

Catholic Population

LA Passes Chicago to Be Nation's Largest See

New York (NC) -- The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has replaced the Archdiocese of Chicago as the largest See in the nation, according to the 1983 Official Catholic Directory.

Los Angeles lists 2.37 million Catholics, 4,157 more than Chicago.

The directory, based on figures reported by the nation's 33 Latin Rite Catholic archdioceses, 143 dioceses, two Eastern Rite archdioceses and seven Eastern Rite dioceses, is compiled annually by P.J. Kenedy and Sons of New York.

The Los Angeles Archdiocese showed an increase of 66,440 over 1982 figures, while Chicago reported an increase of 11,705.

The number of Catholics in the United States is now 52,088,744, an increase over last year of 881,165, according to the directory. That increase is larger by 123,428 over the increase from 1981 to 1982.

Publication of the directory, which usually occurs in late May or early June each year, was delayed because of computer printing problems.

said Thomas Walsh, director of marketing manager.

The figures as of Jan. 1, 1983, indicated continued decreases in the number of priests, brothers and sisters and an increase in the number of permanent deacons.

The number of parishes decreased by 64 to 18,839, and 919 of them are without resident pastors.

Boston continues to be the third largest archdiocese in the country with 1.93 million Catholics, followed by New York (1.84 million), Detroit (1.45 million), Newark, N.J. (1.37 million) and Philadelphia (1.36 million).

Brooklyn, N.Y., continues as the largest diocese with a Catholic population of 1.38 million, followed by Rockville Centre, N.Y., with 1.29 million.

In addition, six archdioceses and five dioceses reported Catholic populations of more than 500,000.

Twelve sees reported increases of more than 25,000, including two new dioceses: Las Cruces, N.M., and Victoria, Texas. Nine sees reported decreases of more than 15,000, including Sante Fe, N.M., and El Paso, Texas, which lost part of their Catholic population to the new dioceses.

The total number of baptisms was down by 16,147, but the number of converts was up by 1,390, the directory reports. The number of Catholic marriages was down by 5,930.

The total number of seminarians studying at diocesan or religious schools was up by 409.

Brothers Offer Support to Sister Mansour

Washington (NC) -- The National Assembly of Religious Brothers has backed efforts by the Sisters of Mercy of the Union in filing a canonical appeal in the case of former Mercy Sister Agnes Mary Mansour.

The NARB, in a statement issued by its national board, also has urged the Mercy Sisters and Catholic Church authorities to seek reconciliation.

The actions came after support for the nuns was raised -- in the form of a resolution -- at the end of an NARB meeting in Washington in late June, said Brother Patrick Hanson, NARB spokesman. He said NARB members instructed the national board to put the resolution into final form and formally express the NARB's concern about the Mansour case. The board, composed of members from across the nation, then did so, issuing the resolution for publication Aug. 1.

Former Sister Agnes Mary Mansour, director of the Michigan Department of Social Services, was told by Archbishop Edmund C. Szoka of Detroit in February to resign her state office because, despite his request, she had not publicly denounced abortion funding, handled by her department. In May, she was told by the Vatican to either resign her state job or face initiation of canonical procedures leading to her expulsion from the Sisters of Mercy. She instead asked for and received dispensation from her vows as a Religious.

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Viewpoint

Sisters Reflect



By Sister Mollie Brown, RSM

Out Of Darkness

There are times when our lives get caught up in pain and fears. Then we are like Calvin Miller's Madman in The Singer, driven by devils, furies, fears and anxieties.

Shackled in the dark, the sleeping giant rages in anguish and isolation, bent only on destroying whatever stands in his path. The clarion call of hope was the Song, created eons ago by the Father-Spirit and learned by His son, the Singer, who was willing to die so we might live.

While the furies continue their rage, the Madman broke his chains and then stopped short, his cries finally softened as he stands still before the Singer, the Song. "With love that knew no fear, the Singer caught his torment, wrapped it all in song and gave it back as peace."

For those who minister as counselors and therapists, those words serve as a mandate, a model that others can look for in their search for one to journey with them out of the darkness into peace. We must learn to love without fear, first ourselves and then the other. We must go deeply into the recesses of our own salvation histories to come to terms with, to grieve over, and to let go of our own devils, fears, losses and needs -- remembering always the pain of them.

To work with another in the dark we must come freely, as did the Singer, knowing our own pain, but never allowing it to cloud another's hurt. Love is stronger than fear and pain and it is safe to walk with another's anguish and not be overwhelmed by it.

To journey through darkness with another the counselor must hold the other's torment for a while, reflecting it without fear, helping him see that pain need not be destructive, allowing him to lay

down the burden for a bit and stand straighter for the weight lifted.

Each must know his own pain, so the pain will be returned, but lightened and softened, wrapped in the Star-Song of the Father-Spirit. The therapist's task is to be the first of those who will stand with the madman and let him know he is no longer alone.

In this sharing of life for brief but repeated spaces of time, the madman knows, perhaps for the first time, that pain is the other side of love and that in the company of others, it can be transformed into peace.

The therapist must know there is a progression in the way the Singer walked with the Madman. As the Singer knew the difference between love and fear, so the counselor needs by training and discipline to know her own loves and fears and the difference between them and the Madman's.

When pain returns to the Madman it is "wrapped in song" and safe to own now as peace. For peace is not the absence of pain, fear, torment and suffering, but rather the fullness of being, "a sense of being oneself rather than...forgiven for being oneself."

There is more in Miller's story. After the Madman received his torment as peace, "the two men held each other in a long embrace of soul." Counselor and counselee must know that their relationship, brief though it may be, is such an "embrace of soul," an eternal responsibility. Both have been touched by the shared pain and both are richer for it.

So it is that men and women heal one another. So it is that life borrows and builds on life and all are richer for it. So it is that the Star-Song continues to be sung, and torment wrapped in it is given back to us as peace.

Sister Mollie Brown, RSM, is a counselor and the director of Spirit House.

Volunteers In Need

St. Ann's Home/The Heritage, 1500 Portland Ave., is in need of volunteers.

A variety of volunteer opportunities exists. Flexible hours, including evening and weekends, are available. Further information is available from 342-1700.



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