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Celebrating service

Bishop Matthew H. Clark and diocesan leaders honored 63 men and women religious who have contributed a total of 2,765 years of service to the Diocese of Rochester. See Page 6.



Rural rehabilitation

From personal contact with clients to legislative advocacy, the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation and its rural housing staff fight for the right to decent housing. See Page 7.

COURIER-JOURNAL

Catholic Diocese of Rochester 35 Cents Thursday, November 6, 1986 16 Pages

World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Mexican bishops oppose bill

Mexico City — The immigration reform bill approved by the U.S. Congress in October reflects a basic misunderstanding of the phenomenon of immigration to the United States, said a spokesman for the Mexican bishops. "The march of Latin Americans to the United States shouldn't be understood as a wave of anger or revolutionary passion, but more as a peaceful conquest," Father Florencio M. Rigoni, assistant secretary for migration for the Mexican bishops' conference, told the Mexican newspaper La Jornada.

Agent excommunicated

Santiago, Chile — A Chilean Catholic bishop excommunicated a former military intelligence agent for participating in the 1976 kidnapping and torture of 10 government opponents. According to news reports, Bishop Tomas Gonzalez Morales of Punta Arenas excommunicated former Air Force intelligence agent Otto Trujillo after a court ruled that Trujillo participated in the violations. The sanction bars persons from receiving the sacraments.

Nation

CRS calls charges unfounded

New York — Charges that aid to Ethiopia was mishandled are "without foundation," according to the Catholic Relief Services official who until recently directed the agency's operation there. In an Oct. 27 interview, the official, Francis Carlin, disputed old criticism in The New York Times and new criticism in an article in the October issue of Reader's Digest, "Famine Aid: Were We Duped?" "If anyone was duped, it was Reader's Digest," Carlin said. "The article trades on cheap sensationalism, and is making statements maybe the world is looking for right now. I know that the food assistance was not misused."

Archbishops clash on paper

New Orleans — New Orleans Archbishop Philip M. Hannan has accused Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland of "wildly exaggerating" and of treating Pope John Paul II "unfairly" in two columns of the Milwaukee prelate wrote for his archdiocesan newspaper. In the wake of Vatican actions against theologian Father Charles Curran and Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle, Archbishop Weakland wrote successive columns critical of excessive orthodoxy, but mentioned no individuals by name. Archbishop Hannan, in an Oct. 23 column in his archdiocesan newspaper, the Clarion Herald, asked, "Is the good archbishop himself not wildly exaggerating in comparing the decisions of the Holy See toward Father Curran and Archbishop Hunthausen with the Inquisition and witch hunts?"



Halloween 'Knight-mare' Michael N. Aydogan
 McQuaid seniors Ted Stahl and John Donohie watched the waning moments of the Knights' 3-0 loss to Gates-Chili in the Friday, Oct. 31, Class A semifinal game at Fauver Stadium. For details of McQuaid's loss and an overview of other boys' and girls' soccer action, see page 9.

Letter on homosexuality draws fire, praise

By Liz Schevtchuk
 Washington (NC) — Catholic homosexuals and religious who minister to them have strongly criticized the Vatican's new letter to bishops on homosexuality.

But a Catholic priest thinks the document will assist Catholic homosexuals who accept Church teaching. And the organization Catholics United for the Faith praised the Holy See's initiative.

Critics said what they found particularly troubling was the Vatican's description of a homosexual inclination as "disordered," its warnings against Church contact with homosexual groups, and its comment that violence against homosexuals, though deplorable, is not surprising.

Released Oct. 30, the Vatican's "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" declared that while a homosexual inclination "is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil" and thus "must be seen as an objective disorder."

The new document repudiated characterizations of the homosexual condition itself as "neutral, or even good" and prohibited use of church facilities to homosexual groups that are "ambiguous" about Church teaching, neglect it or undermine it.

The Vatican's pastoral was denounced by Elinor Crocker, national vice president of Dignity, an unofficial Catholic homosexual group whose local chapters often meet and attend Mass in Catholic Church facilities.

"We find it absolutely appalling, un-Christian, un-Catholic, unloving and totally unacceptable," said Ms. Crocker. She said the U.S. bishops should repudiate the letter.

"Why must they (Church fathers) always take a negative stand against God's people?" asked Sister Donna Quinn, a Dominican nun

For local reaction to the Vatican document, see page 4.

who chairs the board of the unofficial National Coalition of American Nuns. "I don't think that this is the stand Jesus would've taken."

Members of the Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights find the letter "absolutely disgusting," said Brother Rick Garcia, the coalition's Midwest coordinator. "It's a great leap backward and we really feel it will cause more violence against gay and lesbian people."

"It is a psychologically violent statement," added Brother Garcia, a member of the non-canonical Brothers of Christian Community.

But the letter was defended by Father John F. Harvey, a priest of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales who has written extensively on homosexuality and is the founder of Courage, a spiritual support movement for homosexuals who follow Church teaching and abstain from sexual activity. He suggested the letter will help such groups.

The letter "is not against homosexual persons," he said. "It's saying the action (of homosexual sexual conduct) is wrong."

Furthermore, he said, "I do hold that the inclination itself is a disorder." However, he said, "to say that something is a disorder is not to say that it's demeaning."

He disputed what he described as an increasing willingness among liberal Catholic theologians to condone homosexual conduct if it occurs in a loving, monogamous, adult relationship. That view is "really saying homosexuality can be good under certain circumstances," he said. "I would completely disagree with that."

Madeleine Stebbins, who chairs the board of Catholics United for the Faith, highly praised the Vatican letter.

"I think it is wonderful to see that the Catholic Church, in the face of worldly thinking, stands up for the moral principles involved. It is thrilling ... I think it clarifies Catholic teaching in the face of confusion," she said.

She said she feared the Vatican "will be crucified for this, as their master was for saying the hard thing. But it has to be said."

Salvatorian Father Robert Nugent and School Sister of Notre Dame Jeannine Gramick, both active in counseling of and ministry to homosexual Catholics, said the Vatican document will thwart efforts to promote the integral personhood of homosexuals.

"When I heard that they're calling the orientation disordered, I was shocked — and shocked is not too strong a word," said Sister Gramick. "What they're doing is psychological violence to gay people."

Father Nugent said he thinks the Vatican's document "indicates a level of fear that indeed things have changed."

In the last decade, American Catholics, including bishops, have described the need to respect homosexuals as people, he said. Some theologians have described the homosexual orientation as morally neutral or even morally good, he noted. "I'm not talking about behavior," which is another matter entirely, Father Nugent said.

U.S. bishops, theologians and medical experts "are going to have a very difficult time accepting that kind of a judgment about (homosexual) orientation" being disordered, he said.