

Church, Labor Leaders Join to Aid Workers

By Michael Groden

Twelve labor and church leaders in the area have recently joined forces to deal with economic problems now being faced by working people.

The Rochester Committee on Religion and Labor began working earlier this year to develop plans to offset "the

economic offensive" being waged by big businesses and aided by the government, according to Tim McGowan of the diocesan office of Human Development.

The committee is made up of representatives from labor unions, the state department of labor and leaders from the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities.

McGowan said the committee has concentrated its efforts on three main objectives; to improve communication between those involved in labor and the Church; develop programs aimed at helping working people in the area; and educate its constituencies on problems faced by them.

He said that the first several meetings were to set up an operational format for the committee to use and to plan future action.

The committee is now working on three major areas of concern. On the local level the committee is working for the reinstatement of the local

branch of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The Rochester office will be eliminated if the current federal budget, already approved by Congress, is implemented.

OSHA is a federal agency that regulates, and inspects safety and health precautions in private businesses. If the local agency, which currently serves a large geographic area, is eliminated it would be up to the office in Buffalo to take up the slack. Labor leaders believe this development would eliminate the office's effectiveness.

On the state level, a lobby

ing effort is being supported by the Religion and Labor committee that would provide a minimum wage for state farm workers.

The committee will also recommend two delegates to join a national effort to revise the Reagan budget, especially in areas that will affect working people in the country.

McGowan contends that today's laborer is facing an ever increasing threat to his standard of living and family security. Companies are moving to other areas of the country or out of the country all together in order to avoid local labor costs.

He added that the increase in living costs, higher energy prices and "union busting" organizations are all making it more and more difficult for the worker to make ends meet.

The "runaway company" problem often takes away jobs and consequently adds to the public assistance rolls. That development, McGowan said, should make everybody concerned.

He said that the Church has a long history of sharing the experience of workers and their families in neighborhoods and parishes, and should be actively involved in helping them.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

Ecumenism And Newman

With Vatican II there came a bad movement on the part of some to water down the Faith, claiming: "This is the ecumenism directed by the Vatican Council." They violate genuine ecumenism. And they have done this so persistently that they have beclouded the minds of innocent people regarding the historic reality which is the Catholic Church. I have been reading a thrilling book by John Moody, a convert to the Church and the founder of the prestigious Moody's Investment Service found in banks. It is a biography of Cardinal John Henry Newman, born in 1801, who became a Catholic in 1845, and who died at the age of 89 in 1890. Collegiate Catholic societies are often called Newman Clubs, named after him. His writings greatly influenced Vatican Council II. He surely would be outraged at the ragged theological thinking affected by false ecumenists.

One Sunday some years ago I explained to our Rexville congregation that people should know their own religious identity, and illustrated the point by a humorous story of three young brothers whom I met at the Hornell swimming pool. We had become good friends. I asked them: "Are you kids Catholics?" The oldest, about 13 years old, replied: "No. We're Baskets. We belong to the First Basket Church." He was weak in linguistics but clear about his religious identity. The point of the homily was this: honesty demands that we know and profess our faith as Catholics. After Mass a matron from the Buffalo area who is a nurse swept into the sacristy: "Father, I'm so glad I was here today I began to wonder if I was crazy. You've made things clear." This was her story.

"In our parish we have three priests. The word 'Catholic' is never used in homilies or in conversation. Always 'Christian this' and 'Christian that,' but never 'Catholic.' One night I attended a meeting in the parish. 'Christian' came through repeatedly. 'Catholic' came through not even once. At the question period I asked the priest: 'Father, is there any reason why you never say

"Catholic"? We are Catholics, aren't we?" The priest replied curtly: 'I consider that a snide remark,' and refused to answer it. Another woman spoke up after the priest had put me down: 'But Father, we would like to have an answer.' He just replied: 'I refuse to answer the question.' What are people like us supposed to do?"

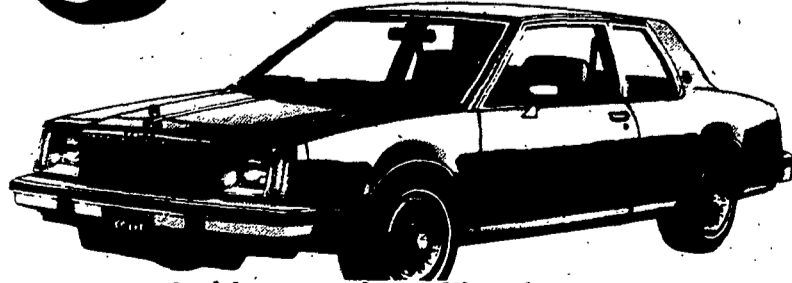
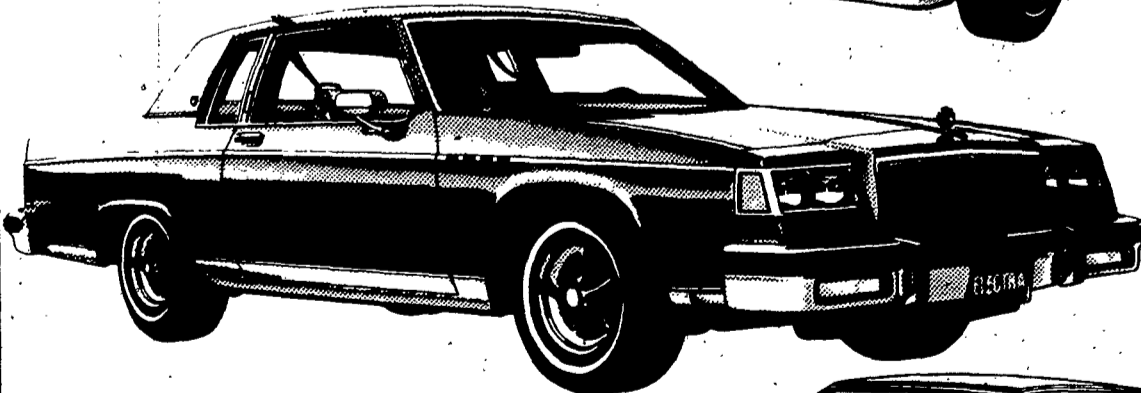
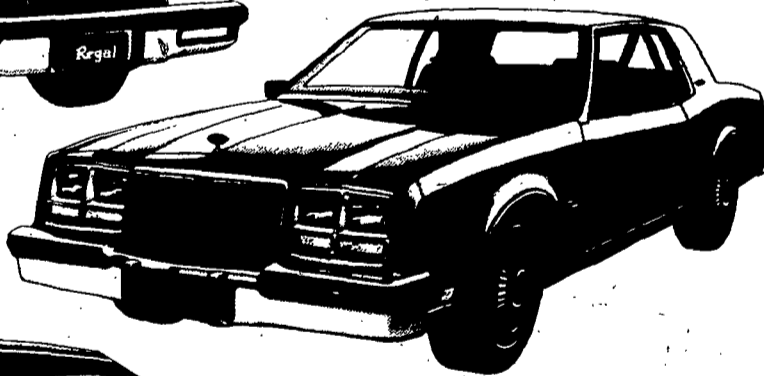
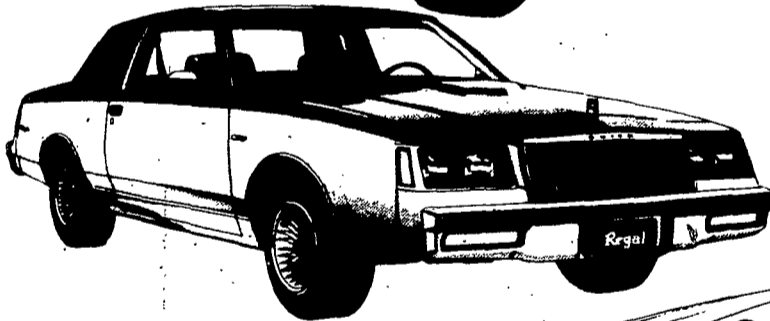
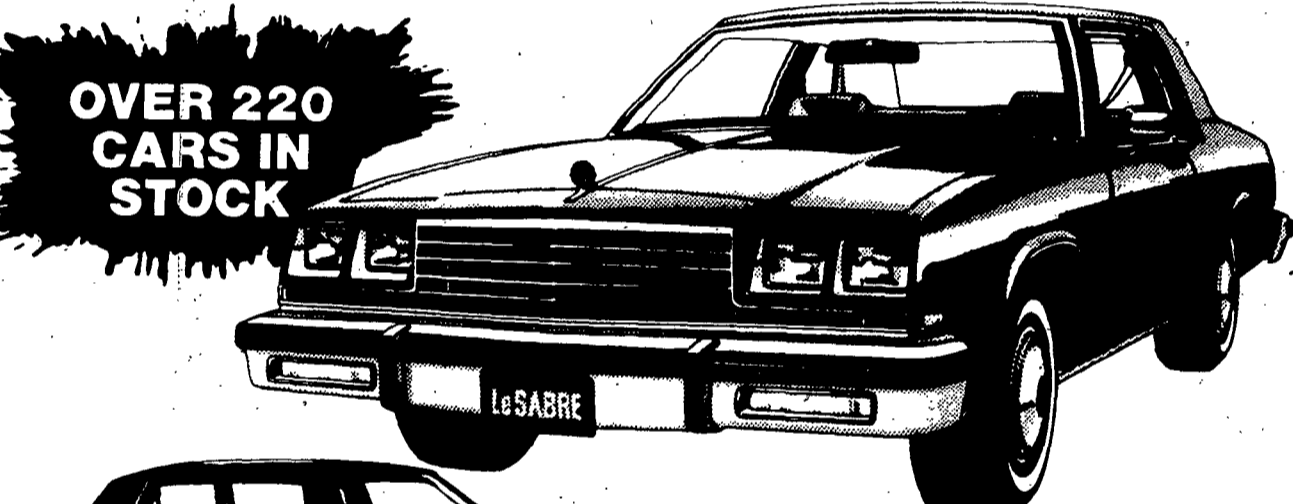
There are times to use the generic word, Christian, and there are times to use the specifically identifying word, Catholic. Sincere ecumenism is betrayed by watering down the Faith. How does the Decree on Ecumenism read? "Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false conciliatory approach which harms the purity of Catholic doctrine and obscures its assured genuine meaning. At the same time, Catholic belief needs to be explained more profoundly and precisely, in ways and in terminology which our separated brothers too can really understand." (N. 11)

I do not think many people will read the writings of Cardinal Newman because they often require subtle reasoning, familiarity with the Fathers and an acquaintance with the Oxford Movement in England. But I do think there will be great interest in this wonderful man who was so shabbily treated by many Catholics, and whose cause for canonization has been reopened at the direction of John Paul II. Fathers Benedict Ehmann and Robert MacNamara of Hornell and John Cavanaugh of Sodus, and Msgr. Maynard Connell are among the diocesan priests most knowledgeable about Newman. There are many religious Sisters and Brothers, and Basilians at John Fisher, and cultivated laymen, who also are authorities, but whose names I do not know. And the tempestuous Father William O'Malley of McQuaid cited Newman's distinction between experiential and theoretical knowledge in one of his quondam instructions: "Contra Patrem Cuddy." Since he is an avid promoter of C.S. Lewis he probably is a devotee of Newman. There is a Chesterton Society in Rochester under the aegis of Mr. Robert Knille. May there come into being a Newman Society in the Rochester diocese under the aegis of those who love the holy, brilliant author of "Lead, Kindly Light."

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