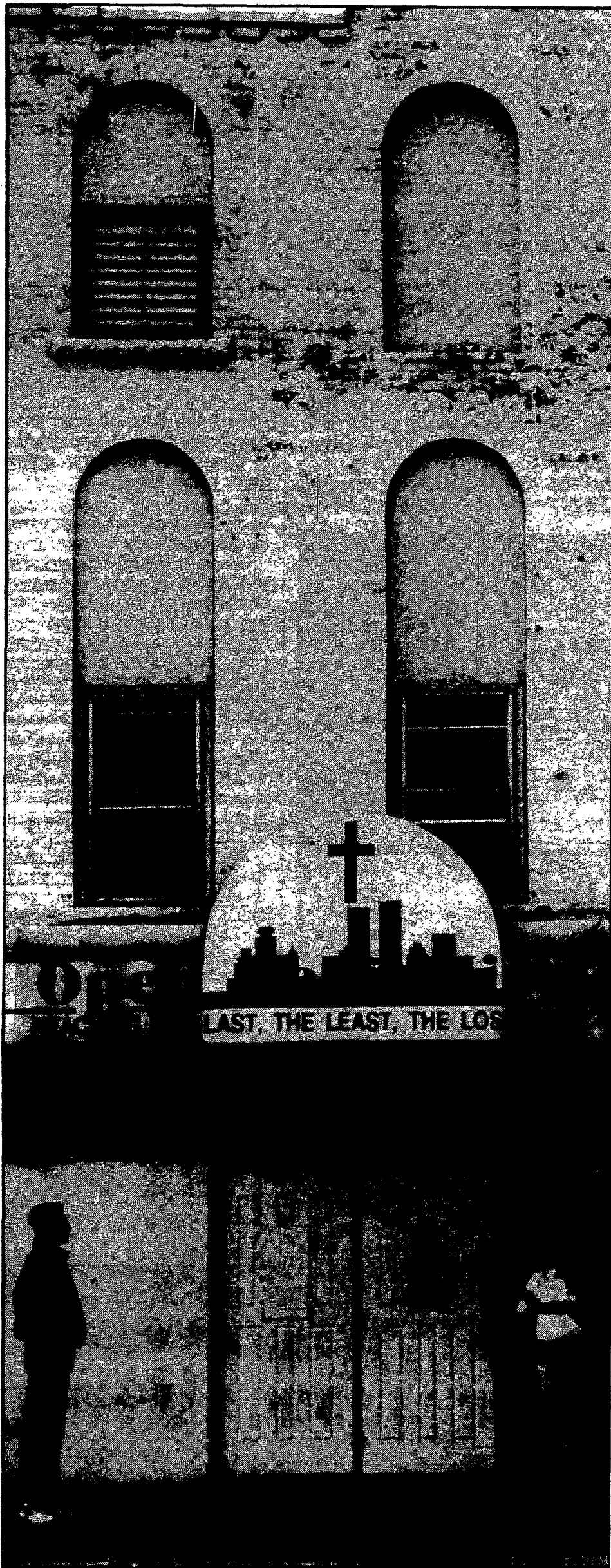


HEALTH CARE

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE CATHOLIC COURIER — JULY 23, 1992



Volunteers at St. Mary's Hospital and the Open Door Mission (above) have initiated a health-care program for the homeless.



Dr. Louis Papa (left), chief medical resident at St. Mary's Hospital, draws a blood sample from Dale Burns at the Open Door Mission. Several doctors and nurses from St. Mary's volunteer to provide basic health care to homeless guests at the mission.

Doctors taking care to streets

ROCHESTER — Dr. Louis Papa summed up the health-care needs of many homeless citizens when he reflected upon his first night of volunteer service at the Open Door Mission, 210 W. Main St.

"It's just reassurance for people who don't have access to the health-care system," Papa said. "They get nervous because they haven't seen a doctor in so long."

The chief medical resident at St. Mary's Hospital, 89 Genesee St., Papa started administering primary care at Open Door after talking to Dr. Joseph Fontana — who began his weekly visits to the mission earlier this year.

"The idea of the program is to get to the root of the health problem before it becomes serious," stated Dr. Fontana in the mission's February, 1992 newsletter.

Such a program saves the hospital and taxpayers money since many homeless people tend to use emergency rooms and hospital clinics in the same way the average person uses his or her own physician, the newsletter concluded.

St. Mary's staff volunteers spend two to three hours per week at the mission, performing blood work, checking blood pressure, prescribing medication and assessing guests' health. In doing so, St. Mary's personnel are putting into practice the ideals of a June symposium the hospital sponsored on health and human services for the homeless.

Those ideals were highlighted during a speech to symposium participants given by Dr. Pedro Greer Jr., a Florida physician who has worked with the homeless at a health clinic in Miami.

Continued on page 2A

The poorer you are is inversely proportional to the amount of disease you'll have. /

Dr. Pedro Greer Jr.

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