



Warmth and willingness

The staff of the House of Mercy helps needy residents of the Central Park area — without questions or red tape. See Page 4.



Syntactically perfect

The National Dance Company of Senegal communicates the diversity of Africa through music and motion. See Pages 8 and 9.

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World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Third World debt studied

Vatican City (NC) — Barter and no-interest loans with long repayment periods may help ease the Third World debt problems, said Anthony Chullikal, an Indian economist and official of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace. The justice and peace commission is studying the Third World debt problem for the Vatican.

Nation

State of the seminaries

Washington (NC) — A Vatican letter on the state of U.S. Catholic theological seminaries is likely to be sent out this spring or summer, according to Bishop John A. Marshall of Burlington, Vt. He announced the planned letter in a report to the U.S. bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation.

Ignorance hinders disabled

New York (NC) — Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York told a Feb. 13 forum on Religion and Rehabilitation that a "profound ignorance" pervades the church regarding the handicapped. That ignorance, rather than deliberate callousness, is the reason so few churches are accessible to the disabled or engaged in ministries to meet their needs, he said.

Blacks on back shelf

Miami (NC) — The U.S. Catholic Church puts evangelization of blacks on "the back shelf," Auxiliary Bishop Emerson J. Moore of New York said during a recent visit to Miami in conjunction with Black History Month. Blacks have made advances but "racism still exists in the church and you hear horror stories from time to time," he said.



Wedding Supplement

Our annual wedding supplement appears in today's issue.

Sandinistas working for social justice, official says

By Teresa A. Parsons

The revolutionary beliefs of the Sandinista government are in accord with the Catholic Church's teachings on social justice, according to the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the U.S., Carlos Tunnermann, who held a press conference at the Monroe County Airport Tuesday morning.

"The revolution is oriented to bringing social justice to the people," Ambassador Tunnermann said. "The revolution has a great literacy campaign that is also a Christian action. If the revolution has been able to eliminate the cases of polio in Nicaragua, and ... has been able to lessen the number of infant mortalities, then that is also a Christian action."

Ambassador Tunnermann spoke to reporters as he arrived in Rochester to deliver a lecture Tuesday evening at St. John Fisher College. His visit is one stop on an extensive lecture tour of the country.

Denying that an inherent conflict exists between Christianity and the Sandinistas, the ambassador said: "We don't have problems with the Christian people of Nicaragua. We do have problems with certain members of the Catholic Church hierarchy."

Tunnermann cited Cardinal Obando Bravo of Managua as one example.

"The problems with the cardinal are not religious problems or theological problems ... they are the result of the political positions the cardinal has taken recently," he said.

When Cardinal Bravo travels to the U.S., the ambassador pointed out that he criticizes the Sandinista government, but neglects to mention the human rights abuses committed by the contra revolutionary forces supported by the U.S.

"The Nicaraguan people who are assassinated by the contras are also Christians," he said, noting that most Nicaraguans are Catholics. If a pervasive conflict between the Sandinistas and Christianity did exist, how, he asked, has the government been able to maintain widespread support among the people?

He added that several priests serve as

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Jeff Gouffong/Courier-Journal
Lester, played by second-grader Carmine Saturno, disregards the wolf's efforts to tempt him to play with fire. On Thursday, Feb. 13, kindergarten through grade two students in Rochester's Annunciation School performed a fire safety play in response to the recent rash of youth-related fires. For story and more photos, see Page 5.

Mount Carmel housing project underway

By Teresa A. Parsons

After ten years of silence, the halls of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School are echoing with activity again.

Walls are being demolished and rebuilt, ceilings lowered, windows replaced. When the renovations begun last week are complete in August, the second and third floors will be transformed into 12 one- and two-bedroom apartments for what parish outreach worker Vic Bartolotta calls "the poorest of the poor."

"Basically, if you have a job, you wouldn't qualify to live there," Bartolotta said.

For the neighborhood, these apartments are one step toward filling a tremendous gap in housing for low-income families.

For the parish, the renovations mark one more step in a long history of ministry to the community.

Since it was built, Mount Carmel's school building has been a repository for the dreams and sacrifices of generations of parishioners, from immigrant Italians to Hispanics and blacks. In the process, the school has

experienced as many ups and downs as has the surrounding neighborhood.

Opened in 1909, the building was originally school, church and parish hall, all in one. Remodeled in 1951, it was the pride of the diocese until November, 1953, when it was gutted by fire. Thanks to a tremendous effort by parishioners, the school was refurbished and reopened the following year.

During the late 1960s and early 70s, as the neighborhood grew less prosperous with the influx of a new class of immigrants, the school faced deficits, and the threat of closing loomed year after year.

Nevertheless, when the Council of Inner City Parishes (CICP) finally voted to close the school in 1975, it was bitter medicine for parishioners. At the time, council members stated: "We commit ourselves to work toward a continued solid presence of the Church in the inner city."

Mount Carmel stands as testimony to the survival and influence of that presence. And a drive down Woodward Street reveals that in 1986, parish and neighborhood are in the

midst of an upswing.

Across Woodward Street from the church, for instance, the Marketview Heights Neighborhood Association is renovating houses for moderate-income families. Across Ontario Street from the school, several vacant lots are scheduled for improvements as well.

"There's been a lot of reinvestment in that neighborhood in recent years," said Julie Everitt of the city's Bureau of Neighborhood Development. "Close to 25 percent of the housing has been rehabbed ... The neighborhood used to have a lot of vacant houses, but very few are vacant now."

Still, behind the fresh exteriors are people in trouble. Those who have lived in the neighborhood for years are finding that they can't afford moderate-income rent or that landlords no longer willingly accept welfare tenants.

"The area is definitely feeling the pressures of increased rent and higher utility costs," Everitt said.

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