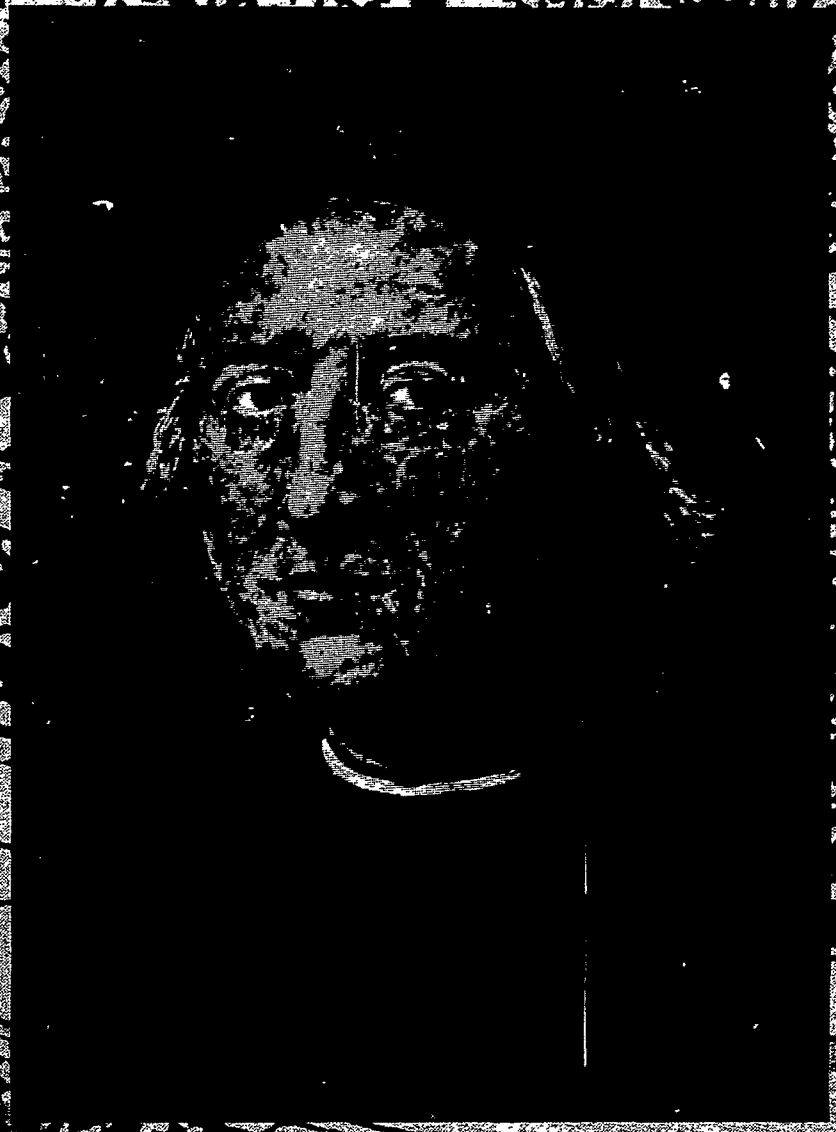
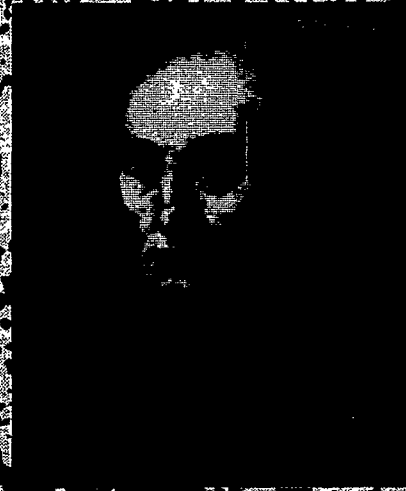


CATHOLIC COURIER

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Ambiguous past paints multifaceted portrait

The celebrations are already underway as nations, groups, and the Catholic Church mark the quincentennial — 500th anniversary — of Columbus' first voyage to the Western Hemisphere.

Among the scheduled events is a Mass to be celebrated by Pope John Paul II October 11 in the Dominican Republic's capital of Santo Domingo.

And in Rochester, the festivities include the Oct. 3 renaming of Thurston Road as "Knights of Columbus Avenue," and a 5 p.m. Mass the same day at Sacred Heart Cathedral, 296 Flower City Park.

But as Garry Wills noted in the Nov. 22, 1990, edition of the *New York Review of Books*, "A funny thing happened on the way to the quincentennial observation of America's 'discovery.' Columbus got mugged."

Thus even as the celebrations are underway, so too are protests.

Some Native American groups have planned demonstrations, for example, claiming that Columbus opened the door for exploitation, slavery and even death to the people living in the lands he visited.

Some social-activism groups have even issued a call for the Knights of Columbus to change their name.

At the center of this debate is the man Columbus. And he is a controversial and, in some ways, ambiguous figure.

Generations of school children learned that on Oct. 12, 1492, Italian sailor Christopher Columbus overcame opposition and adversity to discover America while trying

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