

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

Reflecting On Kenya

When the October tour to Kenya was advertised in the Courier, many were puzzled. "Why would anyone want to go to Africa?" Well, most go because of interest in wildlife and new experiences. I was interested in these, but more in the work of the Church. So it was arranged with Father Reinhart of the Propagation. We should take the regular safari trip: to see ostriches, zebras, giraffes, all African

wildlife. We should experience a couple days of primitive living in "the bush" near the Massai tribe with their spears and colorful garments and bejeweled ears. We should also live in swanky hotels and dine well. We should ride in mini-buses painted with zebra stripes, seating 10. But ours had an added plus: seeing the work of the Church in Kenya.

The highlight for me and for many was Kipchichim, a Catholic mission about three miles from the city of

Kericho in the middle of nowhere. It is a mission complex of four things: 1) An elementary and high school for 1,200 children taught in rough buildings with minimal materials — blackboards, seats, desks, plumbing. The high school has a 29-year-old headmaster, John Sloan of Belfast. He is there somewhat like our Peace Corps volunteers, living primitively, with a wretched salary, and doing great work. 2) There is a clinic for the birth of babies — one large ward of some 20 cots, with the babies in bassinets slung like hammocks at the foot of each cot. It is run by a smiling African Sister who is a nurse and midwife, assisted by two other African Sisters. 3) Adjoining this is another clinic, with a medical ward for some 20 persons. 4) Most moving of all was a kind of Boys and Girls Town of 45 boys and girls each — all victims of polio, yet smiling and happy.

Most touching of all was one of the girls' dormitories. These youngsters, 12-14 years old, with shrunken or twisted limbs, stood by their beds smiling at us. On a dormitory wall was only one picture: not of Christ or Mary or Jomo Kenyatta, but a big poster of four French Can-Can girls, kicking up their legs and skirts for the entertainment of viewers. The pastor in charge is a great-hearted Father John Hayes, about 40-years-old; of the Society of St. Patrick; whose seminary is in County Mayo, Ireland, though he is from County Kerry. He seemed to us to be a male counterpart of Mother Teresa. Here is a recent letter he wrote to one of our group:

"I received your generous check and letter yesterday, Dec. 29. I must say it was a lovely surprise and in fact the only gift for the new year, so we are really happy. I was very impressed by all of your group when you came to visit us with Father Cuddy. It was very brave of you to take time from your holiday and try to see what the missions are doing. It was encouraging to us, because most people who visit Kenya are only interested in the sunshine and seeing wild animals, and they haven't much interest in the state of the people. May God bless you with His love in the new year..."

We are planning a May tour to Ireland. I should like to stop at Mayo again, to celebrate Mass at the shrine of Knock, and to make a brief stop to see the Kiltegan Seminary which produces such dedicated missionaries.

Guadalupe Unit Notes Anniversary

The Queen of the Americas Guild will observe the first anniversary of the establishment of its weekly novena with a Mass of Thanksgiving, 7:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 25, at Guardian Angels Church. The Mass will be celebrated by Father Richard Hart following the regular Monday night novena.

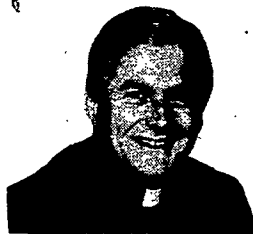
The group is dedicated to spreading devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Stepfamily Group Schedules Boike

Dennis Boike will be the main speaker at the first event of the year for the Stepfamily Association of Rochester. Jan. 22, at the Baptist Temple, 1101 Highland Ave.

The local association is an affiliate of a national group, and is a non-profit educational organization that acts as a support network for stepfamilies, a news release stated.

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Why Fuss Over Haitians?

Dear Father Hohman,

In my view, the Church is here for our spiritual guidance and has no business getting involved in so many social causes.

I resent, in particular, all the coverage in the Courier-Journal about the Haitian refugees. I feel sorry for them but there are other papers where we can find out about their problems. I don't think they should be on Page One of our Catholic paper. Why should Catholics be so concerned about them?

F.S.

Dear F.S.,

This particular question has already been answered from one particular point of view, but I would like to continue that answer. In one of our weekday Gospels in the Christmas season, we have the story of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes from the Gospel of Mark. It begins with the statement "and Jesus had pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd." People who are like sheep without a shepherd are by definition alienated, and therefore refugees would come under this heading.

One of the problems with the Christian Church through the centuries has been the problem of wanting to look at Jesus and admire Him, and then go one's own way. As Jesus pointed out, not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. "He

who does the will of my Father will enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Therefore, if Jesus had pity on those who are refugees, then it is incumbent upon us to have pity on those who are refugees. It doesn't matter that they are in a somewhat different condition from those He had pity upon.

Another way in which we are called upon to follow Christ is to bring the Good News to the poor (to those in need). A newspaper is for news, good as well as bad. Therefore, by featuring the Haitians on the front page of the Courier, we announce the good news to them that we really care about them and that their concerns are now our concerns. That is the kind of good news that Jesus wanted to bring. To consign that kind of news to the secular papers only is to, in effect, say that Christianity isn't really necessary; that the secular world can take care of the needs of people like the Haitians without any involvement of the Christian community.

Personally, I dislike many of President Reagan's budget policies, especially the ones which cut off aid to many poor people. But if his call for voluntarism has the effect of reminding individuals that they do have an obligation relative to the problems of less fortunate people, maybe some good will come from the whole thing. This is not to say that I opt for removal of government from these concerns. To make religion some kind of game we play, with real life being the thing that happens after the game is over, is to absolutely insult religion and blaspheme God.

Ecumenical Workshop Scheduled

The third of four workshops on ecumenism sponsored by the Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs will run 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 20, at St. Theodore Church, 168 Spencerport Road.

Participants will talk about ecumenical experiences, problems and plans; review the documents of both Catholic and Protestant churches on the matter of ecumenism; review practical programs for advancing ecumenism; and project models of ecumenical cooperation.

An advance registration fee of \$5 ensures the participant will receive a quantity of printed material on the subject of ecumenism.

Application should be made to Margery S. Nurnberg, director, Office of Ecumenism, 919 Farnham St., Elmira, N.Y. 14901.

Xerox Grants Aid Colleges

St. John Fisher College, Nazareth College and Colgate Rochester Divinity School-Bexley Hall-Crozer were among several local colleges and organizations which shared in \$2.5 million from Xerox Corporation last year.

St. John Fisher received \$50,000 for its capital program and \$4,000 for its operating fund; Nazareth, \$6,000 for operating funds; and the Divinity Schools, \$5,000 for operating funds.

In all, more than 60 organizations each received grants in excess of \$1,000.

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