

# COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER 20 Pages Wednesday, January 5, 1983 35 Cents

## KOLBE

... in defense of a saint ...



Washington (NC) — Allegations that the recently canonized St. Maximilian Kolbe was anti-Semitic have brought several scholars to the new saint's defense.

St. Maximilian, a Polish Conventual Franciscan priest who volunteered to die in another man's place at the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz in 1941, was formally declared a saint and a martyr by Pope John Paul II Oct. 10. He was the first victim of a Nazi death camp to be honored. He was interned at Auschwitz on charges of aiding Jewish refugees and members of the Polish underground.

In December, columnist Richard Cohen, who writes for the Washington Post and is syndicated in other newspapers, including the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, said that in Father Kolbe's canonization the priest's anti-Semitism "was swept under the carpet" and the Church treated it "as a negligible blemish in an otherwise admirable life."

Cohen quoted two statements from Father Kolbe's writings which referred to the spread of communism as part of a Masonic conspiracy by Zionists to take over the world.

In a letter to the Post, Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, said the documentary record of Father Kolbe's writings and actions belies the charge of anti-Semitism.

He cited writings in which Father Kolbe repudiated anti-Semitism, and he noted that an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 Jewish refugees were harbored at the beginning of World War II in the monastery Father Kolbe founded and headed in Poland.

Fisher traced the charges of anti-Semitism to an article last April in a leading Austrian paper, Wiener Tagebuch, but said American scholars had analyzed the article and rejected its conclusions last summer.

The priest, said Fisher, "should be not a point of division but a symbol of unity among all who would oppose the evil of anti-Semitism today."

The Vienna article had said that Father Kolbe was associated with "rabid, racist anti-Semitism" and that he himself was anti-Semitic.

When the assertions were reported in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch last June, Daniel L. Schlafly Jr., associate professor of history at St. Louis University, and Warren Green, director of the St. Louis Center for Holocaust Studies, issued a statement labeling the charges false.

"Father Kolbe's writings do contain a few references to Jews which reflect the common anti-Semitic beliefs propagated in the 'Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion,' which was a well-known forgery, as well as reflected in the popular Polish-Catholic culture in the interwar period," they said.

"These references were only a tiny fraction of the total works (of Father Kolbe) and were more than counterbalanced by his insistence that one must always act in a spirit of missionary zeal, charity and prudence," they continued. "He saw the Jews and all non-Catholics as souls to be won, not objects of discrimination and hatred. His equitable treatment of Jewish and Polish refugees at the outbreak of World War II ... is inconsistent with his interwar anti-Semitic statements."

The "Protocols" which surfaced in Russia in 1905, was a forged collection of documents that purportedly revealed a secret plot by Jewish leaders to take over the world.

Also among the evidence cited by the Austrian paper were anti-Semitic references in two Catholic publications founded by Father Kolbe.

In a joint article in the St. Louis Jewish Light, Schlafly and

Continued on Page 4

## NEEDY FUND HITS RECORD

The annual Christmas Fund conducted to help the neediest persons in the diocese at Christmastime hit an all-time high of more than \$80,000 this year, it was announced by Anthony J. Costello, publisher and general manager of the Courier-Journal.

The previous high was the \$56,553 donated in 1980. Last year (1981), the total was \$53,438.

The unprecedented success of the 1982 campaign pushed the cumulative total since the fund was inaugurated in 1969 to well over a half-million dollars — some \$550,000.

The first year, 1969, that the newspaper conducted the fund, \$8,566 was donated. The then director of Catholic Charities, the late Father William Charbonneau, called it "the best ever." He noted that previously, Charities conducted the campaign and a bumper crop would be \$2,000.

Speaking about this year's \$80,000-plus results, Costello

said, "The response was simply overwhelming. What has always impressed me most is that so many people with very little themselves still share with others. There are so many one-dollar and two-dollar contributions, often with a note explaining that's all the donor can afford, almost apologetically.

"This year, with the economy in an especially deplorable state, so many people rose to meet the challenge, knowing there were so many more people in need of help.

"On behalf of all of us at the Courier-Journal," the publisher said, "I would like to thank the leadership and staff at Catholic Charities for doing such a fine job of distributing the funds collected through the Courier each year."

The annual drive begins with the Courier-Journal edition the day before Thanksgiving and continues for the five editions until Christmas. The co-sponsoring agency, Catholic Charities,



distributes the money to the neediest individuals and families in the diocese.

As part of the campaign, the newspaper publishes the 100 neediest cases in the diocese, as provided by the agencies of Catholic Charities. Readers are advised that while these cases are authentic and all within the diocese, they are only representative of the

many more being serviced by diocesan agencies.

Midway through the drive, James Malone, director of the Catholic Family Center, reported that unprecedented numbers were swamping his office looking for assistance. He spoke of a "new layer of poor" — those whose unemployment benefits had run out.

## Diocesan 6th Graders Head Class

The New York State Department of Education Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) reading test scores were recently announced and Rochester diocesan sixth graders had top scores.

Ninety percent of the 2,170 diocesan sixth graders scored above the state reference point, a score of 50, recording one of the highest percents among other diocesan and public school systems in the state. According to Sister Clare Brown, diocesan Office of General Education, public schools, statewide, recorded a 70 percent above the state median, and non-public schools averaged an 82 percent. Average for Monroe County pupils was 83 percent and the city school district

recorded a 72 percent.

This was the first year the state broke down the averages according to dioceses and a Rochester diocesan news release said the scores were significant because they included students in city, suburban and rural areas. They also include low achievers as well as average and gifted students.

Diocesan school administrators attributed the academic excellence to Project Upgrade, which was incorporated into the diocesan elementary school curriculum in 1976, and focuses on quality testing, consistency of basics from grade to grade, neatness and attention to individual differences.

## 'LOUIS'

### A Boy In Search Of Love

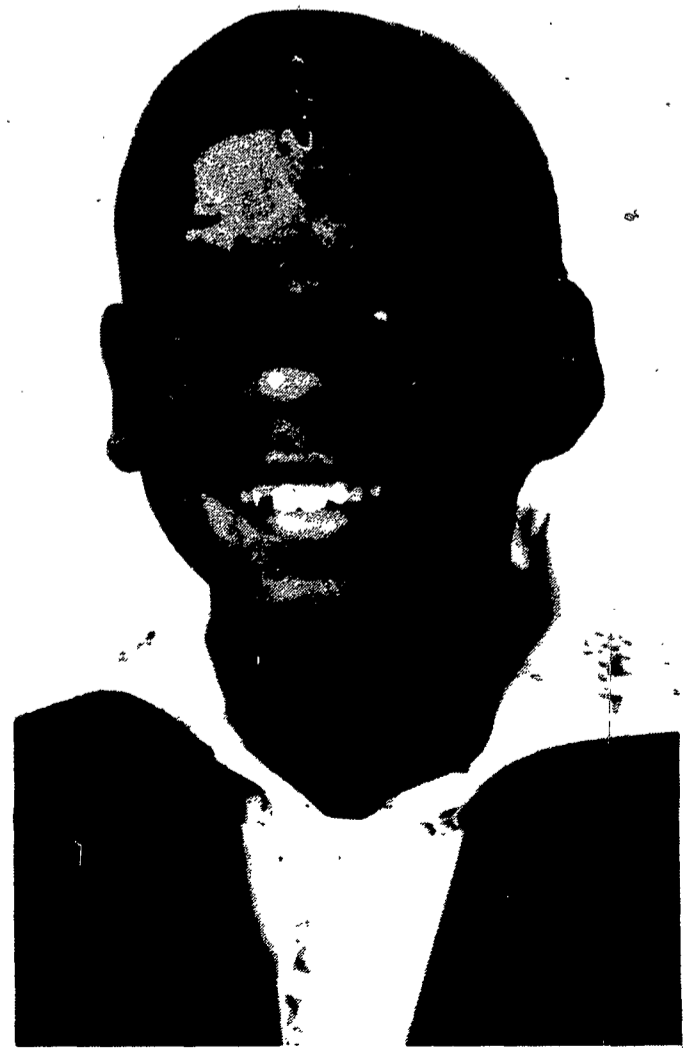
Adoption caseworkers at Catholic Family Center are seeking an adoptive home for "Louis," a 13-year-old now in a residential treatment center.

The CFC said of the child:

"Louis, born July 1969, is a very appealing 13-year-old black youngster despite many facial and head scars stemming from a fire at the age of two. Louis is currently residing in a residential treatment center to help him deal with rejection and behavior problems. He is attending their ungraded campus school, doing fourth grade level work. This placement has been a positive experience for Louis. He enjoys the activities of their daily programs, has become accomplished in football, roller skating, and is improving peer relationships.

will provide him with the love and security he really needs. The new parents need to encourage him to continue in sports activities, mainly because football has done much for his self image. Louis is slow to trust, but his wonderful sense of humor will show through when he feels secure. Therapy is recommended to continue after placement in a new home. School placement will need to be a small structured learning-disabled classroom, where Louis will get the individual attention he needs. Families of all races will be considered."

Persons interested in pursuing adoption, particularly of Louis, are asked to contact Mrs. Karen Rulison, adoption caseworker, Catholic Family Center, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604; (716) 546-7220.



'LOUIS'

"Louis needs a family who