

The Wanderer

FOUNDED
IN 1867

VOLUME 108, NO. 8

FEBRUARY 20, 1975

Co-Founders of the English edition (1931)

Joseph Matt
(1877-1966)

Alphonse J. Matt
(1903-1973)

Editor: A. J. Matt Jr.

Assistant Editors: Cindy Kinning Paslawski
Peggy Moen
Kelly de Rosier

Contributing Editors

William H. Marshner John J. Mulloy

Frank Morriss Edith Myers

Advertising Mgr.: John G. Matt

Circulation Mgr.: Patricia Maurer

Production Mgr.: Gene Reber

Subscription Price: \$9.00 per year. Foreign \$11.00; six months \$5.00; single copies, 25 cents.

Published every Thursday by Wanderer Printing Co., 128 East Tenth Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55101 (additional offices in Madelia, Minn.)
Phone (612) 224-5733. Second Class Postage paid at St. Paul, Minn., and at additional mailing offices.

Bicentennial Alert

By WILLIAM H. MARSHNER

If you, the reader, are in basic agreement with The Wanderer's understanding of Catholic social doctrine, and if you live within striking distance of one of these five cities: San Antonio, St. Paul, Atlanta, Sacramento, or Newark, then Holy Church needs you badly.

These are the cities in which the Bishops' Bicentennial Committee, chaired by John Cardinal Dearden, plans to hold "hearings" similar to the ones held two weeks ago in Washington, D.C., which were an almost unmitigated disgrace. Had you been there, you could have witnessed Marxian socialist Gary MacEoin denouncing *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* as self-contradictory; Brazilian Church activist Marina Vandeira vilifying the Church's history and that of her own country as a tale of oppression and nothing but oppression from the year 1600 to the present day; an employee of the UN International Year for Women, Ms. Irma DeMazelis, rejecting Western civilization outright; Sr. Marie Augusta Neal, a professor of sociology at Harvard, denouncing the family, no less, as presented in both the Old and the New Testaments, and rejecting every form of social or ecclesiastical hierarchy — and these people were not received as kooks. Every one of them had been formally invited by the committee. Then the Bishops sat with stony faces, as their "guests" abused them, their Country, and above all, their Christ. But the audience was not so impassive. Composed of Justice-and-Peace types from neighboring dioceses, Maryknollers on furlough from Peru, hard-faced nuns in pantsuits, and a scattering of bureaucrats from the U.S.C.C., it joyfully applauded the worst excesses.

Soon this show is coming to your neighborhood, dear reader, if you live near one of those five cities. Let me give you the dates and exact addresses:

San Antonio, April 3rd through 5th, in the parish hall of Sacred Heart Parish, 2114 W. Houston St. (Tel. 512-227-5059);

St. Paul, June 12th through 14th, at the College of St. Thomas (Tel. 612-647-5000);

Atlanta, Aug. 7th through 9th, tentatively planned to be held at the Village of St. Joseph, 2969 Butner Rd. S.W.;

Sacramento, Oct. 2nd through 4th, no location selected as yet;

Newark, Dec. 4th through 6th, at Essex Catholic High School, 300 Broadway (Tel. 201-481-2350).

If all you can do is spare an afternoon to attend one of these events, that alone will be of value. Take along a few friends to "balance" the audience. But what we really need, of course, is speakers to "balance" testimony. Do you oppose the Equal Rights Amendment? Then your side has not been heard. Do you oppose abortion? Then your issue has not been raised. Do you think it's ridiculous to talk about women priests? Your opinion has not been voiced. Are you dubious of world government? Then you had better say so, because the Bishops haven't heard anybody of your stripe.

You can arrange to testify by writing to the N.C.C.B. Bicentennial Committee, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005, attention: Mr. Francis J. Butler. I have been assured that the five regional "hearings" listed above are not booked up; there is still room on the schedule, though of course your chances of getting on it are slight. You will do well to disguise yourself as

a radical-chic researcher from the Center of Concern (a Jesuit organization in the pay of David Rockefeller), which has gotten more people onto the schedule than any other organization. Another good cover would be as a theologian of liberation from the Mexican-American Cultural Center, or failing that, here's an idea for the ladies that's money-back guaranteed: represent yourself as a former I.H.M. who has escaped sex-role stereotypes by becoming a full-feathered Comanche warrior.

Perhaps I am being unfair. Bishop James Rausch, general secretary of the N.C.C.B., and Fr. Brian Hehir, a staff advisor to Bicentennial, both swore to me that the hearings were not rigged. Both indicated they were chagrined at the lack of balance in the Washington line-up, which they declared a fluke. Bill Buckley had been invited but couldn't come; Jim Buckley, ditto; Professor James Hitchcock, ditto. Of ERA opponents, none had stepped forward. Well, perhaps. I do not wish to doubt anyone's good intentions. But the proof will come in the next few months. If you have an organization, if you have strong views about Catholicism and America's crumbling social order, if you can present competent testimony in any of the five cities, then immediately write to Mr. Butler. Let's test how "open" these hearings will be. Then, at least, if the final record of the American Catholic Bicentennial program is an unrelieved shriek of hatred against the Faith and the Catholic people, the cause will be Cardinal Dearden's manipulation and not our default.