

Panama

Continued from page 4

for a year.

The feeling of many Panamanians with regard to Noriega is the U.S. "created him, they should get him out," said Maryknoll Sister Jennifer McDonald, who has lived in the nation for 25 years and is director of the office of vocations and ministry of the Archdiocese of Panama.

Sister Horan said few Panamanians turned out for a May 17 general strike to protest Noriega's actions because they're "scared to death" after the beatings of Noriega's political opponents. "There's no freedom of assembly here. And martyrdom we're not ready for," she said.

But the situation with Noriega isn't as black and white as it's been painted by the

U.S. media and Bush administration, maintains Phillip Berryman of Philadelphia, a longtime Latin American church observer who lived in Panama in 1965-73.

He said there was "no reason to believe a civilian government would bring a noticeable improvement in the welfare of poor Panamanians," adding that the U.S.-backed Noriega opponents who won the election are members of upper-class Panamanian families, who in years past did little to further human rights or assist the poor.

The May 7 election results were "more of a vote against" Noriega and a sign of the "desire for change" than a vote in favor of his opponents, believes Sister McDonald.

While displeased by the "repression" Noriega has exercised, she noted that "there have been good things done" for the Panamanian poor under his rule.

According to Berryman, who opposes U.S. intervention, saying the United States was responsible for Noriega's rise to power overestimates the importance of U.S. influence. "He was No. 2 man in the military during the (Panamanian Gen. Omar) Torrijos years. For over 10 years he was head of intelligence.... He has the goods on a lot of people. His main strength comes from that."

Berryman argues that Noriega has been "made out by our media and government to be about the ugliest-thing going."

Some of it's true, he said, but he charged the U.S. government exercises "selective indignation."

When riots protesting government austerity measures erupted in Venezuela this past spring, Venezuelan government troops "went in shooting" and 300-500 protesters were killed, "where was the

outcry?" he asked.

"Imagine if that had happened in Panama or Nicaragua," Berryman said.

The government's decision to opt for an inter-American approach to bring change in Panama — by its work through the Organization of American States — is to be commended, Quigley said. While the OAS has been tagged a "paper tiger" in the past, this is the organization's opportunity to demonstrate its effectiveness, he said.

Improved East-West relations in light of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's "glasnost" and a "sense that (former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Elliott) Abrams' policy of high confrontation in Central America was a failed policy" have lessened the likelihood of U.S. military interference anywhere in Central America, according to Quigley.

"Fighting Moscow by going into Grenada doesn't play like some years ago," he observed.

DPC

Continued from page 8

process will involve trying to get better input from parishes, and added that the marketing survey the development office is undertaking will help with this.

The third major report given at the meeting concerned progress in the Commitment to Ministry process. Father Tomasso noted that parishes are now entering the third round of the planned six, during which they will discuss how to organize at parish levels. Future parish discussions will also involve determining "affinities," parishes

which might naturally work together in terms of shared ministry, possibly even shared staffs.

Father Tomasso said that each parish will produce a written report from the Commitment to Ministry process to be submitted to Bishop Clark during Pentecost, 1990. These reports would contain data about the parish and will focus on parish goals. In the future, these reports will be updated annually to reflect changes in the parish, and will replace several annual diocesan forms. "It's supposed to be a living document mutually usable to the parish and the diocese," he explained.

Mercy sisters seek participants for ministry program

The Sisters of Mercy of Rochester invite men and women 18 years and older to participate in the Ministry in Mercy Program, which allows volunteers to work with members of the order in a variety of ministries in the Diocese of Rochester.

Participants will spend a week assisting

in any of several ministries operated by the Mercy sisters. They will also be able to participate in the order's community life.

For more information, contact Sister Fran Wegman at 716/342-9594, or send for an application by writing her at 1437 Blossom Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14610.

Pre-Cana

Continued from page 8

Tierney said the diocese is currently forming a response to the St. Thomas the Apostle group. Meanwhile, the group is talking to other pre-Cana groups to get their opinions on *When Families Marry*. One couple at St. Thomas More Parish in Rochester has a clear idea of where they stand.

Rui and Jo Ann Figueiredo said that they don't speak for their pre-Cana group as a whole, but as individuals they are opposed to the manual. Using it puts too much of a burden on pre-Cana teams, Rui Figueiredo said.

Criticizing the sections on family planning and sexuality, he said that the volunteer couples who make up parish pre-Cana teams are unqualified to discuss such issues at length with engaged couples.

However, the Figueiredos' pastor, Father Tom Collins, does not share their

opinion. "I myself feel the the manual is a very good one. It gives couples the options balanced by certain information that they need to make an informed, conscious decision," he said.

The Fischers said that they had received similar praise for the manual from others involved in pre-Cana courses, although they declined to name individual supporters. Tierney and Shari Fischer noted that the diocese has not formulated any plan to deal with a pre-Cana group that absolutely refuses to use the manual.

Bradys to speak at St. Mary's dinner

Former White House Press Secretary James Brady and his wife, Sarah, will be keynote speakers at a June 8 dinner marking the opening of St. Mary's Hospital Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program.

The dinner is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, 1111 Jefferson Rd., Henrietta. The public is invited to attend.

Brady was critically wounded in 1981 during an assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan. Doctors once believed Brady would die from his injuries, but he has experienced a deliberate, progressive recovery. The Bradys have taken an active role in speaking out on issues of gun control and rights of the disabled.

The dinner will be held in conjunction with the third annual Brain Injury Teaching Day, which is being co-sponsored by St. Mary's Hospital and Neurorehab Associates, set for June 8 and 9. The teaching day is actually two days of conferences on brain rehabilitation for health care providers in upstate New York.

In addition to speakers, workshops and tours of St. Mary's facilities, a dramatic play, "Goodbye Me-Hello Me," will be presented by the Neurorehab Players. The dramatization depicts life after traumatic brain injury.

St. Mary's received approval in January from the New York State Department of Health to establish the 40-bed brain injury rehabilitation program.

The cost for the dinner is \$50 per person, and \$115 for the entire conference. Pre-registration and reservations are required. Call Shirley Malucci, 716/464-3640, for information.

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