

# USCC Again Pleads for Sponsors for Refugees

In what has become a continuing and urgent project, the United States Catholic Conference, and, in Rochester, the Catholic Family Center, is appealing to parishes and individual diocesans to act as sponsors for Southeast Asian refugees.

To that end, James Delaney, the USCC refugee resettlement officer here who works out of the Catholic Family Center, has sent letters throughout the diocese asking to speak to groups about the issue.

To the presidents of parish councils, Delaney noted: "With the certainty that you can readily appreciate the genuine gravity of the refugee problem and of the diocese's, USCC's and refugees' absolute reliance upon active parish participation in the resettlement program, I remain hopeful of hearing from you on this vital matter at your earliest convenience."

To pastoral assistants, Delaney wrote: "Given the American government's recently announced intention to accelerate the resettlement of all 8 to 15,000 Amerasians in Vietnam and upwards of 15,000 Vietnamese political prisoners during the next three years, the USCC and the diocese urgently require the active participation and support of all parishes in the diocese in order to effectively and smoothly accommodate the expected influx.

"Kindly note that this office is completely unable to approve any of these expected cases for resettlement in this diocese without a sponsoring group and/or individual having been identified beforehand.

"In short, parish sponsorships are needed now to eliminate the otherwise frenzied and dire last-minute appeals which have often characterized the diocese's sponsorship recruitment efforts in the past.

"With your invaluable assistance, it is sincerely hoped that the Rochester Diocese and its individual parishes can be prepared for a possible influx by late spring, 1985.

"So very much depends upon you to translate this hope and objective into reality."

Delaney observed, "As American citizens and Christians, the future of our Amerasian progeny currently in Vietnam should, in truth, be our collective responsibility — a responsibility that cannot be convincingly denied. This last vestige of America's presence in Vietnam should, at long last, be removed with alacrity and compassion."

A fact sheet Delaney provided states that "of the more than 55,000 persons who have emigrated from Vietnam since 1979, 16,000 were received by the United States. To date, an estimated 500 Amerasian children/young adults have been

resettled in the United States. The USCC has resettled one Asian-American and 14 Amerasian cases during the past year."

In that last distinction, the fact sheet notes that Asian-Americans are children who possess documented proof of having been fathered by an American citizen. Amerasians, on the other hand, "must be able to convincingly establish by appearance, witnesses and/or documentation that they were born of American citizens between January 1951 to October 1982."

To particularize the need, Delaney said: "Catholic Family Center is actively searching for parishes willing to resettle a refugee family.

"In short, we are urgently in need of sponsorship commitments for Cambodian, Vietnamese, Laotian and Amerasian cases. These particular cases may be expected within the next six to twelve months.

"They are without relatives, friends or sponsors in the U.S., and are, therefore, unable to exit detention and processing centers overseas until a sponsoring group is forthcoming."

Delaney asked that anyone wishing further information, or to offer refugee sponsorship to contact him at the Catholic Family Center, (716) 546-7220, ext. 53.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

## Authority And Title

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 23/1-12. (R1) Mal. 1/14-2/2. (R2) 1 Thess. 2/7-9,13.

Of course, this dates me. But when I was a kid one radio program everybody listened to was "Amos and Andy." On one show Andy was engaged in a bit of dialogue with "the Kingfish," explaining that the lodge meeting had been cancelled that evening, "because the grand, exalted, almighty, invincible Potentate done got beat up by his wife last night."

Sunday's gospel deals with authority and titles.

Jesus speaks of the authority of the Scribes and the Pharisees to teach. He does not question their authority, but He criticizes their practice: it does not match the teaching. Jesus complained of two things: first, the rigor of their interpretation of the Law (draining religion of its vitality and relevance); and secondly, their vanity and hypocrisy, evidenced by the width of their phylacteries (small leather cases containing four parchments with texts from Exodus and Deuteronomy) and the size of their tassels (preserved today on Jewish prayer shawls). "Do as they say," Jesus taught, "but not as they do — for they are hypocrites at heart."

Then Jesus went to discuss honorific titles, such as, master (rabbi), father (abba), and teacher (moreh). Our Lord didn't intend to give a lesson on nomenclature. He was not concerned with words as such, but with the spirit behind them. We may have heard someone say, "It is not what you said that hurts, but how you said it." So our Lord, in this instance was forbidding in his followers the vanity that would threaten to intrude itself between people and God. He was forbidding any acknowledgment of fatherhood, for instance, that would obscure the fatherhood of God, nothing more.

When Matthew wrote his gospel, it was against the Jews of Jamnia, after the fall of Jerusalem. The

Scribes and Pharisees there had set themselves up against the authority of

Christ Himself, had put their interpretations above Christ's. It was this drawing of attention to self away from God that is condemned, not words or titles.

Jesus would never forbid a human son to use the word "father," for God had said, "Honor your father and mother." Nor would he forbid the term if addressed to one who is God's representative. Calling a priest "Father" re-

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minds one of the Fatherhood of God.

Mary used the word "Your father and I sought you sorrowing." St. Paul called himself father of the Corinthian Church.

What is condemned in titling is the arrogance it may foster. Sometimes we can become like the daughter of the country squire who liked to be called "Colonel." The little girl was asked if her father's hen

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laid eggs. "Well, of course they can," she replied haughtily, "but in our position, you know, they don't really have to."

In Alan Paton's book, "Instrument of Thy Peace," he tells of a rabbi, a cantor, and a humble synagogue janitor who were preparing for the Day of Atonement. The rabbi beat his breast and said, "I am nothing. I am nothing." The cantor beat his breast

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and said, "I am nothing. I am nothing." The janitor beat his breast and said, "I am nothing. I am nothing."

The rabbi said to the cantor, "Look who thinks he's nothing."

Titles are all right. We have court titles, we have religious titles, and we have courtesy titles. Each has a history of its own. Titles are legitimate, but they also have their dangers.

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