

Need Is Great . . . Response Is Greater

Last year at this stage of the annual Courier-Journal Christmas Fund, the headline read, "Christmas Fund \$5,000 Behind 1980 Pace." While the figures were disappointing, they were not disastrous — 1980 had been the record year for the fund since it was established in 1969 with a final total of \$56,553.41.

And last year, although the drive was successful, it didn't quite reach the record.

This year, however, the fund has already exceeded the total for 1981, establishing a new high for the drive. As of Friday, Dec. 17, diocesans had contributed \$58,864.25 — more than \$2,000 over the previous high total.

The results are truly fortuitous since unemployment in the diocese is at an all-time high and inflation adds to the woes of many at Christmastime. Officials at the agencies of Catholic Charities have reported a greater

number of people seeking help than ever before.

Obviously those fortunate enough to keep their jobs and afford a normal holiday are digging deeper into their means to help those in need.

As part of the annual drive, the Courier-Journal describes the 100 neediest cases in the diocese, as provided by Catholic Charities. The cases, though real, are still only representative of the many more individuals and families suffering at Christmas, particularly this year.

Plenty of time remains to help; anyone wishing to do so should send contributions to:

Courier-Journal
Catholic Charities
Christmas Fund
50 Chestnut St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14604



The Neediest In Diocese

81 W is a separated mother of two children. Her husband left her and she is overwhelmed with debts. She has severe bouts of depression and there is little income to meet her family's needs.

82 D is a recently divorced mother of two. She would like to work but has limited skills and does not have money to pay for day care services or a babysitter. Her income provides little in meeting the basic needs of the family.

83 R and her three children are in need of help. She was recently hospitalized in order to have a serious operation. She is living on a fixed income and with this recent development, she will find it even more difficult to make ends meet.

84 J has recently returned from foster care to live with her mother. She has a serious weight problem which she is valiantly working on under the supervision of a doctor. However, her present weight requires purchase of outsize clothing which is very expensive. Her mother earns minimum wage and finds it impossible to clothe her daughter properly.

85 P lost his arm in an accident several years ago and now has had operations on the other arm because of a nerve problem. He and his wife have seven children and are finding it difficult to manage on their fixed income.

86 The Vs are supporting five children and one grandchild on his limited retirement income. One daughter is expecting a baby but has no income of her own except medical coverage. It is becoming hard to feed and clothe all these people.

87 L has a little boy who must remain in a hospital out of town for a long term. One of L's main concerns is not having transportation funds to visit him when she needs to. She has for the past month been sitting and crying because if she has enough money to visit him for Christmas, she will then not be able to afford a Christmas gift.



88 S is the 38-year-old father of two children and is the only provider for his household. He is on a limited budget.

89 J is a single parent living with her two young boys. The family depends on public assistance, and so will find it extremely difficult to have anything extra for Christmas.

90 S is in her mid-70s. Her multiple health problems so restrict her mobility that she is now housebound. She is skilled at craft work, but on her low Social Security income, can no longer afford materials.

91 F is one of several Caribbean refugees recently released from federal detention and seeking political asylum. He is looking for work to become a contributing member of the community that has offered him a chance to be free.

92 M is in her late 60s who lives in a poorly insulated house with her older mentally retarded cousin. M owns the house, therefore they cannot move. They are struggling to remain in their home.

93 M, in her early 70s, lives alone in a poor section of town. Once a very active and outgoing person, the recent years with their physical, emotional and financial problems have made her almost a recluse. She lives almost entirely in the past because her present is so grim. Last winter's fuel bills have so depleted her assets that she sometimes does not have enough money to eat properly.

94 M, a senior citizen, had been living with her son's family, but moved to her own apartment because they were not getting along. She has had to set up housekeeping again, and the expense of that plus rent and bills have overwhelmed her fixed income. She sometimes runs out of money for food before the end of the month.

95 J, once a pretty woman with flashing brown eyes, is now thin, drawn and dejected. Evicted from her apartment through no fault of her own, she is temporarily housed in emergency shelter. Through counseling, she is slowly putting her life back in order.

96 S has three children and lives in a sparsely furnished apartment. She has bouts with depression. Her greatest desire is to keep her family together.

97 The Ds, burdened with diabetes, crippling arthritis, and recovery from major surgery, are caring for their grandson. They live on a small pension and are in need of clothing, household items, a gift for the grandchild and food.

98 K is a refugee from Southeast Asia who arrived here recently with his wife and six children. Although they are illiterate in their own language, they are all studying English. The family is isolated because it has no American sponsor and does not live near other countrymen.

99 J and her newborn son live alone in an apartment without even the most rudimentary sorts of furniture.

100 A is facing his first winter in Rochester, but prefers to cope with the cold and snow rather than the oppression and starvation of his native Haiti. He has a part-time job but his income is inadequate to meet his living expenses as he seeks political asylum here.

A Christmas Legend: A Special Visitor to Santa

In the spirit of Advent, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan recently used a legendary story about Santa and the Christ Child as basis for a homily. It proved so popular with parishioners at St. Patrick's in Victor, that he thought it should be shared with Courier-Journal readers.

Written by Nicholas Blakewell and titled "Santa and the Christ Child," the story tells about a young boy who visits Santa's village in the midst of Christmas preparations. The boy proves very capable and popular in helping the elves prepare for Christmas.

But, alas, Santa falls and breaks his leg and the doctor orders the annual trip canceled — "a terrible tragedy."

The child, however, working in the carpentry shop, makes a set of crutches for Santa and moves into his house to care for him. "He also exercises the reindeer every day and is busily at work on a 'secret project.'"

"The elves are bursting with curiosity," the story goes. "The child agrees to show them the secret project, if they will get busy and finish the inventory. On Christmas Eve, they finish the very last toy and the child unveils the secret project. The elves leap with excitement and joy.

"Meanwhile, the doctor came by to be certain Santa isn't planning anything rash. Santa despondently agrees there is no way he can make the trip. Just then he hears

the sound of jingling bells and reindeer hoofs. Opening the door, he sees his sleigh — all loaded with toys! The child is driving, and the elves are in the back shouting, 'Come on, Santa! We can make the trip now! The secret project is a special place for you to ride!' Attached to the rear of the sleigh is a remarkable conveyance on which Santa can lie back, with his leg propped up in comfort and safety. The doctor helps Santa bundle up and they take off on the long trip.

"At each rooftop, the elves do the chimney climbing, while Santa checks the list: When they finish, Santa is overjoyed. The child asks if they may make one more stop — to show where he was born. Santa

agrees and they fly off into the silent night — following a brilliant star.

"Landing the sleigh, the child helps Santa hobble toward a stable. Suddenly, Santa notices the child has disappeared! Then the voice of the child comes from the stable saying, 'Don't be afraid, Santa. This is where I was born on the first Christmas night. Drop your crutches and come kneel with us.' Santa hesitates — then drops his crutches, walks forward and falls to his knees — viewing the beautiful Nativity scene! He haltingly asks, 'Why — why did you come to me?' The child voice replies, 'To remind you, Dear Santa, to remind you and all the world that Christmas is my birthday — the birthday of the Lord.'"