



Concerned couple

John and Margie Hart urge lay people to reflect on their roles in the post-conciliar Church as bishops prepare for a synod on the laity in Rome this fall. See page 4.



Curran case

Father Charles E. Curran will take his case to civil court as he fights Catholic University of America's decision to suspend him from teaching. See page 5.

COURIER-JOURNAL

Catholic Diocese of Rochester

50 Cents

Thursday, March 5, 1987

16 Pages

World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Fr. Jenco 'wants to believe'

Toronto — Servite Father Lawrence Martin Jenco, who was held hostage in Lebanon for 18 months, said President Reagan assured him that his release was not part of an arms deal. Father Jenco said, however, that the Tower commission report has led him to question the president's credibility. Speaking in Toronto Feb. 22, Father Jenco said Reagan sent a personal telegram assuring him that the United States did not send arms to Iran to get his release. "I want to believe the president," Father Jenco said in Toronto.

Pope to visit South America

Vatican City — Pope John Paul II plans to visit 19 cities on a 13-day trip to Uruguay, Chile and Argentina to commemorate his successful mediation of an Argentine-Chilean border dispute. The schedule for the March 31-April 13 trip was made public by the Vatican Feb. 28. It includes a meeting in the Chilean capital of Santiago with Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who has been at odds with the Chilean hierarchy over human rights issues ever since he came to power in a bloody 1973 military coup.

Nation

Theological struggles likened

Washington — Peruvian Father Gustavo Gutierrez, chairman of the theology department at Catholic University in Lima, Peru, likens "harsh, painful moments" experienced by Latin American liberation theologians to the current controversies surrounding Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen and U.S. moral theologian Father Charles Curran. Father Gutierrez, who popularized liberation theology in Latin America, suggested that the two North Americans can take heart from the experience of Latin American liberation theologians who faced criticism from Vatican officials.

Group considers diaconate

Douglston, N.Y. — An ecumenical consultation on the office of deacon, the first gathering of its type in the United States, found that although all the churches represented have deacons in some form, little if any consensus existed on the meaning of the diaconate. At the conclusion of the meeting, Catholic participants said that much more work and sharing among the churches should be undertaken to clarify the deacon's role as a distinct form of ministry.

FBI studied 'peace bishops'

Kansas City, Mo. — The Federal Bureau of Investigation compiled dossiers on two leading "peace bishops," Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, according to the National Catholic Reporter. The Kansas City-based Catholic weekly, through a request to the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act, obtained 30 of 165 pages of documentation on the two prelates. The other 135 pages could not be released because the material dealt with national security, had involved criminal investigations, or, if released, could compromise the privacy rights of third parties or confidential sources, the FBI told the newspaper.

Proud to be black:

Historical heroes nurture students' ambitions

'My ancestors cried out. Why do people laugh at me, criticize me, and turn their backs on me?'
Excerpted from "People"
by Shahona Rutledge

By Teresa A. Parsons

Phillis Wheatley was 13 years old when she wrote her first poem.

She wrote about the University of Cambridge in England — a likely choice of subjects for a young woman in 1767. What was far more exceptional was her ability to read and write, since she had been seized in her native country, Senegal, at the age of seven, and was sold into slavery in the United States.

In fact, several years later, when she tried to publish her poetry, Wheatley had to pass a test to prove that she was capable of writing it. She died in poverty and despair at the age of 30, never dreaming that her name and her story would be remembered during Black History Month celebrations more than 200 years later.

Shahona Rutledge, on the other hand, wouldn't be surprised if, on some future February day, a new generation of students writes essays about the contributions she and her eighth-grade classmates at St. Monica's School will make to history.

At 13, Rutledge shares Wheatley's love for poetry. But the dreams she and her fellow students envision are far beyond anything Wheatley would have dared to imagine.

Rutledge wants to become an obstetrician and raise a family someday. Her friend, DeWanna Scott, is interested in scientific research or psychology. Lamin Masaquio, another eighth-grader, is aiming toward a career as an artist or an architect. Dwayne Maye might study law.

Theirs are ambitions that principal Gaynelle Wethers and the faculty at St. Monica's try to nurture all year long. But the students' confidence gets a special boost each February, when the school community at 831 Genesee Street celebrates the particular contributions men and women of color have made throughout history.

Through drawings, poems and essays, students shared the stories of such famous leaders as Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, and George Washington Carver, along with lesser-known heroes such as Mary Bethune McLeod, who founded her own school, Richard Allen, who started the African Methodist Church, and Robert Smalls, a soldier who fought with the Union army during the Civil War.

DeWanna Scott wrote an essay about Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. "He was a tapdancer, and he had to struggle a long time to become known," she said. "He showed me that you can't give up in this world. You've got to keep on trying no matter what."

Maye was impressed by the story of Jack "Right Hook" Johnson, a boxer who persevered to become America's first black heavyweight champion, even though he was

cheated out of prize money in many fights because of his color. "In a way, he makes me feel proud to be black," Maye said.

While they haven't personally faced the same blatant discrimination that blacks encountered in the past, Maye and his fellow students have all felt the sting of a more subtle form of racism.

"It shows up in little ways. If people hate you, they hide it and take it out on you in different ways," Lamin Masaquio explained. "Like when you walk into a store and people start staring at you, watching you like they think you're going to do something wrong."

Without encouragement, even the prospect of being ostracized can dissuade students from pursuing their dreams through every avenue that's open to them.

Earlier this year, for instance, Scott and Rutledge had all but decided to attend a public high school next fall. Then the Rev. Charles Rice, vice principal at St. Monica's, asked them to consider Our Lady of Mercy High School

and told them they could qualify for scholarships.

Although the doors of Catholic high schools have long been open to black students, their numbers remain small enough so that each new student feels like a pioneer in uncharted territory.

But they reluctantly agreed to visit the school. "We found out that a lot of them dress and talk like us and they like the same kind of music," Scott said. "That made us feel more comfortable."

The welcoming atmosphere, coupled with offers of scholarships, was enough to change both girls' minds.

Wethers hopes someday to offer the same kind of assistance and encouragement to St. Monica's graduates considering a college education.

"You can't just watch them walk out the door after eighth grade and forget them," she said. "They need our continued support?"

