



Playing around

Hard work was no hindrance to the enjoyment derived by parishioners, parents and students of St. Louis, Pittsford, who built a playground for their school. See Page 7.



Repeat performance

Cardinal Mooney ace Julie Staub pitched a no-hitter against Aquinas last Friday, the second such feat in the senior's illustrious career. See Page 10.

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World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Marchers beaten in Paraguay

Sao Paulo, Brazil — Police in the Paraguayan capital of Asuncion reportedly beat May Day demonstrators marching from Mass to join a rally in a city square May 1. The incident came amid a series of strikes and demonstrations against the military government of 73-year-old Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, who has ruled under a civil rights-limiting state of siege for 31 years. After hearing a homily on the significance of May Day for workers given by Bishop Mario Melanio Medina Salinas, demonstrators headed for the square. Eyewitness reports say police blocked the street at either end of the group and began systematically beating people.

Report on new religious sects

Vatican City — A Vatican progress report on religious sects should help promote "more understanding than aggressiveness" by Catholics toward new religious movements. The study also might help open up the possibility of ecumenical dialogue with the movements, said Nigerian Father Jude Okolo, who participated in the study.

Unmarried couples need help

Vatican City — Pope John Paul II has asked Italian bishops to take a "patient and loving" attitude toward couples who have not had church marriages. "Pastors never tire of telling people who live together that they should not consider themselves separated from the church," the pope said. "Even though it is impossible to admit them to eucharistic Communion, they are not excluded from our affection, benevolence and prayer," he said.

Nation

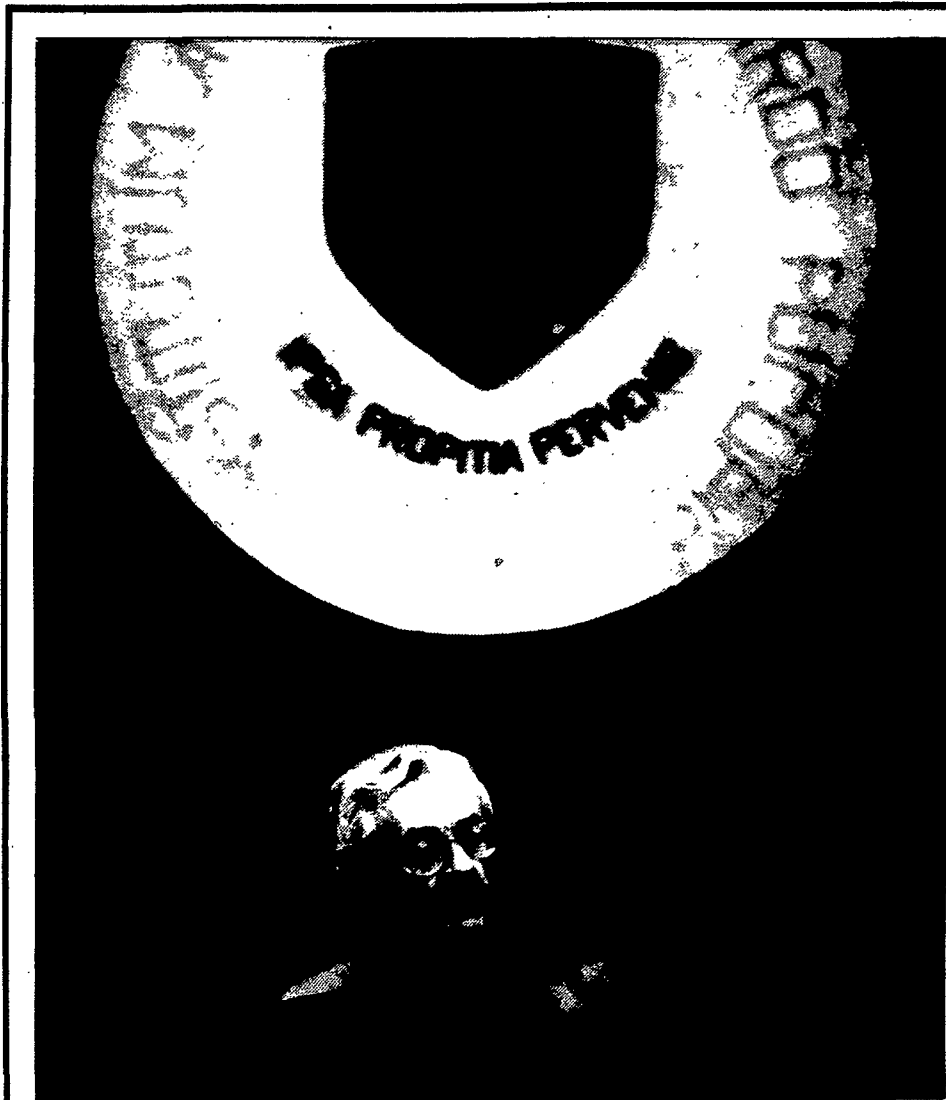
Pastoral letter ambiguous

New York — National security strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski, speaking at the annual John Courtney Murray Forum May 1, said the U.S. bishops' 1983 pastoral letter on war and peace was ambiguous on nuclear deterrence in a way that could make it counterproductive. "Many things in the pastoral are helpful, command respect and provide a framework for long-range efforts," he said. "The part that troubles me most concerns deterrence and what we do if deterrence fails. It seems to come to the point that if it fails, nuclear weapons should not be used. The problem is that this destroys deterrence."

Clergy disorder needs study

Morristown, N.J. — Sexual molestation of children by Catholic clergy is the church's most serious problem "in centuries" and has far-reaching consequences, said Dominican Father Thomas P. Doyle, a canon lawyer. The church has a deep obligation to the laity to look into the problem of priests afflicted by such a disorder, known as pedophilia, he added. Among the costs of pedophilia Father Doyle cited were the jailing and possible suicide of priests, suicide of victims, massive monetary settlements paid to victims and their families, and a nationwide class action suit against the church for billions of dollars.

Sanctuary workers plan to continue aid



Reflections

Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

At St. Bernard's Institute's fifth annual commencement convocation Friday evening, May 2, retired Bishop Joseph L. Hogan delivers an address entitled, "Walking Down Memory Lane with an Old Theology Textbook in Hand." During the ceremony, Bishop Hogan received an honorary doctor of theology degree.

Human rights advocates seek mercy by mail

Teresa A. Parsons
Each week, Anita Maruggi receives stories in the mail that, for sheer drama, are virtually unmatched. They are case sheets from Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network, and they describe the plight of real people in prisons around the world.

Situations such as that of an Iranian woman who was arrested for publicly distributing leaflets and had her leg amputated as punishment.

Or Petrus Nchabaleng, a longtime opponent of apartheid, who was killed hours after he was arrested and reportedly threatened with death by police officials in the South African "homeland" of Lebowa. His family has been denied access to his body and has been given no explanation for his death.

Or the rural Colombian teacher who disappeared while enjoying his vacation. He was last seen being taken into custody by government troops.

Week after week, fresh cases like these arrive, and Maruggi, human rights coordinator for the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry, quickly sends them on to doctors, lawyers, students, teachers, priests, sisters and parishes around the diocese.

In response, these people join thousands of other people around the world in writing letters expressing polite concern over the denial of human rights, whether through torture, denial of legal due process, refusal of medical treatment or simply violation of the right to life.

"It's ordinary people writing letters for people they may never meet in countries they

may never visit," explained Sylvia Thompson, an Amnesty International member and former coordinator of the diocesan Human Rights Task Force.

As overwhelming as the number and severity of cases may be, most writers are convinced that their letters work. In about half of all Urgent Action cases, prisoners are treated better because of letters, according to Amnesty International.

"They may get an extra blanket or better food. They may not be forced to do as much work or they may be allowed to see a doctor," said Thompson. "People tend to really sit up and take notice when 500 letters come in."

Experience indicates that prisoners are often tortured during their first few days of detainment, particularly when they are being held incommunicado. Thus, Amnesty International, a worldwide independent human rights advocacy organization, developed its Urgent Action Network in 1974. Urgent Action is designed to respond quickly to reports of imprisonment, torture, capital punishment, extrajudicial executions, inadequate medical care and other pressing cases.

Cases for the network are gleaned from any number of sources — human rights workers, newspapers, family members. "Many times a prisoner's family feels utterly powerless. They may go from police station to police station without getting any answers," Thompson said.

She described one case reported by her daughter to illustrate just how quickly Urgent Action can respond. Her daughter, a

Tucson, Ariz. (NC) — Sanctuary workers convicted May 1 of aiding illegal aliens pledged to continue helping Central Americans and appealed for greater Church support for the movement.

In the Tucson trial, eight church workers were found guilty of aiding illegal Central Americans and face a variety of prison terms and fines. Three others were acquitted.

After she was convicted Sister Darlene Niegorski, a School Sister of St. Francis, said, "I have no regrets at all."

At a New York press conference May 2, Sister Niegorski said her order and some bishops have given strong support to the network of activists who aid illegal Central Americans. "But unfortunately, the bishops as a group took the legal opinion of corporate lawyers instead of following the Spirit."

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has not taken an official position on the movement, which contends that Central Americans must be sheltered because they will be persecuted if forced to return to their homelands. The movement is at odds with the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which categorizes the Central Americans as economic refugees and the sanctuary workers as smugglers.

Sister Niegorski said that "most of the refugees are Catholic. The Church is alive and growing in Central America where there are martyrs today and where the Church is having to stand up for what it is about." She added that she hoped the Church in the United States would begin to take such a stand.

Another defendant found guilty, Father Anthony Clark, a priest of the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, in residence at Sacred Heart Parish in Nogales, Ariz., said in an interview after the trial that "so long as there are refugees there will always be sanctuary.... If people come to me and ask my assistance I will respond accordingly."

"No one can convince me that what I have done (or) am doing is criminal. It's the height of absurdity," Father Clark added.

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health-care worker in Honduras, heard of two Salvadoran teachers who had escaped to Honduras, but returned to El Salvador, where they were jailed. She reported the case to Thompson, who called Amnesty's London office. London officials in turn called sources in El Salvador to verify the report. The information was next sent by telex from London to Amnesty's office in Nederland, Colorado. Within five days of her daughter's call, Thompson received in her mail an Urgent Action advisory on the teachers.

She and her husband, Robert became involved with Amnesty International almost nine years ago. Along with other members of the then newly established diocesan international Justice and Peace Commission, the Thompsons were searching for activities the commission could sponsor. At the same time Amnesty International was in the spotlight after being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1977.

"We felt it had real spiritual underpinnings," Thompson explained. "When we write a letter we feel that it's tantamount to visiting someone in prison... a corporal work of mercy."

The commission's Human Rights Task Force then took on the task of recruiting parishes and other groups to write.

Reaction from parishes has been mixed. Many parish human development committees were lukewarm about adopting yet another cause. Over the years, the number of participants has fluctuated, but currently, 10 parishes and one Protestant community comprise the network.

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