

Crisis on the Seas

James Delaney of the Rochester office of the United States Catholic Conference's Migration and Refugee Services last week drew attention to recent reports of piracy against boats filled with Vietnamese refugees.

A USCC report claimed that the attacks "continue unabated," and that only about a half of the money authorized by Congress to police the waters has been allocated this year.

The USCC report stated that since the situation first came to international attention in 1979, "multiple attacks continue to occur on more than half of all refugee boats arriving in Thailand, resulting in hundreds of deaths, rapes, and kidnappings per year."

"Given the boatloads of refugees that perish without survivors and the reluctance of Vietnamese women to speak of the atrocities committed against them, such statistics... should be consid-

ered conservative at best," the report said.

The USCC service is the largest private, voluntary agency working in this field in the U.S.

The agency's report states that 77 percent of Vietnamese refugee boats were subjected to such attacks in 1981, the last year for which statistics are available. Some boats were attacked more than once. The total number of attacks that year was 1,100.

Aside from the human suffering, the issue has also become critical because the \$5 million Congress authorized to be spent combating the problem is about set to reach its cutoff date with only about half given to agencies capable of handling the piracy.

In mid-1982, the USCC said, the United Nations high commissioner for refugees organized an effort with \$3.7 million in donations from several countries including the U.S.

The program helped supply upgraded technical equipment and material and involved the coordinated efforts of the Royal Thai Navy, the Harbor Department and the Marine Police, but resulted in few apprehensions of pirates, while arriving Vietnamese refugees reported continuing attacks, the USCC said.

Earlier efforts, notably one between the U.S. and Thai governments in 1981, had also met with only limited success, "primarily because the effort could not cope with the vastness of the problem," the USCC said.

"Congress authorized \$10 million for anti-piracy efforts in August 1983, with half earmarked for expenditure in fiscal year 1984 and the other half designated for fiscal year 1985."

"At last report, \$2.3 million of the FY 84 funds have been allocated to anti-piracy efforts of the United Nations high commissioner for refu-

Pirate Attacks against Refugee Boats Continue Unabated, Church Unit Says

tees... An additional \$150,000 have been allocated to the Red Crescent Society of Malaysia, a branch of the International Red Cross.

"Additional projects related to anti-piracy efforts are being studied. As the Sept. 30 FY 84 cutoff approaches, the State Department said, monies not allocated for anti-piracy projects may be considered for other programs assisting refugees," the USCC said.

In 1981, there were 371 refugee deaths in the attacks and 600 women were sexually assaulted, most as subjects of repeated, multiple rape, the

USCC report stated. "Another 250 women and girls were abducted. Many of those not killed were later sold into forced prostitution or labor in southern Thailand and Malaysia. Few abductees are ever found or heard from again," the report stated.

The pirates are mostly former crewmen with Thai fishing fleets. They are described by the USCC as "career criminals" who "forcibly impose a reign of terror on those defenseless in the open sea. Their domain is 80,000 square miles of ocean that lie between Vietnam and the Thai-Malay peninsula to

the west."

The USCC further said: "Because of the vast expanse of open water, inadequate marine identification requirements of the Thai government, and the sophisticated navigational and communication capabilities of the pirates — compared with the meager equipment and facilities of law enforcement units — few pirate boats are ever identified. Arrests are few and far between and, in recent years, only four pirates have been apprehended, tried, convicted, and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment each."

Our Positions the Same, Bush Tells K. of C.

Denver (NC) -- Vice President George Bush told the Knights of Columbus Aug. 8 that the Knights' values of "family, faith and neighborhood" are "the values the (Reagan) administration has stood for these past four years."

In a speech to the Knights' annual Supreme Council meeting in Denver, Bush criticized his Democratic opponents and said President Reagan's policies have helped American families.

He also mentioned the administration's consultations and meetings with Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Pio Laghi, Vatican ambassador to the United States.

And he praised the late Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York for his belief in "the gift of life" and lauded the Knights themselves for contributing some \$33 million and 13 million hours in 1983 "to the service of those in need."

Bush, alluding to his vice presidential opponent Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, D-N.Y., pointed out that "in case you hadn't noticed it, this is an election year. And I'm a candidate for an office people used to ignore, although this year it's a little different."

Bush, in remarks enthusiastically received by the Knights, repeatedly cited Reagan's views on tuition tax credits, a right-to-life constitutional amendment, anti-communism, foreign policy, the economy, school prayer and other issues, which he said coincide with the Knights' beliefs, not the Democrats.

He tied "belief in family" to the "revival of the economy" under Reagan.

"I don't need to tell you what the economy was doing to families when we came into office," Bush said. "Taxes and inflation were soaring... it was becoming harder and harder for families to save. Interest rates by the end of their (Carter-Mondale) term were so high that mortgage money disappeared."

Nonetheless, "it took President Reagan just two years to turn around that supposedly hopeless American economy," the vice president said. "For each of the last two years, the American working family's income, after taking out taxes and inflation, went up — the first time that's happened in

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almost 10 years.

"We've stood for fairness in helping working parents bear the cost of education when they send their children to a parochial or independent school," he said in a reference to tuition tax credits.

He criticized Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale for opposing Reagan policies in Nicaragua, which Bush said were aimed at bringing "freedom and democracy to that country and to meet the communist threat there."

He said that Mondale has chosen to "remain silent about the humiliation of the Holy Father in Managua last year, and about the massacre of Miskito Indians, or about

the arrest and deportation of priests..."

Bush's comment about the pope in Managua was a reference to the March 1983 shouting match that erupted between the pope and a group of Sandinista youths who tried to drown out the pope's criticism during an outdoor Mass of church leaders who adopt political ideologies.

"Does he (Mondale) forget that just two weeks ago the Holy Father stood on the balcony overlooking St. Peter's Square and said that the Sandinista government is oppressing and attempting to abolish the church in Nicaragua?" Bush added.

Sainthood Process Begun for Cdl. Cooke

New York (NC) -- Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York has appointed Capuchin Father Benedict J. Groeschel as "postulator and promoter" for the cause of canonization of the late Cardinal Terence Cooke, with the preliminary step of beatification as the immediate goal.

The appointment was announced at a press conference Aug. 6 by Father Peter Finn, archdiocesan communications director. Father Groeschel said he was already preparing a biography of Cardinal Cooke when Archbishop O'Connor asked him to take the assignment as postulator. The cardinal's writings must be examined, and documentation will be gathered on reports of miracles and other favors granted through the late cardinal's intercession.

According to Father Groeschel, some reports of possible healing miracles had come in, one a case of cancer that went into remission with no apparent medical cause.

To assist in promoting the cause of

sainthood, a Cardinal Cooke Guild will be established Oct. 6, the first anniversary of his death. Father Groeschel, who will head the guild, said it will be open to non-Catholics and will raise funds to pay expenses for the cause, including the employment of staff.

He said no costs will be paid out of regular archdiocesan funds.

Father Groeschel noted that a formal approach to the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, headed by Cardinal Pietro Palazzini, could not begin until five years after Cardinal Cooke's death, approximately the time he expected to finish the biography.

A decree will then be issued with an invitation for testimony, he said, noting that negative testimony must also be heard. Under regulations instituted in 1983, he said, greater responsibility lies with the local bishop and postulator for compiling evidence.

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

No Love Without God

Dear Reader,

Two weeks ago I wrote of the three kinds of love which the Greek words designate: "eros," "phelos" and "agape." We identified agape in the Christian scheme of things with the love that comes from God through Jesus. It is a covenant love whereby two people give their lives to each other until death parts them.

The question may well be asked — considering how lofty the ideal of covenant love is, how can people, especially very young people, achieve that love? Since there is so little selfishness in the world, how could we ever expect married couples to live this ideal?

My answer to that question would be — communication.

I am taking the word in its very root meaning, which is to thoroughly unite. The first level of this

communication must necessarily be with God because it is He who has taught us the meaning of covenant love and it is He through Jesus who empowers us to live this love. Without God there is no love.

It is a commonly quoted statistic that couples who are committed Christians have 400 times more chance of their marriage working than do others.

I believe that the reason for this is their constant communication with God in prayer which teaches them the meaning of covenant love as it is lived in Jesus. It is he who makes his marriage vows with us every day: "This is my body which will be given up for you; this is my blood of the new and everlasting covenant which will be shed for you."

These words could very realistically be the marital vows of a couple joined in covenant love.

When they are a part of one's life and are very important in one's life, then the possibility of the knowledge of covenant love grows

apace. The Eucharist also contains within itself the power to enable us to live this kind of love not only in relationship to God but to one another.

It is no wonder then that people who are committed Christians are more capable of living out this covenant love in their daily lives.

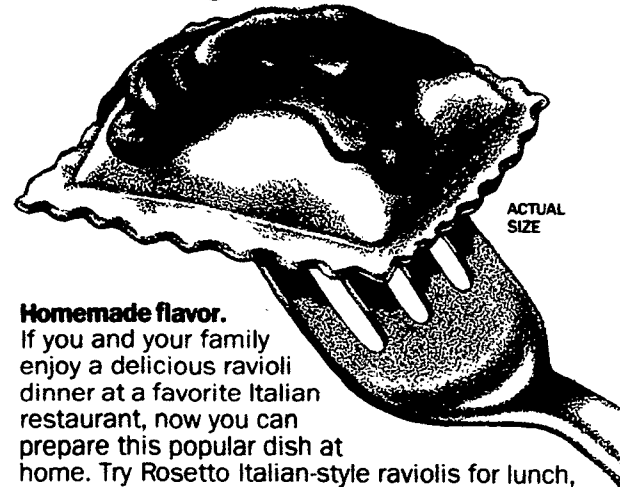
As they experience week after week Jesus breaking the bread of his life to nourish them, so they begin to understand the need for them to break the bread of their own lives to nourish each other. They also receive the power to do precisely that, difficult as it is.

Being married in a church signifies precisely this dependence upon God in the marital relationship. It is not simply a pretty place or a traditional place, or a place that pleases parents. That is why it is so distressing to priests in parish ministry when young people come to be married in the church building and have no relationship to it whatsoever, or who, in their heart of hearts, despise it.

They are basically passing up the most promising help that they could get to make their marriage whole and beautiful.

Next week I will address myself to communications which are necessary between man and wife if there is going to be unity in the marriage.

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