

# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## ETHIOPIA

**A little girl was pulling at my sleeves saying, 'Come, come, see mother.' I saw that the mother was dying and I knew that after she died the child would die ..."**

New York (NC) -- Catholic Relief Services plans to distribute \$140 million in relief aid to Ethiopia in 1985, said Msgr. Robert Coll, CRS Ethiopia director, during a brief visit to the United States.

The U.S. Catholic aid agency is joining with other non-governmental relief agencies in an "unprecedented" \$200-million cooperative program, the priest said.

Meanwhile in Rome, Pope John Paul II reiterated his pleas for efforts to help the starving people of Africa, especially Ethiopia, saying that "at stake are human life, human dignity and all human solidarity."

"Human life is being attacked, weakened and destroyed by widespread famine," the pope said at the conclusion of his weekly audience Jan. 9. "The suffering and death that are the common lot of so many people call for a continued response of prayer, fraternal love and human compassion from the rest of mankind."

The pontiff praised the efforts of individuals and nations in working to alleviate the effects of the drought.

Msgr. Coll also praised international media efforts for making people aware of the millions suffering in Ethiopia. He said that the U.S. and Ethiopian governments had quit letting political differences interfere with famine relief and were now cooperating "responsibly" in getting aid to the starving.

Msgr. Coll was interviewed just before taking a return flight from New York via Rome to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. He said he left Ethiopia Dec. 16, reported to various church offices in Rome and arrived in the United States Dec. 23.

Msgr. Coll said the situation was as severe as it has been reported. "I watched an infant die because they didn't have the right size of needle for the intravenous solution. At a camp in a place called Korem in Wollo Province, a little girl was crying and pulled at my sleeve saying, 'Come, come, see mother.' I saw that the mother was dying, and I knew that after she died, the child would die, and I knew that there was nothing I could do."

Formerly director of the CRS office in Rome, Msgr. Coll was transferred to Addis Ababa in mid-October.

To avoid duplication among the various church and other voluntary agencies, many of which lack the operational structure CRS has developed through many years of work in Ethiopia, CRS has moved to establish "partnership" arrangements, Msgr. Coll said.

"This is by far the largest program ever mounted by non-governmental organizations in one place," he said. "In all the history of CRS, never have we assumed such a responsibility. It is absolutely unprecedented."

Inside Ethiopia, Msgr. Coll said, CRS cooperates with numerous other voluntary agencies, including those of national churches. He said that the Ethiopian Catholic Church, with a membership of only 250,000, was playing a role far greater than its size would indicate.

Of Ethiopia's estimated 42 million population, 6 million to 10 million are said to be threatened with starvation.

Msgr. Coll said the group effort he coordinates is currently aiding 1.6 million and hopes to increase the number to 2 million in the coming months. He said with programs of governments, the United Nations, the Red Cross and others, perhaps 70 percent of those in danger of starvation are being reached. "We can't save everybody," he said.

He said the emergency feeding program involves giving 104 pounds of processed flour, dried milk and vegetable oil per month to families with children under 5. He said the program is intended to give each recipient some 1,400 calories per day and is considered "supplemental," though it is recognized that in many cases the people will get nothing else.

Msgr. Coll said the goal of the emergency effort, called a "food security program," is to ensure that people in the villages will get food there on a monthly basis so they will not migrate to the towns. They will also be given seed and small tools to help them raise a spring crop if any rain comes, he said.

On a more long-range basis, Msgr. Coll said, the plan calls for development projects such as water management and reforestation, which he said could begin in 1985.

Plans are also being developed to carry out similar programs in other famine-stricken countries of Africa, he said.

"Ethiopia is a window through which we're looking at a continental problem," he said. "Some serious people say we're witnessing the death of a continent."



## Roman Holiday

On a street near the Colosseum, Romans on a sled and skis take advantage of the city's first heavy snowfall in 14 years. As Pope John Paul II looked out his window onto St. Peter's Square, he saw a snowy landscape for the first time in his pontificate. Children were sledding and throwing snowballs. "I see that not all Romans are afraid of the snow, the pope said." He sent a message to skiers in the hills outside Rome, "Through this snow, I greet you all." (NC Photo)

## A SAINT?

### Dorothy Day Canonization Seen Possible

New York (NC) -- Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York has raised the possibility that Dorothy Day, the Catholic Worker leader who died in 1980, be proposed for canonization.

In the Jan. 3 issue of the New York archdiocesan weekly, Catholic New York, Archbishop O'Connor commented in his regular column on Miss Day's influence on his own life and noted that her canonization had been suggested.

Last September, Salt Magazine, published by the Claretian Fathers and Brothers, began collecting Miss Day's writings and researching her life as a first step toward her canonization. Mary Fernandes, public relation coordinator for Salt, said that 80,000 Dorothy Day prayer cards have been distributed as of Jan. 8.

"People are writing in, saying Dorothy Day had an influence on their lives," Ms. Fernandes said. She said the letters started arriving after a September 1983 article in Salt proposing Ms. Day's canonization.

At one time a communist, Miss Day converted to Catholicism and thereafter, working from her base in New York, was noted for combining a deep Catholic spirituality with radical social action for peace and justice. She died Nov. 29, 1980.

Although formal Vatican procedures cannot begin until five years after a person's death, Archbishop O'Connor has already initiated preparatory work for the cause of his



DOROTHY DAY

predecessor, Cardinal Terence Cooke, who died Oct. 6, 1983.

"Shortly after I announced the study of Cardinal Cooke's life," Archbishop O'Connor wrote in his column, "several people wrote to ask me: 'Why not Dorothy Day?' I saw the same question in print recently. It's a good question. Indeed, it's an excellent question. It's almost impossible to read 'By Little and By Little, The Selected Writings of Dorothy Day,' without asking it, especially if she started you thinking more than 40 years ago."

The archbishop concluded his column, "I would be interested in your answers."