

'Alice in Blunderland' Featured at Peace Confab

The program for "Facing the Challenge of Peace... Themes of Hope," the diocesan conference on the U.S. bishops' peace pastoral, includes a performance of "Alice in Blunderland."

According to Sam Merrill, spokesperson of the local group Crossroads, which will be staging the performance, "Alice in Blunderland" is a musical allegory based on the Lewis Carroll "Alice" stories.

The show features seven original songs, including "Leave My DNA Alone," and "God Save Us from Ourselves."

A synopsis of the show concludes that Alice, "reassured... that no government or corporation can stand up against people who follow the lead of their convictions, returns through the magic mirror to do her part to save her world for the children."

Crossroads, Merrill said,

"is a local grassroots citizen's group — an unique phenomenon bringing together people from different faiths, backgrounds, political persuasions and professions to address the dangers of our nuclear age through the musical allegory. The cast contains children, adults and families."

He said the show was written and produced by Legacy, a similar group in Kent, Ohio. The musical

production "turns the familiar Alice in Wonderland into a modern morality play," he said.

"What results is a whimsical experience about a not so whimsical possibility that we all face in today's world — nuclear extinction. The thrust is to inspire audiences to learn about and to involve themselves in the nuclear issue," he said.

The diocesan conference will also feature addresses by

Father J. Bryan Hehir, executive secretary to the United States Catholic Conference Department of Social Development and Peace; and Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

In addition, a number of workshops are scheduled as are youth activities.

The program will open 7 p.m., Friday, Sept. 28 and will conclude 4 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 29, at Our Lady of Mercy High School on

Blossom Road.

The event is being sponsored by the Bishop's Steering Committee for "The Challenge of Peace," the diocesan Division of Education, and the diocesan Department of Religious Education.

Further information on the event is available by calling Maribeth Mancini or James Lund, at the diocesan Pastoral Center, (716) 328-3210.

Reagan Visits, Praises Buffalo Diocese Project

Buffalo, N.Y. (NC) -- A senior citizen housing project developed by the Diocese of Buffalo with federal help was praised Sept. 12 by President Reagan as an example of cooperative effort at its finest.

Reagan also repeated his call for tuition tax credits and quoted Pope John Paul II's challenge on meeting human needs to highlight his own economic goals.

The president traveled to Buffalo to dedicate the Santa

Maria Towers, a non-profit, low-income residence for senior citizens and handicapped people built with federal assistance under auspices of Catholic Charities in the Buffalo diocese.

Reagan, who visited the project with Bishop Edward D. Head of Buffalo, said Santa Maria Towers demonstrates what people can do cooperatively.

"No single sector of our nation -- government, business, labor or non-profit or-

ganization -- can solve our problems alone," he said.

"But working together, pooling our resources and building on our strengths, we can accomplish great things. And the Santa Maria Towers -- this wonderful project for senior citizens and the handicapped -- is truly a great thing."

Reagan also lauded efforts of another group, the St. Stanislaus Community Organization, for its efforts in planning another local pro-

ject, Msgr. Adamski Village.

"Buffalo is telling America your neighborhoods and communities are caring for your senior citizens and handicapped," Reagan said.

"His Holiness Pope John Paul II recently remarked we must meet the challenge to build a society where to live is to work for the good of others, where to govern is to serve, where no one is used as a tool, no one left out and no one downtrodden, where all can live in real

brotherhood," Reagan said.

Later, addressing community leaders at a luncheon sponsored by the Federation of Italian-American Societies and the St. Stanislaus Community Organization, Reagan mentioned two of his favorite school-related issues, tuition tax credits and school prayer.

"I think our government should help make it easier for those who believe in traditional values," Reagan said at the luncheon, held at

St. Youville College, a Catholic institution.

"That's why I have supported -- and will continue to support -- tuition tax credits for those who pay into the tax system to support public schools but who also take their savings to send their children to parochial or independent schools. And I support -- and will continue to support -- the right of voluntary prayer in the schools."

Lib Theologian, Vatican Official In 'Conversation'

Vatican City (NC) -- Franciscan Father Leonardo Boff said he could be led to "deepen" his thought on liberation theology following the review of his arguments by the Vatican's doctrinal authorities.

But the Brazilian priest, a leading liberation theologian, told reporters minutes after his Sept. 7 meeting with the head of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, that the session had been a "good" opportunity to "explain my arguments on this book."

He also said the Vatican's latest critique of liberation theology represents a "European point of view" and needs further documentation with help from "those involved in liberation theology."

"It is a very good day because we in Brazil today have Independence Day and for me it is also independence of this problem in Rome," the priest said in halting English.

Father Boff was called to the meeting by the congregation, formerly known as the "Holy Office," to discuss his book, "Church: Charism and Power."

He said that he had been told by "insiders" at the congregation to expect a response from the cardinals, who make up its membership, by Christmas or the first part of 1985. The response of the cardinals, Father Boff added, will then go to the pope who, he said, "has the last word."

Shortly after the meeting, the Vatican press office issued a statement, developed by Cardinal Ratzinger and Father Boff, describing the meeting as "a conversation."

Father Boff said that during the meeting, which took place in a small room within the congregation building, he had the "freedom to express myself."

He said that he had answered questions "clear

and had "no worries" as to the outcome. He added that he wrote the book, which consists of a series of lectures, "within the context of human rights and not to provoke discussion."

The meeting at the congregation, he added, was "not a question of victory or defeat."

"I am not here to win a fight," he explained after the meeting, "just to explain the truth as I see it." He added that there has been no attempt to silence him on the issues but admitted that the cardinals could lead him to "deepen his thought."

The scope of the meeting, said the Vatican statement, was "to offer Father Boff the possibility of clarifying, in view of the previous publication of the same work, some aspects of the book which had been listed and which created difficulty."

The Vatican did not specify which aspects of the book were in question. Father Boff, however, during the press conference said that among the issues of concern were ecclesiology, his methodology, and the language in which he expressed himself when he criticized church authority.

Father Boff also said that the meeting with Cardinal Ratzinger, which was followed by a second meeting which also included Brazilian Cardinals Aloisio Lorscheider of Fortaleza and Cardinal Paulo Arns of Sao Paulo, was only a first step in the congregation process.

Further steps, he said will include a study by the cardinals who comprise the congregation of the 50-page defense which he brought to the meeting. That study, he said, will take place in October.

Father Boff said the congregation's recent writings on liberation theology also were discussed and that Cardinal Ratzinger indicated that in preparing a further document on liberation theology, he would cooperate "from

CHD Lists Grants, Answers Criticism

Washington (NC) -- The Campaign for Human Development, the U.S. bishops' anti-poverty program, announced 1984 grants Sept. 10 totaling \$7 million to 220 self-help projects across the country.

At the same time the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the director of CHD defended the program from recent criticism that it funds "leftist political activists."

"I am proud to say that because of this (CHD) effort, countless Americans have gained a greater sense of human dignity -- and a voice, individually and collectively, in decision-making processes that affect their lives," Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, NCCB president, said as he announced the awards in Washington.

"The funded projects in which low-income people organize to improve their lives are firmly grounded in American values and tradition -- and not unlike the town

meetings that characterized an earlier period in our history," Bishop Malone said.

Father Marvin Mottet, executive director of CHD, responded to a 16-page criticism which surfaced in Texas in July. The report has been attributed to Thomas Pauken, director of ACTION, a federal agency coordinating volunteer programs.

The unsigned document said that, unknown to most of its Catholic contributors, CHD funds "leftist political activists."

Father Mottet said CHD helps the poor and "if that is leftist, then John Paul II and all popes in this century are leftists" because they have supported social justice programs.

He said leadership training provided by the organizations funded by CHD allows the poor "to become full participants in our society," which he said was healthier than letting anger build up into a 1960s-like "explosion."

William Velasquez of the National Hispanic Voter Registration Campaign, a grant recipient, said the document critical of CHD mentioned his efforts in south Texas. He attributed the remarks to fear of increasing numbers of Hispanic voters.

Some Texans consider voter registration drives among Hispanics a "left-wing plot" and a "confrontation," he said.

This year's largest grant was \$90,000 to Valley Interfaith, a project working on housing, hospital care and job development in the lower Rio Grande Valley of south Texas.

Present at the press conference were Velasquez, whose organization received \$35,000; Jenice View of the

Unemployed Rural Workers Project, which received \$40,000; and Jo Dukes, vice president of Nine to Five National Association of Working Women, which received \$35,000.

Ms. View said her organization's CHD funds would go toward a jobs task force in rural areas. Ms. Dukes said her association plans to open chapters in eight additional states and work on the Nine to Five Working Women's agenda, which includes policies for working families, support for older working women and safe working conditions.

Since CHD was established by the bishops in 1970, about \$82 million has been allocated to more than 2,200 projects.

South African Boycott

London (NC) -- Most of South Africa's Indian and mixed-race minorities boycotted recent parliamentary elections because blacks are still denied the vote and because they felt the first-time representation for their communities still fell short of conferring real power, a spokesman for the Catholic Institute for International Relations said Aug. 30. The boycott effectively rejected the new South African constitution which created new houses of Parliament for the two communities, said the Rev. Kenneth Slack at a London press conference.

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