

Farmer

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He sounds like a idealist, but Dermody bases the realization of his hopes on what he believes is solid, practical footing — that Catholics will someday learn to put the gospel message to work in the world by sponsoring and supporting legislation that recognizes people as a priority.

"If we Catholics would just work on the legislative program in the United States, we could get on the books most anything we wanted," he said. Some of the items on his wish list are increased aid to dependent mothers and children, pregnant women, and family allowances; liberalized lending to working people.

While he respects Pope John Paul II's strong stand against clergy becoming directly involved in politics, Dermody believes that clergy do have a teaching role in that arena.

"Now what I think we better do is turn around and have the clergy educate the people to organize and defend their rights," he said. "I think what we have to do is by example, by teaching and talking, tell people everyone has a stake in whether or not we have free, viable agriculture."

Predictably, Dermody applauded the bishops for including a chapter on agriculture in the second draft of their economics pastoral. To critics who say the bishops are overstepping the bounds of their

authority and expertise, he cites historical precedents reaching all the way back to the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215, which resulted from pressure placed on King John by the bishops, nobles and the squires of England.

"The bishops of England were in communion with the Holy Father. We've come a full circle," Dermody said. "Economics are a hard thing. They're not like the late show, they're not as entertaining, but they're something that everybody should understand. And the Church should take an interest because the solution to dealing with agriculture must be based on moral principles. That's all we've got left is the moral principles."

As for the additional statement on the small-farm crisis released by the bishops after they met in Washington last week, Dermody termed it "late, but still in time."

"Every day because of American agriculture and the way it's organized, 70 million people around the world eat," Dermody said. "But we can't give it to them, much as we'd like to do it. You can make a donation but not as a steady diet."

The prospect of action being taken before many more farmers lose their land and many more children go hungry is bleak. But with the eternal optimism of a man who waits every year for seeds to come up and animals to give birth, Dermody remains hopeful.

"It's a case of education, and there are more people, more young people, beginning to think my way," he said.



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Obituaries

J. Donald Fewster, Divinity School Trustee

J. Donald Fewster, retired Eastman Kodak Company treasurer and long-time board member at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Divinity School, died Wednesday, Nov. 6, at Strong Memorial Hospital.

Born in 1908 in Ontario, N.Y., he joined Kodak in 1930 after earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Rochester and a master's in business administration from Harvard. He retired from Kodak in 1973.

Elected to the Divinity School board in 1950, he served as chairperson from 1971-77

and as chairperson of the Finance Committee and treasurer until his death.

In tribute, Dr. Larry Greenfield, president of the school, said: "In the most profound sense, Donald Fewster was preeminently a trustee — someone who could be trusted and who could instill trust."

Fewster is survived by his wife, Alma Hart; two daughters, Mrs. Phyllis Rosser of Holmdel, N.J., and Mrs. Janet Bandur of Woodland Hills, California; a son, Lowell Fewster, vice president of the Divinity School; and eight grandchildren.

Father Ralph F. Neagle, native Auburnian

Father Ralph F. Neagle, who was ordained with the 1931 class of St. Bernard's Seminary, died Monday, Nov. 18, in Asheville, N.C., where he had served since the 1950s.

Mass of Christ the High Priest was celebrated at St. Lawrence Church, Asheville, N.C., by Bishop John F. Donoghue of Charleston, N.C., with Retired Bishop Michael J. Begley in attendance.

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey presided at a memorial Mass Saturday, Nov. 23, at St. Mary's Church, in Father Neagle's hometown of Auburn. Burial was in Auburn's St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Father Neagle was schooled at Auburn High School, and St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries before being ordained by Bishop John Francis O'Hernin in Rochester's St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Before World War II, Father Neagle served at St. Peter and Paul and St. Bridget's Churches, Rochester; St. Francis de Sales, Geneva; and St. Cecilia, Elmira.

During the war, he volunteered for the Army Chaplain Corps and served with the 100th Division of Fort Jackson, S.C. Following the war, Father Neagle spent two years with the Ninth Base Hospital at Guadalcanal and Okinawa, attaining the rank of major, before becoming a Veterans Administration chaplain in Bath, N.Y.

In 1952, the Veterans' Administration transferred Father Neagle to North Carolina, where he became chaplain of the Veteran's Facility in Oteen, N.C. in 1953.

Installed as Faithful Navigator of the Asheville Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus in 1961, Father Neagle became the first priest to serve in a Knights of Columbus office in North Carolina. He retired as chaplain of the Oteen facility in 1970 and assisted North Carolina area churches until his death.

Father Neagle celebrated his golden jubilee in 1981.

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