-8755.

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