



Contemporary castoffs

Like leprosy in Biblical times, AIDS provokes paranoia. Turning that reaction around is the aim of Sister Alice Robeson, S.S.J. and others at AIDS Rochester, Inc. See Page 5.



Good neighbors

Three years ago, many Cleveland Street neighbors opened a community residence in their back yards. Last weekend, a block party celebrated a different spirit. See Page 6.

COURIER-JOURNAL

Catholic Diocese of Rochester

35 Cents

Thursday, September 25, 1986

16 Pages

World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Human rights threatened

Chile — A Chilean Catholic human rights agency said in messages sent to groups in Washington that it is facing an increasing barrage of threats and intimidation. The Santiago Archdiocese's Vicariate of Solidarity said its workers began receiving the first of several recent death threats just before the Sept. 7 assassination attempt against President Augusto Pinochet. Soon after the attempt, a group believed to support Pinochet threatened a vicariate attorney, rights workers said. In earlier incidents, the home of the agency's executive secretary, Enrique Palet, was splashed with blood and a guard was wounded seriously.

Talks fail, mediation goes on

San Salvador, El Salvador — Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas of San Salvador said he would continue to mediate his country's peace efforts, despite a breakdown in the latest talks. "I won't give up," he said Sept. 18, the night before the peace talks were to have begun. "We must carry on working. We must not become resigned to the war and the continuing death and destruction," he said in an address at Central American University.

Nation

Seattle priests' council unites

Seattle — The Seattle archdiocesan priests' council Sept. 18 said it had developed "a positive plan for moving into the future in a unified fashion" in dealing with the Vatican-ordered division of authority between Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle and his auxiliary, Bishop Donald Wuerl. Controversy has followed the unusual Vatican decision to split episcopal authority, which many view as a punishment provoked by conservative appeals to Rome criticizing Archbishop Hunthausen's administration.

Farm crisis affects Church

Lexington, Mo. — The Catholic Church is "very much a part" of the farm crisis because of the effect on local parishes and the challenge it brings to the church, said Bishop John Sullivan of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo. His comments were in a pastoral statement issued to open three days of an ecumenical discussion for farmers. The discussion was sponsored by the archdiocesan Rural Crisis Initiative in Lexington. "The church as an institution is affected by the rural crisis but more importantly, the church is people who are called to minister," Bishop Sullivan said. "As people of God, we are called to care for those who suffer, search with them for justice and speak to them the word of hope."

Baptism controversy Sacraments minus faith 'superficial'

By Teresa A. Parsons

Last year, an estimated 5,079 people were baptized in the Diocese of Rochester.

But two who were not baptized have drawn the most public attention by far.

Last November, Mother of Sorrows' pastor, Father Thomas J. Statt, delayed Kevin Michael Sce's baptism, claiming that his parents, who were not married, were not practicing their Catholic faith. The infant's father, James Sce, was so angry he picketed at the church for two weekends.

Earlier this month, the scenario was partially repeated at St. Margaret Mary Church in Wolcott. Father Robert G. Smith, pastor, told Lynne Chapman and Timothy Whitcomb Sr. that their 7-week-old daughter, Kalah Marie, could not be baptized until the parents exhibited a stronger indication of their intent to raise her in a Christian environment.

Last year, Chapman, 24, was religious education coordinator at St. Margaret Mary. Father Smith said he replaced her in that position this year and decided to delay her daughter's baptism in part because she and Whitcomb were living together without making an effort to "do the things necessary to get married," and also because she did not attend weekend Mass regularly.

Frustrated by what she perceived as an injustice, Chapman "went public," telling her story to a local newspaper.

"I don't feel as though my daughter should be punished for my actions," Chapman said. "I am a practicing Catholic, and I believe very strongly in the faith... To say 'we'll do it (baptize) under these conditions and if you meet these requirements' is like getting a high school diploma. I never looked at baptism that way."

For Chapman, the road back to the good graces of the Church seems long and strewn with obstacles. Whitcomb, a Methodist, would first have to obtain a civil divorce, which he said he can't afford and for which he doesn't want to take a loan. Then he would need to seek an annulment — and he cannot count on cooperation from his wife, according to Chapman. If and when the annulment was granted, the couple would have to participate in pre-Cana sessions prior to their marriage. Then they would face baptismal preparation before Kalah could be baptized. "I have no idea how long it would take," Chapman said.

'Parents are naive if they think that they have done their Christian duty by having their children baptized without accepting the responsibility of teaching their own Christian faith ... by the practice of that faith.'

Father Robert G. Smith

On the contrary, Father Smith said, neither he nor the Church want to place obstacles in the couple's way. In fact, he offered to lend or give Whitcomb the money for a divorce.

"It's completely up to her to show evidence of the practice of her Christian faith," he said. "Parents are naive if they think that they have done their Christian duty by having their children baptized without accepting the responsibility of



Tangled up

Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Cardinal Mooney's Peter Mojsej appears to have a leg up on the situation in this play against East's Larry Bello. Mooney also came out on top on the scoreboard, 3-0. For an overview of this pivotal City-Catholic contest as well as a game between Aquinas and Bishop Kearney in girls' soccer, see Page 9.

teaching their own Christian faith to their children by the practice of that faith.

"Faith is not just saying 'I believe.' It's a question of practicing your belief," he added. "Baptism without faith is a superficial sign."

The same can be said for all of the sacraments. But there's no doubt that over the years faithful Catholics have confused superficial signs and assumptions with the essence of the sacraments themselves.

In bygone days, Catholics baptized their babies right out of the hospital, believing

sacraments based almost solely on their age and on rote knowledge of a prayer list and the Baltimore Catechism. Today, sacramental programs are more often parish-based rather than school-based. Age has replaced readiness as the overriding consideration in administering a sacrament.

But how is readiness determined?

Diocesan sacramental guidelines provide some criteria. The guidelines were developed in 1980 by a committee appointed by Bishop Matthew J. Clark. In light of changes in canon law, those guidelines were again revised in November, 1985.

Readiness for baptism, according to the guidelines, should be based on general knowledge of the child's parents and an interview. A pastor or pastoral minister is charged with discerning whether the parents make an effort to live the Christian life.

The guidelines offer several criteria on which to base such determinations. These criteria include: acceptance of the doctrine of the creed; regular sharing in the worship of the Church; personal prayer life; concern to show charity to others; a lifestyle influenced by belief in the Lord Jesus; and a commitment to the way of life to which He invites us.

If these elements appear to be seriously lacking in the parents' lives, the minister is directed to delay baptism, explain his reasons, and work to bring the parents to a fuller understanding of their own faith and their responsibilities to the child and the parish community.

When a deferred baptism cannot be resolved between parents and pastor, the

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