

Editorials

Forgotten

At the risk of sounding over-pastoralized, a point made by Bishop Joseph A. Francis of Newark on a forgotten pastoral is sharp and painfully to the point.

At the meeting of the bishops in Washington, he reminded the prelates of this pastoral they approved, on racism, in 1979.

"Had our words been taken seriously by clergy, Religious and laity, millions of blacks and other racial minorities in our country and perhaps around the world would really have something to celebrate on this fifth anniversary," he said.

Bishop Francis, who helped prepare that document, "Brothers and Sisters to Us," which condemned racism as a sin, wondered aloud if that proclamation had received the same attention and

acclaim as the more recent ones on peace and economics would there be a change in the attitude of many Catholics concerning race. As it is, he has seen no change in the past five years. His vision is acute.

Perhaps because of Bishop Francis' remarks, 17 bishops spoke up against the Reagan policy of "constructive agreement" with South Africa, which looks the other way at that nation's infamous, sanctioned apartheid. While this is a start -- the U.S. bishops have been woefully silent on the situation in South Africa which calls out to heaven for correction. They have also procrastinated on confronting the racism which exists in the U.S. church itself.

Bishop Francis rightfully says opposition to racism is also a pro-life matter, much the same as opposing abortion or nuclear war. Then he raised an eerie thought: Racism could be even a greater problem after a nuclear war because "it is inconceivable that people denied their rights in normal times and under

somewhat favorable conditions will enjoy any rights at all in a time of national and global chaos if they happen to be black."

Bishop Francis asked the bishops to revivify the pastoral against racism. They should.

Baby Fae

Baby Fae touched us all. It is always edifying that when the focus falls on one person, on one flickering heart, on one tiny, helpless baby, that we all recognize the sanctity of life.

Baby Fae never knew how the world yearned for her survival, how it hurt when she didn't make it. For her brief period of struggle, we were all pro-life.

Is there a continuing lesson there? Should not that be Baby Fae's legacy?

Opinions

Appeal Criticized

EDITOR:

This letter is composed of four parts: (1) a purpose statement, (2) a recommendation, (3) a rationale statement for the recommendations, and (4) a concluding statement.

The purpose of this letter is to address two distinct but related issues: (1) the appropriateness of the Annual ThanksGiving Appeal, and (2) the diocesan commitment to Catholic education, particularly, urban Catholic education. Based upon the lack of response from the bishop and the appeal planners, the primary recommendation in this letter is that urban parishes, particularly urban parishes with schools, boycott the appeal by refusing to solicit contributions from parishioners in 1984 and in those years in which a parish is experiencing serious financial difficulties. The rationale for this recommendation will become apparent in the text that follows.

The Fourth Annual ThanksGiving Appeal has begun and follows the pattern of previous years in spite of the recommendations, the pleas and the concerns of parish pastors and parish councils. Pastors have requested that Appeal quotas not be raised so that parishes could meet their own needs. Parish councils have pleaded not only for a freeze on the appeal level but also for a reduction so that their respective parishes could "survive." The response from the diocese, for those who did receive a response, was, at best, sanguine and did NOT address the issues directly.

The diocese has deemed it appropriate to discontinue the practice of returning overages from the Thanks-Giving Appeal to the parishes. The position of the diocese is that a more equitable distribution of quotas would result, thus less affluent parishes could expect to have their quotas reduced. Poorer parishes were advised that their quotas would be reduced. However, the pastors were not informed until late into the process that the reductions would occur over a five year period and not immediately as they were led to believe. A simple mathematical computation makes it obvious how much MORE money will fill the diocesan coffers given this new approach. It is certain that many parish leaders will lose the incentive to extol the merits of the appeal when

there is no benefit to their own parish.

The new direction of the bishop and the appeal planners demonstrates a lack of concern and sensitivity for those who are unable to contribute; viz., the elderly on a fixed and limited income, the single parent, or the unemployed who have families. Certainly these are not the only contributors; however, urban parishes are composed of these categories of parishioners and, therefore, the burden to meet unreasonably high quotas is left to the few in the parish. This is particularly true in urban parishes which maintain a school.

The bishop and the diocesan education committee have been asked about their commitment to Catholic education. The bishop and the education committee have NOT stated that they support Catholic education sufficiently to subsidize it where urban schools are experiencing fiscal constraints because of other parish needs. Urban schools are "mission" schools because the enrollment is predominately non-Catholic. The bishop travels to Oxolatan, Mexico, yet the diocesan leaders disregard the pleas of the urban "missions." The diocesan education committee demands a "five year plan" for each of its schools, but has NONE of its own. The diocesan education committee provides "criteria" for the successful operation of schools without requesting needs analyses, or resources and constraint analyses, from each school. The diocesan education committee is not composed of priests and sisters, but does NOT include professional educators, planners, or developers from among the laity. If the diocesan leadership does not adopt a more responsible position and attitude toward urban Catholic schools, and if the diocese will not subsidize urban schools beyond student grants, then the result will be more school closings in the vein of the C.I.C.P. experience.

How are the ThanksGiving Appeal and the Catholic education issues related? The answer is that the bishop and the ThanksGiving Appeal planners should include a provision for funding poorer parishes which are attempting to spread the gospel and to witness Christ's presence in the local neighborhoods through Catholic schools. The diocese should freeze its ever increasing appeal demands and focus on the quality of a few programs rather than establishing new programs throughout the diocese. The diocesan leadership should direct its attention to the question of EQUITY in dealing with the parishes in terms of Appeal

quotas. In other words, review the resources and constraints of each parish and then determine a fair quota based on an equitable formula. Do NOT be changing formulae each year.

One particular parish has 55 percent non-Catholic enrollment. Up until now, the parishioners have expected to assume the responsibility for meeting the quota while 55 percent non-Catholic families have no obligations. The same parish is faced with more than \$50,000 of repair work plus the possible additional cost of \$250,000 to remove a defective part of the church structure. More than 50 percent of the parishioners of this parish are 65 years old or older. How will the people satisfy the demands of the appeal and meet the needs of this parish? Maybe it's time for the affluent suburban parishes to share their wealth with their less affluent brothers and sisters! Where are our "brother's keepers?"

In conclusion, let me urge the urban parishes to boycott the ThanksGiving Appeal until they are able to satisfy the educational and/or the parish financial needs. This is a question of justice. The poor and less affluent have a RIGHT to the same educational opportunities as the affluent. How you decide to respond to the appeal in the next few weeks will determine the direction that the diocesan planners pursue in the future. If you have similar concerns, or an opposing view, please write to me at St. Augustine's Parish.

Dr. Henry Maher President, St. Augustine's Parish Council Chairman, ThanksGiving Appeal, 1981, 82,83,84

Diocesan Response

1. Concerns raised about urban Catholic education: At Bishop Matthew H. Clark's direction, the divisions of Education, Urban Services and Support Ministries conducted a series of five hearings involving seven urban parishes in the Fall of 1983 to ascertain their needs, resources and future concerns. Based on these results, these divisions have developed and refined, through parish hearings, criteria to be used in professionally evaluating standardized data being submitted by each of our urban schools. This process will provide a comprehensive plan for urban parochial schools by Jan. 1, 1986.

During the current fiscal year (1984-85), the Thanks Giving Appeal is giving approximately \$124,000 to tu-

ition subsidy to provide families with the opportunity to attend Catholic elementary or secondary schools, \$133,000 in grants to urban parishes and \$140,000 for ministry to urban minorities. This half million dollars (\$500,000) in direct subsidy and ministry demonstrates the diocese's strong ongoing commitment to urban parishes. In addition to this, services and programs are provided by diocesan departments and Church related agencies to these parishes.

A task force is preparing a statement on a diocesan position regarding Catholic schools as evangelizers within our Church and community. The members of the task force represent laity, clergy and religious from our urban area.

2. Concerns raised about the annual Catholic Thanks giving appeal: Bishop Clark has listened carefully each year to the concerns raised about the appeal and made radical changes in the appeal where deemed necessary in response to concerns raised by pastors and parishioners.

In order to communicate the revisions in this year's appeal, Bishop Clark presented and discussed the modifications at:

-- Eight regional seminars with the priests of the diocese in August 1984;

-- Five regional workshops for the parish Appeal Executive Committees in September 1984. It is unfortunate that Dr. Maher did not attend any of these parish appeal seminars which Bishop Clark conducted.

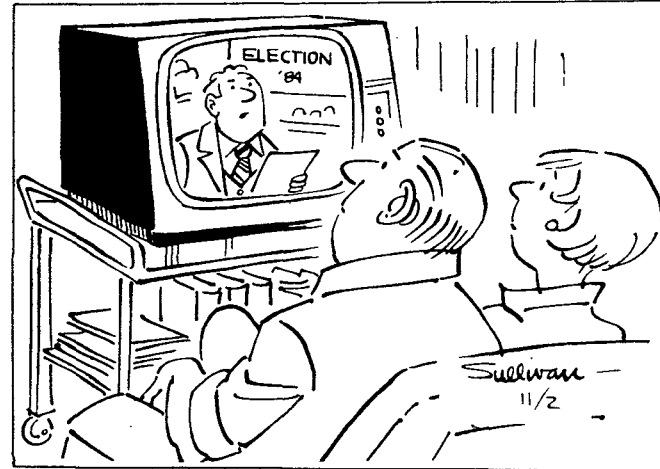
In these meetings, the bishop took the opportunity to present the history of the appeal, the programs that have been accomplished because of parishioners' generous contributions, the rationale behind the changes in this year's appeal and the challenges that still lie before us.

Bishop Clark also described that the annual appeal had eliminated the monthly assessment which previously was paid by each parish to the diocese.

The steps that have been taken to promote open dialogue while at the same time respecting the consultative processes in arriving at the procedures for this year's appeal are detailed below:

a. Reviewed input on evaluation questionnaires from clergy and lay leadership on both the parish and diocesan levels.

b. Reviewed results of annual appeals, economic indicators and diocesan needs working in conjunction with three representatives from each of the following groups: bishop's Financial Advisory Board, annual appeal



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leadership and division directors to arrive at the 1984 annual appeal goal.

c. Met extensively with the Priests Advisory Committee for the annual appeal to consider changing the pattern from the previous year's appeals regarding overage and the formula on which parish quotas are based.

d. The Center for Governmental Research provided the professional research assistance to the Priests Advisory Committee in developing many models for the diocesan formula and parish quotas.

e. The Priests Advisory committee recommended unanimously to the bishop that parish quotas be based on the adjusted average household income of people living within their parish boundaries using the 1980 federal census information as the source document. This committee strongly recommended this action as a significant step in arriving at equity in parish quotas.

f. The new formula responded directly to some of our parishes which had requested that their quotas remain the same or even possibly be reduced. As the new formula was applied to parishes in the diocese, the following results occurred:

-- 25 percent of our parishes had the same or a reduced parish quota from last year.

-- 50 percent of our parishes experienced an increase.

-- 25 percent of our parishes were challenged to greater giving levels.

All increased or decreases in parish quotas will be phased in over a five-year period.

g. A number of our parishes indicated that the diocese is assured of its budget each year because the parish quotas add up to the total amount needed from the appeal. The amount of funds needed from the 1984 an-

nual appeal is \$3,038,000. However, the assigned parish quotas total \$2,863,000. Because there is a \$175,000 difference, the bishop has requested that people be as generous as possible so that the diocese can continue these much needed programs. If the diocese does not realize this additional \$175,000, program modifications will have to be made. Thus, it is evident that there are neither surplus funds nor "much more money will fill the diocesan coffers" as presented in Dr. Maher's letter.

h. The diocesan expenditures are carefully monitored each year by the Ministerial Review Committee which is a standing committee of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. This committee examines the proposed plan of each department as well as its proposed budget. After the members are satisfied that there is no excess or unnecessary spending involved, the budget is presented to the entire DPC for study, modification and approval. There is an additional mid-year review of all departments to assure that all plans are being followed. All diocesan accounts are audited each year by the international accounting firm of Price Waterhouse and their findings are made public in a report printed in the Courier-Journal each year.

3. Ongoing evaluation process: As in previous years, an evaluation will seek input and observations about this year's appeal from all of our pastors and Parish Appeal Executive Committees. If a person wishes to provide input concerning the appeal, his/her comments can be given to the Parish Appeal Executive Committee who will be filling out a formal evaluation questionnaire.

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