

COURIER-JOURNAL

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15th Annual Christmas Fund Appeal Opens

Today marks the 15th anniversary of the Courier-Journal/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal to aid the neediest persons in the diocese. And today, the fund again opens, with a goal this year of \$90,000.

Since the beginning of the drive in 1969, diocesans have contributed more than \$630,000 to aid their brothers and sisters suffering in poverty in every quarter of the diocese.

As part of the drive, the Courier-Journal annually prints the true stories of the 100 "neediest cases" in the diocese. The stories are provided by agencies of Catholic Charities. The stories, however, are also representative of hundreds of other cases of great need.

While some contributors may be moved by a particular case to contribute to that particular family or individual, and other cases may solicit less response, the agencies of Catholic Charities must use their expertise in distributing the funds so that as many as possible may be helped.

Parishes and other organizations wishing to participate in the fund should contact Catholic Charities.

Contributions should be sent to:

Courier-Journal
Catholic Charities
Christmas Appeal
50 Chestnut St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14604

Neediest Cases In the Diocese

1 The Js are an elderly black couple living in a shack in a rural area. Since the shack is theirs, they won't move. Electricity and heating costs in the winter are very high because of lack of insulation. She receives about \$160 in Social Security and hasn't Medicaid, although her medications are very expensive. His Social Security is also small and he hasn't any pension.

2 S, nearly 70, has had mental health problems for more than 40 years. She lives in one room and receives SSI. She denies that she even has a family. Her children do care and try to communicate with her, but she will not even acknowledge their existence.

3 F is 75, receives very limited Social Security and is not eligible for SSI because he owns a small piece of property. His mental impairment makes community living very difficult. His limited income does not provide adequately for him to afford better housing, food and clothing.

4 J is a single mother of three young children. Presently, her family is struggling to overcome the effects of an abusive father. The father sexually molested the eldest daughter. J, shocked by what has happened is now, through counseling, trying help her daughter recover from the pain and confusion resulting from the abuse.

5 The Ds are a 10-member Vietnamese refugee family struggling to make ends meet. The father

COURIER-JOURNAL



Christmas Appeal

Give Generously

works part-time in a technical position and also attends school to advance professionally and earn more income. The mother attends English language classes and cares for the children's daily needs. They live in a sparsely furnished home.

6 T has been living on welfare with her four-year-old daughter because she wanted to remain at home during her child's formative years. Now she would like to return to school to develop job skills so she can become self-sufficient. However, she is very self-conscious about returning to school because she has no appropriate clothing. Because she is very overweight, it is difficult for her to find inexpensive clothing in her size.

7 A is a single parent of four young children. The children are in need of clothing and toys. Due to A's limited funds, she will not be able to provide anything extra for her children at Christmas.

Continued on Page 4



Photos by Terrance J. Brennan

Feast Closes Triduum

More than 200 Hispanics gathered on Monday night, Nov. 19 at Holy Redeemer Parish for Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Providence, the closing celebration of a Triduum. Bishop Matthew H. Clark, upper right, was celebrant, assisted by Father William Leone, pastor, and Deacon Carlos Vargas. Right, two women join in song. Above, Father Laurence Tracy of the Spanish Apostolate, positions the statue of Our Lady of Providence near the altar.

'So Many Poor People A Moral Disgrace'

Second in a five-part series
By Jerry Filteau

Washington (NC) -- "The fact that so many people are poor in a nation as wealthy as ours is a social and moral scandal," says the first draft of a pastoral letter by the U.S. bishops on Catholic social teaching and the American economy.

Poverty is one of five major issues the document addresses. In that section it calls for a major reform in the U.S. welfare system. It also urges significant changes in American tax policies, the treatment of women, employment policy and the distribution of wealth in the country.

The draft pastoral, made public Nov. 11, was written by a five-bishop committee headed by Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee. It is scheduled to be debated and revised twice over the next year before coming to a final vote by the nation's bishops in November 1985.

Another chapter deals with employment in detail, but the chapter on poverty also reflects that issue as a major concern. It says that any realistic effort to combat poverty in the United States must begin with creation of new jobs and a policy of full employment.

The Bishops And the Economy

POVERTY

Some of the draft's most controversial conclusions arise in its treatment of poverty. It begins with factual analyses of who the poor in America are, rebutting assertions about poverty arising from lack of motivation, about a class of able-bodied poor unwilling to work, and about America breeding a new class of welfare dependents.

The persistently poor, it notes, are practically all retired, disabled, single parents with pre-school children, or working at wages too low to bring them above the poverty line. These groups make up a significant portion of the poor in America at any given time, but they are only about 10 percent of the roughly 50 million Americans -- a fourth of the total population -- who have been in poverty at some time in the past decade.

Of the others, the draft says, studies show that most are pushed temporarily into poverty by such things as job loss, illness, disability, or change in family circumstance such as divorce or the death of a spouse.

Noting that disproportionate numbers of the poor are women and minorities, it says that continuing racial and ethnic discrimination and the institutionalized economic disadvantages that women confront must be overcome.

It particularly attacks the "gross inequalities" in the distribution of wealth and income in the United States,

Continued on Page 4