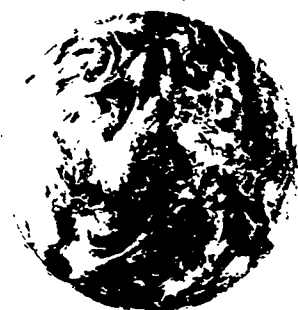


# To Look Through Each Other's Eyes

COULD A GREATER MIRACLE TAKE PLACE THAN FOR US TO LOOK THROUGH EACH OTHER'S EYES FOR AN INSTANT "HENRY DAVID THOREAU"



## Selma: Yesterday and Today

By Sisters Shirley Casler, Mary Maloy, And Anne Urquhart, SSJ.

Since the triumphant civil rights march led by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1965, the city of Selma, nestled in the heart of Alabama, has never been the same.

That march of Selma's black leaders and people and civil rights supporters from all over the country climaxed a long and arduous struggle for the black community.

But even before as well as during and after the Civil Rights Movement, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester participated in the struggles of black people in Selma.

Responding to the invitation of Bishop Thomas J. Toolan, the sisters joined the Selma mission as far back as 1940 to work with the Fathers of St. Edmund in the "home missions" of the South. The combined efforts of the sisters and the priests won many converts from the black community, and St. Elizabeth's Parish began to thrive.

One year later, in 1941, St. Elizabeth's School for black children was opened and served the black community for 30 years.

In 1971, at the request of Archbishop John May, the black and white parishes integrated, and the newly formed Queen of Peace Parish was established.

Currently six sisters from the Rochester Diocese, in addition to sisters from four other religious communities, live in Queen of Peace Convent in Selma and work with and among the poor in the area.

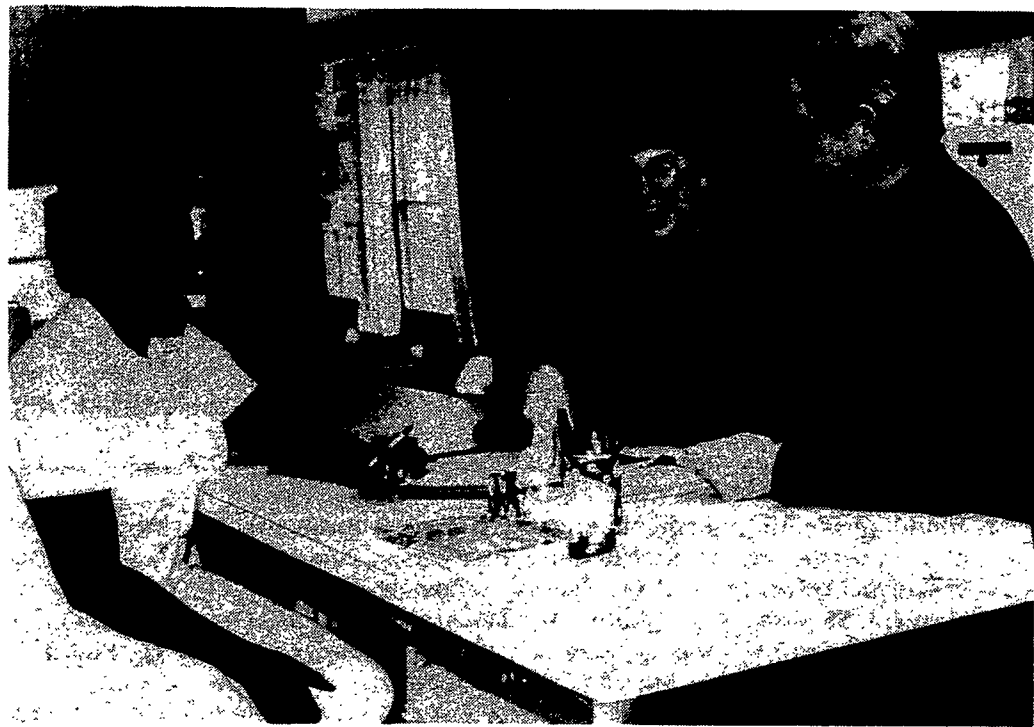
During their first 30 years in the South, the Sisters of St. Joseph, in addition to teaching, also engaged in hospital work. Good Samaritan Hospital was established in 1944 to serve the health and medical needs of the members of the black community. Affectionately called "Good Sam," it was sponsored by the Edmundite Fathers and administered by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The Good Samaritan Hospital School of Practical Nursing was established in 1950 and for several years was the only school of practical nursing for blacks in Alabama.

Integration resulting from the Civil Rights Movement brought many changes to the lives of the members of the black community in Selma. As their needs changed, so did the ministries of the sisters.

Sister Mary Weaver, SSJ, adapted to the changing needs when she left the classroom and became a social worker for the Economic Opportunity Board, setting up nine centers for the elderly in Dallas County. She was recently appointed assistant executive director of the Community Action Agency in Selma. In this capacity she supervises a wide range of assistance programs for the poor in a multi-county area.

Even though Good Samar-



Mrs. Lander Lewis, Sister Shirley Casler, SSJ, and Father Roger LaCharite, SSE, director of the Edmundite Southern Missions, at the Alberta Health Center, a private clinic administered by Sister Shirley.

itan Hospital has closed, the sisters are still active in fostering health programs in isolated rural areas. Sister Shirley Casler, SSJ, is administrator and program director of a private clinic in Alberta, located 27 miles southwest of Selma. Sister Mary Maloy, SSJ, is the outreach worker for Pine Apple Rural Health Clinic, located 48 miles from Selma in Wilcox County, the second most economically deprived county in the state. While each of these ministries is funded by the Edmundite Fathers, the sisters provide services with funds from the Rochester Diocese.

Sister Mary Claude Loeb, a Sister of Mercy of Rochester, joined the Selma mission in Jan. 1981 to minister to the people of rural Vredenburgh, located

on the county line of Wilcox and Monroe. Her work of empowering and enabling the poor, needy and elderly is a ministry of presence, outreach, liaison and advocacy.

Sister Albertine Devereaux, SSJ, and Sister Anne Urquhart, SSJ, minister in Queen of Peace Parish. Sister Anne, a member of the parish team of two priests and two sisters, is coordinator of Catholic Social Ministry. Her work involves advocacy, promotion of social justice issues and outreach to the poor in Selma and Dallas County. Sister Albertine touches the lives of many in her position

as parish secretary and through her active participation in all aspects of parish life.

Ministry planning in Selma continues to keep abreast of the changing needs. Plans are underway for an after-school tutoring program in Pine Apple, a center of concern in Selma and expansion of the Alberta Clinic.

These home missionaries in southern U.S.A. feel that the tradition of the past and their love of the people they serve are the basis for their hopes for the future in their Selma ministry.

**The Courier-Journal Monthly Mission Page**

Whether in the home fields of the U.S., or thousands of miles away in South America or Africa, the diocesan missionaries enjoy hearing from home. For those interested in corresponding with them an address of the month has been made available through the missions office. This month's address is:

Selma Sisters:  
Queen of Peace Convent  
1423 Broad Street  
Selma, AL 36701

Sr. Virginia Brien, SSND:

## Missionary to Nigeria

By Sister Mariella McMillan SSND

"Let us continue to serve the triune God with joy" is the challenge of the foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Mother Mary Theresa of Jesus.

The portrayal of this mandate can be found in the service of Sister Virginia Brien, SSND, a native of Rochester who is serving the people of the Diocese of Ikot Ekpene, Nigeria, West Africa.

Her frequent newsletters to her relatives in Rochester and to her friends in various parts of the U.S. give testimony that she is filled with joy and almost perpetual excitement as she works as principal of a secondary school in the small village.

In January 1981 Sister Virginia arrived in Nigeria and began her ministry of teaching in a primitive school. While she awaits the completion of a home, she and two other School Sisters of Notre Dame are living with the Daughters of Charity.

### Education

An interesting feature of hiring teachers for the school appears in the following excerpt from one of Sister Virginia's letters: "On Friday we were assigned three new teachers for our school. The state pays for the education of a student if the person will

pledge a year of free service and agrees to spend six months at a camp in preparation for the teaching position. When the employers arrive at the camp, it is a suspenseful time for all since the positions are decided at the last minute. Fortunately, we received a teacher for biology and chemistry, one for business methods, and one for mathematics and science."

### Health

In another newsletter she writes of the plight of a young native boy, a student at the school, who suffered from lumps on his neck. Sister Virginia took him to a private hospital for tests. The diagnosis: tuberculosis of the lymph glands.

His illness developed after an operation performed by a native doctor who had used unsterilized instruments. Sister Virginia says that native doctors go about the village with their surgical equipment stored in dirty cartons tied to their bicycles. After use, the instruments are wiped off with any available rag or paper. As a result, many natives who fail to seek professional health care develop infections which frequently lead to death.

At present, the young boy is receiving treatment at a TB clinic. Sister Virginia writes: "Two years of hospitalization will be a burden for his parents. Besides paying for the treatments, they are responsible for providing all the patient's meals."

### Problems

In another letter she mentions a young girl who was brought to live with the sisters because she "had a problem with her head." She had been labeled a "mad person" because she had become angry with her mother and had threatened her. After she had lived with the sisters and performed small jobs about the house, the only symptoms of "madness" appeared to be her habit of talking to herself. Now she is residing with a woman from the village who has a knack for helping "troubled people." The number of such "troubled people" seems to grow day by day, Sister Virginia comments. Places for them to go for shelter and food are nonexistent.

The foundress of Sister Virginia's congregation, Mother Mary Theresa, presented a challenge to her followers: "To prefer the poor, to serve as educator, to be a radical disciple..."

In Nigeria, West Africa, Notre Dame Sister, Virginia Brien, attempts to meet that challenge.

## Chile's Beauty: Its People

By Sister Jean Marie Kearse, RSM

(The superior general of the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester reflects upon her visit this past November to the Mercy Sisters serving in Santiago, Chile.)

There is a loud knock at the gate of Santa Ana Convent, and simultaneously the woman shouts, "Hola, Hermana! Hola, Hermana!" Sister Margaret Mungovan goes quickly to the gate, and the woman asks her for enough pesos to take the bus to pick up some food that has been promised her.

Later some youths stop to see Hermana "Katie" (Kay Schwenzer), and they come in just to talk as well as to review some forms they must fill out for a catechetical course, which will prepare them to teach the younger children about Eucharist and First Communion.

In the evening there is a prayer service in the little chapel behind the convent. This is in honor of the month of Mary (Nov. 8 - Dec. 8), and the people gather in homes or the chapels to pray the rosary and learn about Mary, mother of the poor, the dispossessed and the disappeared.

Afterwards Rafael knocks on the back door and asks for food for the next day. A handsome man, sick, bent with worry and fatigue, he has been out of work for quite a while. Each morning before 5 a.m. his wife goes to the Barrio Alto, the affluent section of Santiago, and searches the refuse for items that they can repair and sell. But that does not provide the family with enough to eat. He needs work as do more than 40 percent of the people.

In San Luis parish Sister Janet Caulfield stops to buy eggs from a middle-aged man who pulls his large wooden cart behind him down the unpaved streets. They laugh and banter back and forth, and then his face clouds when Janet asks about his wife and how she is feeling today.

Sister Jane Kenrick comes home from her chapel of Our Lady of Guadalupe and shares with us that the son of one of the women, Rosa, has been missing for three days. The mother believes he has been arrested. There is to be a Mass the next evening, celebrated by the Vicar of the Northern Zone, for the families of those who have disappeared. I meet a woman whose husband and three sons are missing. She gives comfort to Rosa, and hope.

Sister Graciela Lagos-Donoso, a Chilean woman and our first Mercy novice, professes her first vows as a Sister of Mercy. For the people of San Luis, her home parish, it is a time of jubilation. With fire hoses they wash and sweep the church and decorate it with flower petals and white nosegays. The entrance to the church becomes a flowered archway as does the gate to the churchyard. The people from the small chapels in the parish come to the profession in procession, singing. They fill the church to overflowing to witness these vows and to share this special joy. For this one night there is no fear of what tomorrow might bring.

Chile is a land of magnificent mountains and spectacular ocean vistas. But none of nature's beauty surpasses that of the soul of its people. They have the ability to set aside their own pain and grief to enter into the joy or loss of another. This gift of being able to take on the heart and mind of another is their way of life. We call it compassion or mercy, and the people of Chile teach us what it means.

The Sisters of Mercy have been in Chile for 18 years. Their presence has been a blessing for the Chilean people in the parishes where they have served. But the people of Santiago have richly blessed our sisters and our congregation in return. They have taught us the meaning of long-suffering and of mercy. Eternity alone will reveal the depth of their blessing on us.