

1980s:

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As the decade continued, Long and other leaders of the local pro-life movement were increasingly occupied with court dates and jail sentences. Meanwhile, the prospect of a reversal or weakening of the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision prompted a wave of new activism from pro-choice advocates, who suddenly began organizing their own Saturday morning demonstrations at hospitals and providing escorts for women seeking abortions at some locations.

Our respect for life was also challenged throughout the decade by the faces and horror stories of refugees whose resettlement local groups and parishes sponsored through the Catholic Family Center.

As the 1980s opened, hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asians languished in refugee camps in Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia. A legacy of decades of fighting in the region, they included Amerasians, Vietnamese boat people and Laotians who fled communist-led takeovers in their countries and Cambodians who escaped the brutal Khmer Rouge during the late 1970s.

At the same time, the southeastern United States was besieged by a flood of Cubans and Haitians: the latter fleeing the repressive "Baby Doc" Duvalier regime, the former group arriving with the Mariel boatlift, in which Fidel Castro sent the occupants of Cuban prisons and mental hospitals to U.S. shores.

Smaller numbers of refugees arrived in United States fleeing the 1980 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, repression in Poland, Iran's Islamic revolution, and war and famine in Ethiopia.

While the institutional church struggled



File photo
Salvadoran exile Alejandro Gomez and his family fled to Canada in July, 1986, fearing deportation.

to find local support for those officially recognized as refugees, individual parishes joined an underground movement to protect a new wave of refugees sweeping across the country's southwestern borders.

Following the lead of a Chicago church that in 1981 declared itself a public sanc-

tuary for Salvadorans and Guatemalans, Rochester's Corpus Christi Parish joined several local congregations in 1983 to support and protect the family of Alejandro and Leticia Gomez from deportation.

The Gomezes said they fled El Salvador in fear for their lives. The U.S. government claimed, however, that most Central Americans were not political, but economic refugees seeking an improved standard of living.

During the Gomezes' deportation hearing in June, 1986, Alejandro admitted having once belonged to the Communist Party, and his wife admitted having visited Moscow briefly.

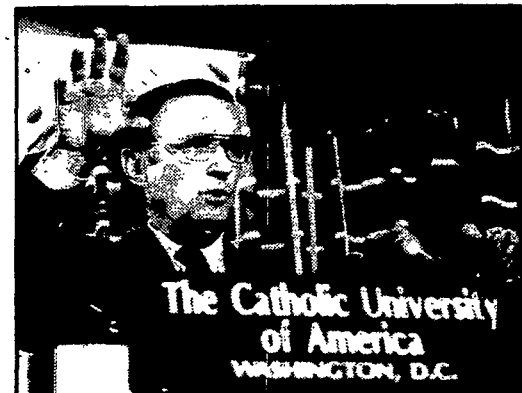
A month later, fearing the judge would rule against them, the Gomezes fled to Canada, where they were granted refugee status.

Some observers asserted that the Catholic church created its own class of refugees during the 1980s, as Vatican officials sought to re-establish doctrinal authority and orthodoxy. Theologians and bishops, as well as catechetical writings, were targets of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which censured Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen and Father Charles Curran, a moral theology professor at Catholic University, and withdrew the imprimatur from *Christ Among Us*, a popular catechism.

The Friends for Charles Curran, a local group largely comprising former students of the Rochester diocesan priest, leapt to his defense in March, 1986, when Father Curran revealed that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had ordered him to retract his views on birth control and other sexual issues or cease teaching as a Catholic theologian.

When Father Curran refused, the Vatican declared him "not suitable nor eligible to teach Catholic theology ..." in August, 1986.

Suspended from teaching at Catholic University in January, 1987, Father Curran challenged the action in a civil lawsuit. A District of Columbia Superior Court



File photo
Father Charles Curran addressed the press during his 1986 battle with Catholic University of America.

1960s: Visionary and dramatic bishop led diocese into implementation of Vatican II concepts

By Father Robert F. McNamara
Guest contributor

The *Courier* had much to report about during its eighth decade, 1959-1969: inflation, civil rights, Vietnam War protests and, especially, the Second Vatican Council and the spiritual controversy that followed it.

Fulton J. Sheen, bishop of Rochester from 1966-69, touched on all these tensions and, as a very active participant in Vatican II, came to us resolved to update the diocese according to the council's standard.

Bishop Sheen was, of course, nearing the end of his career when named to the see of Rochester. He had been ordained a priest of the Diocese of Peoria, Ill., in 1919, and served there as an assistant pastor for one year. But he was immediately sent on to graduate study and had won doctoral degrees with highest praise at both Louvain and Rome. Thereafter he began a term of 24 years in the philosophy department of the Catholic University of America.

During his days in Washington, then-Father Sheen also developed his natural gifts as a preacher and lecturer. His philosophical training enabled him to simplify complex subjects and his ability as a writer and elocutionist helped him to state his case winningly.

Already much in demand as an orator, he was engaged in 1930 as the first regular speaker on radio's "Catholic Hour." A

pioneer of the "electronic Gospel," Father Sheen won a large audience by deftly and attractively applying Catholic principles to the world's current worries. By 1950, his broadcasts were reaching 4 million listeners in America, and through short-wave transmission, countless thousands elsewhere.

As early as 1940, Dr. Sheen (by then a monsignor) had spoken on the first religious radio program ever televised. In 1950, he was named national director of the mission-funding Society for the Propagation of the Faith. A year later he was consecrated auxiliary bishop of New York, and launched his television lecture series, "Life is Worth Living," donating the in-

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File photo
Bishop Fulton J. Sheen expressed his concern for the poor by serving food at a local soup kitchen.

A word of special thanks

Throughout 1989, the *Catholic Courier* has published a series of historical reflections on each of the decades of the paper's existence.

The articles recounting the major news events of paper's first nine decades appeared from March through December of 1989 under the heading of "Centennial Scrapbook," and are reprinted here in an abridged form. The final decade's news-history is published herein for the first time.

We are deeply indebted to Father Robert F. McNamara, longtime diocesan archivist and historian, for writing nearly all of the Scrapbook articles. His painstaking research and delightful writing style have combined to bring the past alive each month for *Courier* readers and staff alike. Without his generous efforts, our birthday celebration would have lacked any sense of historical meaning.

We also wish to thank former *Courier* editor Carmen J. Viglucci for recounting the major news events of the 1970s in December's Scrapbook installment.



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