



File photo

Monsignor John M. Duffy visited with children at the Sisters of Mercy Mission in Santiago, Chile, in 1967, as part of the diocesan Mission Program. The diocese began providing financial support for both the Chilean mission and for the Sisters of St. Joseph's Brazilian mission 25 years ago.

Diocese celebrates 25 years of reaching out to missions

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Although it has been 25 years since the Rochester diocese began to financially support missions in Chile and Brazil, two former missionaries observed that contributors don't always have a clear picture of how their money is used.

"People give and say, 'Oh, those poor people.' But it's not like we take a dollar bill, put it in somebody's hands and say to go out and buy rice," said Sister Elaine Hollis, SSJ, whose 12-year service in Brazil ended this past October. "We work with the people and help them develop their (personal) riches."

Sister Anne Curtis, RSM, acknowledged that since the majority of Chileans and Brazilians are already Catholic, the missionaries' perceived role as converters isn't quite accurate, either.

"I run into this old idea that you go to convert people. But I think (the experience) actually does more for us (missionaries.) It's almost like we need the poor of Latin America to show us another way," said Sister Curtis, who served in Chile from 1987-91.

Despite these misconceptions, the Sisters of St. Joseph and Sisters of Mercy emphasize one irrefutable fact: their service would not be possible without the tremendous financial sup-

port they receive from diocesan parishioners.

"We'd publicly like to thank the people. Without them, there wouldn't be any missions," said Sister Janet Korn, RSM, who spent 1965-81 in Chile.

Sister Korn was one of the first Sisters of Mercy from the Rochester diocese to perform missionary work in Chile. One year earlier, in 1964, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester had begun similar service in Brazil.

These congregations originally funded their own mission projects. In 1968 they began to benefit from diocesan efforts, mostly through Mission Sunday offerings at diocesan parishes. Contributions have totaled in excess of \$1,000,000 over the past decade, according to figures provided by Father Robert C. Bradler, director of the diocesan Missions Office.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of this partnership between the Chilean and Brazilian missions and the diocese, Bishop Matthew H. Clark is scheduled to celebrate a special Mass on Mission Sunday, May 16. The 9:30 a.m. Mass will take place at St. James Church, 130 Brett Road, Irondequoit, where Father Bradler serves as pastor.

Also on May 16, diocesan collections will be taken for mission works in places such as Selma, Ala., and the countries of Bolivia and Mexico.

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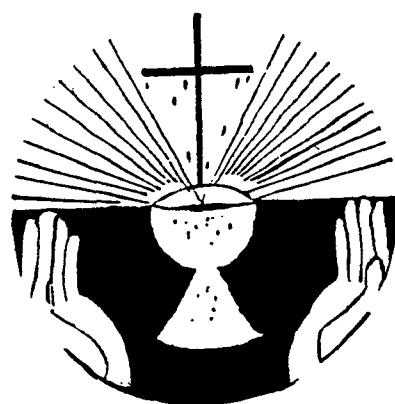
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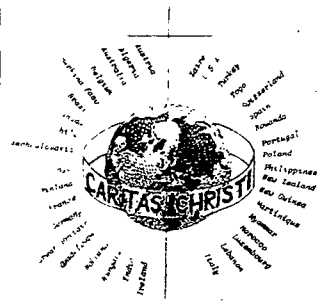
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