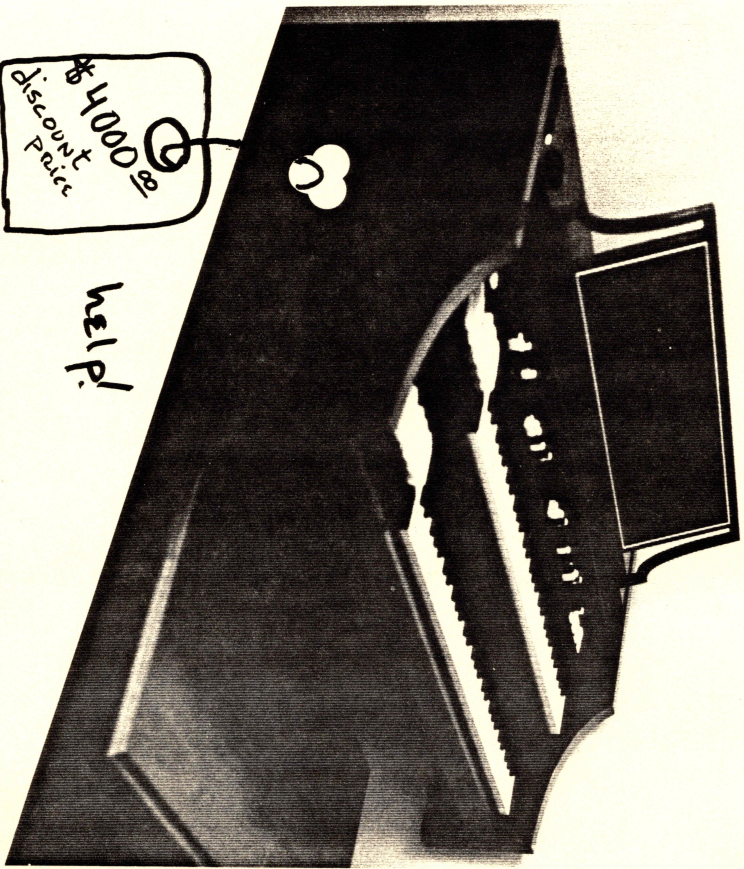
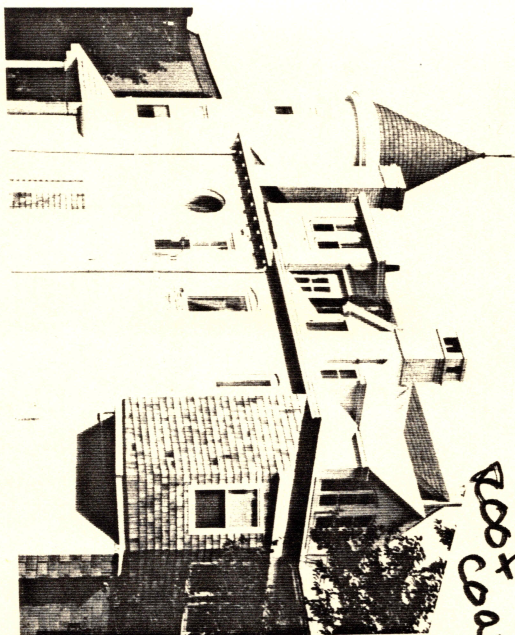


OUR SANCTUARY

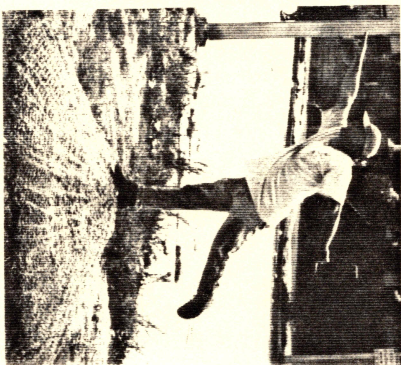


help!



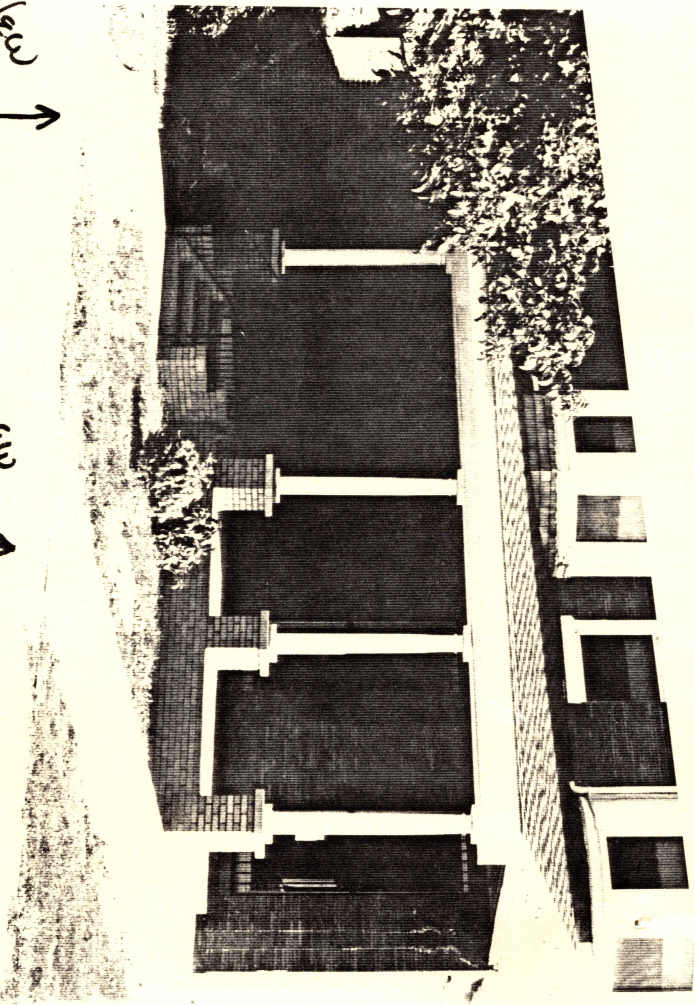
roof coating

Span the concrete walk →



New walk →

New Ramp →



education and art programs for the youngsters. That's the only way we'll be able to change the drug culture. The older kids are by and large not going to stop.

The *St. Francis Mobile Dental Service* is running successfully, thanks to the time and effort of John ( Dr. Taylor). *Baltimore Gas & Electric* recently refurbished our van, which they donated and outfitted about fifteen years ago.

We are the host for our neighborhood organization. The aim of the organization is to keep at least this one block clean, classy, and quiet. It helps that most of the residents are home owners.

We have one *Alcoholics Anonymous* and three *Narcotics Anonymous* meetings here every week. They are a blessing for the members and for the Center. It's folks reaching out to folks to change their own lives. The walls hold their spirit and radiate it back to others who use our church.

My air compressor gives me an entré into the little kids' lives. They come with their bikes for me to fill their tires. They ride up the ramp into my "office" (the front porch), and I fuss over them while I'm filling the tires. They have to give me three things in return: they have to know my name, as I do theirs, they have to say a prayer for me, and they have to watch our church building whenever they pass by, "so nobody messes." The word gets around. One fellow prayed out loud - - all the prayers he knew, and parts of others - - for fully three minutes. Now I tell them they can say the prayer when they go to bed at night.

reconstruction. He said, "Fr. Tom, I thought you were nuts. This place was a disaster. I thought you were wasting your time, effort and money."

"And, now, what do you think?"  
"I can't believe it. You guys did a miracle. This place looks great." ▼

Some of our supporters have asked us what the *Center* does. Here's an outline.

First of all, there is the visible presence of *St. Francis Neighborhood Center* in our neighborhood. We stand as a long-term tribute to the dignity of our people. We're the impossible Church. Many passersby brighten up when they see us fixing the house. Each nail fixes the neighborhood, too.

We hold regular religious services, primarily Mass on Sunday, and make hospital visits. I tell folks who ask that they are welcome to attend Sunday service. We do not check ID's at the door. The only criterion is the wish to pray. I tell them it's recognizably Catholic, but they would still be comfortable. It always bothered me when I was growing up that I could invite friends to my mother's table but not my God's. Pete isn't checking ID's at his gates, either.

Our congregation has asked me to hold bible classes one evening a week, for adults. We're currently preparing that. We have a Cub Scout troop overseen by Debbie Hill, and we want to start up our

Hi, folks. Happy Fall.

Straight off, I want to thank all the folks who have sent us donations. I wish I could thank you all personally as I used to do when my days were not so crammed.

As you know, we have moved, and have completed most of the construction. This fall, under some gentle (?) pressure from my community, we are completing jobs undone since the contractors exited last November.

We built a concrete handicapped ramp from the sidewalk to the porch to allow some of our folks who walk with difficulty to get in. Also, there are some members of NA and AA who have wheel-chairs. Now they can get in without steps and bumps.

We also put in a curved walk to our front steps. We are having the tin part of our roof coated so that the 100 year old metal stops rusting. We are installing a railing along the ramp, and putting in a ceiling on the porch. We are preparing our main grand staircase ("Frankly, my dear . . .") for its runner, which has been fabricated, paid for but not installed. We finally built a kitchen for the Church Ladies.

Interestingly, our electricians returned to put three lights on the porch, and one of them remembered working here at the beginning of the

Sometimes I'm the cop (silent), when the kids start throwing bottles or rocks. Sometimes I'm the Pope of Whitelock Street (no competition). All the time I am pastor of our congregation, and they are my family. Lots of times, I am the taxi service when the elder-van services blow it. That happens a lot. For the Center, I am the general maintenance man, fund-raiser, organizer, and general *fac-totum*. In between, I work part time jobs like teaching, sing-a-long gigs, parties, counseling, and computer work to earn my keep.



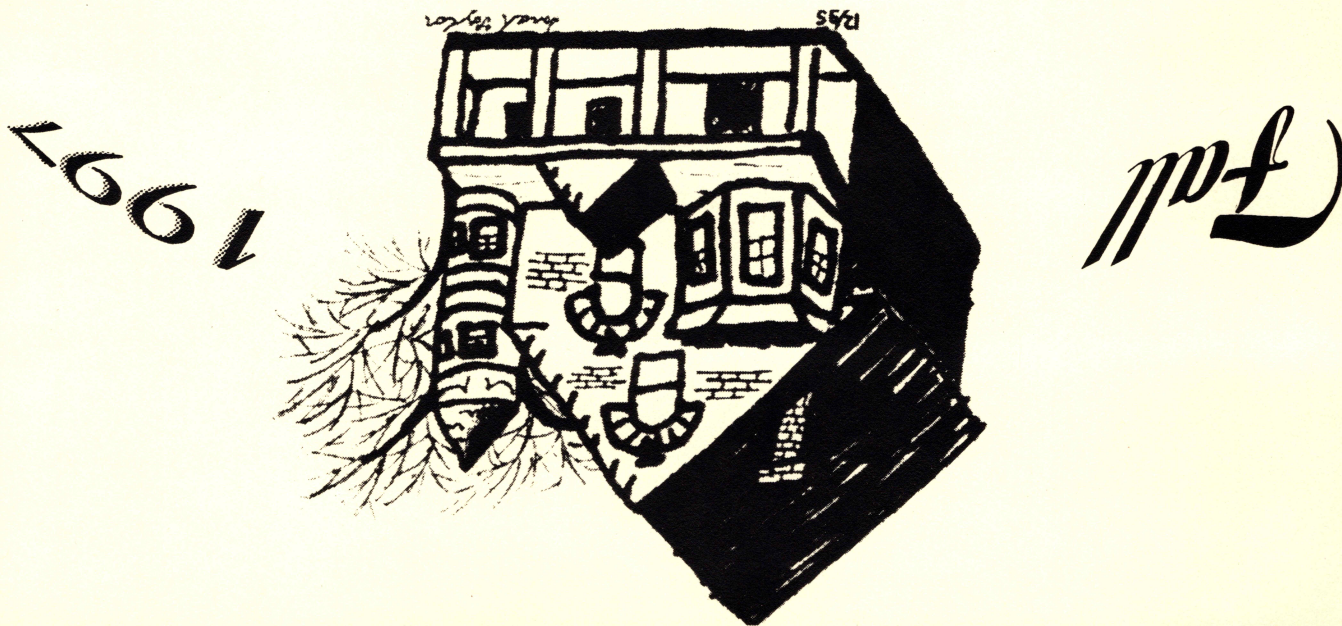
At present, I am writing a book, the story of the Center. I was encouraged to do this in lieu of investing time and effort into a Ph.D. Besides, if I don't write it, no one will, and there'd be no history of our work here for the past thirty-five years.

I am also the chair of the *Ethics and Patient Advisory Committee* for a Baltimore nursing home. I'm trying to spread the idea that the nursing home is a sacred place and should be considered a continual ethical milieu.

So that's an overview. Every so often we hear from folks like priests, poets, and other citizens that they admire our work here, wish they could do the same, keep it up. Maybe it helps.

Has been - John, Debbie  
for Tom, John, Debbie  
4

*St. Francis Neighborhood Center  
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