

Charities Passes Resolution Opposing Reagan Budget

By Michael Groden

The Catholic Charities Board of Directors, after hearing gloomy reports from affiliated agencies on the proposed budget cuts, unanimously last week adopted a resolution which described the cuts as being, "in conflict with Church teaching, social thought and Catholic Charities' essential value of protecting the poor, the marginal, the needy."

The resolution also calls for continued efforts to educate people on the consequences of the Reagan cuts on social services.

If passed, the cuts will eliminate "food stamps in 400,000 households ... eliminate 300,000 jobs for the economically disadvantaged ... shrink thousands of single parent families' benefits ... reduce low income housing ... eliminate equal access to legal services by the poor ... and encourage health service providers not to serve the poor," the resolution said.

The budget cuts, as proposed by the Reagan administration, call for a 25 percent cutback in federal aid to states for social programs. The funds would

also be made in "block grants." Under each grant (health services, preventive services, social services and emergency and energy assistance) there may be as many as 40 different programs competing for the same money, according to a Charities' report.

Charities' agency directors who testified were in agreement that someone has to lose in that situation.

James Maloney, director of the Catholic Family Center (CFC), told board members that the reduction in federal aid could cost his agency "marginally, \$300,000 in next year's budget."

He said that this money could not realistically be made up and that services CFC provides (adoption, refugee resettlement, protective care, family

counseling, etc.) would have to be curtailed.

"(budget cuts) will jar our entire program," Maloney said.

Joseph Weider, director of Kinship Homes, a group home program for adolescent boys and girls, projected that \$24,000 in funding would be taken away. This reduction comes at a time when the Kinship program is being asked to provide more, and more services, Weider added.

Weider said that in order to provide these services he has asked United Way, who also provides funding, for "100 percent more than we received from them last year." In light of these federal budget cuts, he said, that request is going to be "very hard to sell."

Sister Judith McKay, SSJ,

director of St. Joseph's Villa, echoed the previous testimony. She estimated that the Villa, which provides care and treatment for dependant, neglected, delinquent and emotionally disturbed children, would have to close "three out of the five operating cottages."

Following the testimony board members briefly discussed the proposed resolution, and voted.

The resolution says, in part, that Catholic Charities will "seek to educate the people of the diocese on the effect of the reductions," and that Charities will conduct these educative programs in concert with its affiliates. Charities will work in cooperation with "local, state and national organizations on "advocacy activities that protect the poor from the effects of the cuts."

Catholic Charities will also convene its agencies periodically "to plan short and long term strategies for dealing with proposed cuts."

Tuition Hike At Nazareth

Robert A. Kidera, president of Nazareth College, has announced that the Board of Trustees of the college has approved increases in tuition. Full-time undergraduate tuition will go from \$3,420 to \$3,780 a year. Maximum room-and-board charges will increase from \$2,010 to \$2,250.

Charges for part-time students in the college's continuing education program will be raised \$13 to \$109 per credit hour. Graduate students will pay \$121 per credit hour, also an increase of \$13. The new continuing education and graduate fees will take effect this summer.

Insights In Liturgy

By Pam Schaeffer



The Greatest Symbol

We must find in our symbols an active quality — power for growth, change, ongoing renewal. The symbols that we use to identify ourselves as "community" must reveal themselves as vehicles for expressing life, and be closely related to life as we experience it today — now. Since we depend upon symbols to speak of who we are, and to convey what we are about, they can never be permitted to be arbitrary, compulsory, or faddish.

This does not mean our Christian symbols, inherited over the centuries, have outlived their relevancy. Or, that in an age of disposable everything (from paper plates to diapers), we must automatically scrap what has been handed down to us and attribute our actions to the "price" we pay for progress. Rather, we must train ourselves to look at our symbols, embrace them as a part of our heritage (not as vestiges of antiquity, or sacrosanct), and apply the spirit of renewal called for in the liturgical reform of our age.

Renewal has never meant "throw-away," but calls for restoration, revitalization, rebuilding. This does not mean that we must re-do every symbol that comes to us through our Christian heritage. As Leonel Mitchell points out in "The Meaning of Ritual," "Some ritual acts once charged with meaning no longer mean anything at all except to historians, and attempts to revive them are doomed to failure." We must discern, after careful appraisal, what symbols speak of Christianity in our time and place, and store away those that ring empty. In fact, this is exactly what the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy calls us to do (cf. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Section III, The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy, 21-40). "The Liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the

liturgy or have become unsuited to it." (21)

"Among the symbols with which liturgy deals, none is more important than this assembly of believers" (Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, EACW, 28). It is here, in the assembly, that the most powerful experience of the sacred is found (EACW, 29). The assembly represents the living gesture, the living voice, the living sacrifice, the living meal. It is to this assembly of believers that we must open the symbols that speak of ourselves. Only through these most important symbols can we attempt to convey the depths of our meaning in every word, gesture, movement, object, and appointment in our celebrations. For it is to the assembly that they belong!

"In our culture's emphasis on reason, it is critically important for the Church to re-emphasize a more total approach to the human person ..." (EACW, 35) We must open up our symbols, especially the basic ones: bread and wine (we hear the words and see the action, but are not usually invited to share in both bread and wine — and is the bread we do see and share from one loaf? does it appear as real bread?); water (can we tell by our senses that water is being poured or sprinkled?); oil (is the connotation picked up that oil is messy and must be wiped away immediately? Oil is messy! Symbols are messy! This is what makes them real!); and the laying on of hands (is the emotion shared by the human touch warm and friendly?) does the penitent feel as if a hug of forgiveness was received from the Father? "One should be able to sense something special (and nothing trivial) in everything that is seen and heard, touched and smelled, and tasted in liturgy." (EACW, 12)

It is only through recognition of the dignity and responsibility of each individual that we can hope to attain a clear picture of the mystery we represent, the mystery we celebrate. Revealing the expression of our symbols is not something that can be done for us, but something that can only be done together.

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