

Bishop Thomas Murphy:

Church Concern for Labor Still Strong

By Tracy Early

New York (NC) — Church concern for labor issues is as great today as in past decades when some bishops and "labor priests" held greater prominence as supporters of the union movement, Bishop Thomas J. Murphy of Great Falls-Billings, Mont., said in an interview June 3.

He said issues were "more simply identified then," but that church response has been equally apparent in recent situations such as the closing of the steel plant in Youngstown, Ohio, and the resulting unemployment and suffering for the community at large.

Bishop Murphy said Catholic interest in labor issues had also been shown by widespread attention

given to Pope John Paul II's encyclical "Laborem Exercens." Issued in 1981, the document was the most recent in a series of "social encyclicals" that began 90 years before with Pope Leo XIII's "Rerum Novarum."

The bishop was interviewed after an address June 3 in the Shepherd's Speak series of St. James Cathedral in Brooklyn. He spoke on "The Dignity of Human Labor: Developing a Christian Spirituality of Work."

Bishop Murphy based much of his address on "Laborem Exercens," and said it led to the conclusion that "human labor has the possibility of bringing people to a deeper relationship with God, offers them participa-

tion in the redemptive plan of God and calls them to live out the ministry of Jesus."

He said the encyclical has two key ideas: "work is for the person, not the person for work" and "the priority of labor over capital."

In a question period after the address and in the interview, Bishop Murphy declined to comment on the implications of those two ideas for American society, or to suggest how he thought they should be developed in the forthcoming bishops' pastoral on economics.

But he disagreed with the view that bishops should confine themselves to general principles and avoid dealing with specific problems. That, he said, would mean "setting

aside a whole field of experience where the Gospel does not speak."

Bishop Murphy said the "high priority" given by Pope John Paul to "developing a Christian spirituality of work" was indicated not only by the encyclical but also by an address to a mass audience of industrial workers, agricultural laborers and fishermen during his recent Korean tour.

He said the pope "emphasized strongly the dignity and value of work whereby human beings share in the work of creation with the challenge to unite our work with the mission of our Savior to bring about a new earth where justice dwells and we contribute to the coming of the kingdom of God."

Much of the bishop's address was oriented to the church's role in helping individuals use the "lens of faith" to gain a true perception of their work. "There is the desperate need to recognize and acknowledge human work as a vocation," he said.

Bishop Murphy's appearance at St. James Cathedral concluded this year's Shepherds Speak series, the cathedral's fifth year of bringing bishops from throughout the United States to address topics of special concern.

The cathedral's pastoral team arranged the series out of a desire to let bishops who have shown leadership on some issue before the church gain a wider hearing outside their own dioceses.

Though the series is advertised in The New York Times and promoted in other ways throughout the metropolitan area, attendance has been low. About 50 were present on June 3, and the number seldom goes much above 100. But the addresses are recorded and reach a wider audience through sale of the tapes.

The cathedral also sponsors three other series each year — one of women addressing issues of special concern to women each October and two addressing selected devotional themes in Advent and Lent.

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Cardinal Backs Minister On Anti-Pornography Drive

New York (NC) — Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia has called on Catholics to join an ecumenical campaign launched by a Presbyterian minister to combat pornography.

Religious leaders must give the issue increased attention, he said, because the "merchants of pornography" who formerly ignored moral principles are now directly "attacking religious authority, religious teaching and religious teachers."

Pornographic publications show sacrilegious depictions of Christ, Mary, priests, Religious and, in at least one recent case, Pope John Paul II, he said in his keynote address at a conference June 1-3 in New York, called by the anti-pornography agency, Morality in Media.

About 160 people representing more than 50 dioceses plus organizations such as the Knights of Columbus attended. They were asked to help launch an effort to be carried on in coordination with the National Consultation on Pornography and Obscenity, Inc.

This movement grew out of an initiative by the Rev. Jerry Kirk, pastor of College Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati. He chairs a 15-member leadership group that is seeking to gather 1,000 Christian leaders in Cincinnati Sept. 6-7 to unite the Christian community in combatting pornography.

Morality in Media is an interfaith agency. But Jesuit Father Morton Hill, its founder and president, said Mr. Kirk was asking for separate action by the different churches preparatory to the joint effort, and had called on Morality in Media to take the lead for the Catholic Church because there was "no other vehicle."

At the conference, Morality in Media proposed a five-year program with the appointment of a full-time "director of pornography confrontation" in each diocese for a one-year period.

The campaign's objectives for the first year are "an outpouring of expression to President Reagan, thanking him for his concern and requesting a direct order to the Department of Justice to enforce federal obscenity laws vigorously" and working for state laws against pornography on cable television.

Other speakers included Franciscan Father Bruce Ritter of the New York ministry to runaway youth, Covenant House; Stephen Galebach of the White House Working Group on Pornography and retired FBI obscenity investigator William Kelly.

All-Stars

Dave Dasch and Tim Barone of Ithaca College have been selected to the Independent College Athletic Conference (ICAC) baseball all-star first team.

Dasch, a 1982 graduate of Cardinal Mooney High School, was also named conference player of the year.

Barone, a senior outfielder, was a 1980 graduate of Cardinal Mooney.

Noting that he had been chairman of the Legion of Decency, Cardinal Krol said its demise has left the Catholic Church without a way to organize efforts against pornography. He said he was "considering very seriously" asking the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to take some action.

Cardinal Krol said that the mentality of those who rejected Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical "Humanae Vitae" led to acceptance of pornography.

The encyclical, he said, insisted on "the necessary linkage of love and life" in stating that every sexual act must be open to the possibility of procreation. "When you have people who take away the life dimension, then you're setting up sex gratification as the norm," he said. "Once this is accepted, there are no limits."



Youngster Wins Three Gold Medals

Erika Eichelberger, a third grader at St. Pius Tenth School, was a triple gold medal winner at the Skating Institute of Rochester Invitational on Saturday, May 12. Some 90 competitive skaters from upper New York State and parts of Canada participated. Miss Eichelberger, 9, the youngest skater in her competitive group, won her medals in the freestyle and compulsory moves events. She then teamed with two other local skaters, Mary Ciravolo and Amy Melville, also representing the Genesee Figure Skating Club, to win the Juvenile Team Compulsory Event.



Tantalo To Attend Notre Dame

Frank Tantalo of Chili, a senior at Aquinas Institute, has been accepted and will attend the University of Notre Dame this fall. Tantalo is the recipient of a scholarship awarded by the Notre Dame Club of Rochester and has also received several other awards sponsored through the university. At Aquinas, Tantalo has been a member of the St. Thomas Club honor roll, was on the varsity soccer team, and was recently recognized in Who's Who Among American High School Students.

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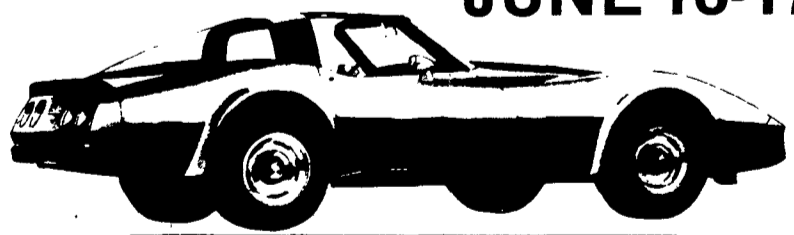
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