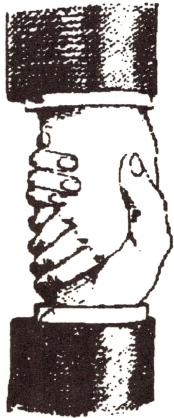


One of the important thoughts in our discussions is this. In the 60's there was a sense of community. There was a sense of service and sharing. No matter what talent or resource one had, somebody out there needed it. The needs haven't changed, only the social climate.



Government and church care less now for the poor and outcast. Volunteers are a scarce and extremely valuable commodity, but so few. While some still think that government and church will again provide leadership, such thinking is cultural lag. Evolution does not go backward. In our post-industrial, technological United States, social and religious leadership must now be in the hands of the people. We are an educated populace, certainly capable and often desirous of self-direction. We need not look, indeed, can not look to the church and the government for responsibility. Social Security, male celibate clergy, nuns, tax exemptions, and many elements of the welfare system, for example, are rapidly becoming sociological fossils.

What we have been struggling with here at St. Francis is precisely a microcosm of the larger social picture.

Given all these changing social moods, how do we take ourselves into the next decades? Our first step is to re-examine the thinking of the 60's to distill the elements that worked. What prescriptions did we use to heal the hurts of the community? Was it presence? Was it medical (dental)? Was it the chapel belonging to the community? Was it religious services? Was it education? Was it Alcoholics Anonymous? Was it counselling? Was it dealing with people as we would like to be dealt with? Was it all of these coupled with loyalty to the people, who began slowly to believe that we would not leave as so many others had?

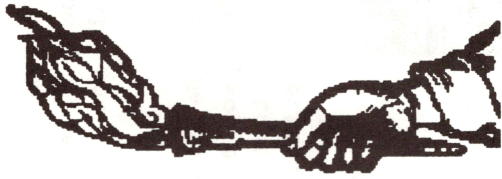
What is the next step? We do something that worked before. We ask the people of the surrounding neighborhood what it is that the center can do to serve the neighborhood better. Our third step is to

match our talents, resources and abilities to the suggested directions.

There will be change. It is society's way. Our direction midst the change will be to preserve those elements which foster community and provide avenues for people to serve each other. The leaders, social and religious, must be in-



digenous. They must come from the community. In Palestine, Jesus told his message directly to the lay-thousands, not to robed intermediaries. Mary Magdalen, Nicodemus, Martha, Peter and John passed it on. So it will be here on White Lock Street. God will still and ever be us for us. He will wear the clothes, the heart, the arms and the legs of our neighbors. He will speak with our accents, listen with our ears, look with our eyes, reach out from our porches and touch with our hands.



St. Francis will remain and grow as a center of service. It must invite more people to do its work, spread its influence. It must fill the gaps where others have left. It must continue to serve the marginal, the ones whom no one chooses to see, the ones who do not fit the perfection of the books.

Emma Lazarus could have written about some of our community. We have our tired and our poor. The other members of our community, under the aegis of St. Francis, will lift the lamp to those who look this way.

support from volunteers, donations, church and government. Over time, this support dwindled, and we evolved in the direction of less handout and more seed-planting. Because structured handouts perpetuate poverty and dependence, we elected to lay better foundations for the future.



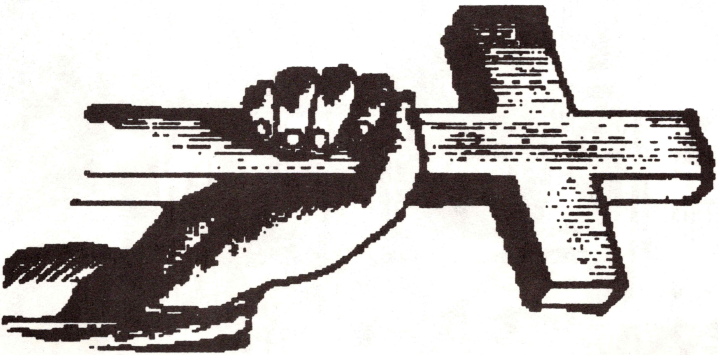
For the past few months, then, we have been discussing the future of the Center. Where shall we take St. Francis in the coming two decades and more? What should be its orientation? Who, indeed, is the "we?" Serious considerations, these.

Hello from St. Francis

Life seems to get faster and faster. It's been a while since we've written. Here are some of the efforts capturing us:

First is our Summer Bible School. It was again a success this year. The children require incredible efforts, especially here on Whitelock Street where drugs, dropping out and dream-death are a way of life. The Bible School gives the youngsters tools to survive childhood. Success is there.

A second concern of our community is the future of the Center. St. Francis started in 1963 in a rented apartment about three blocks from this present location. Its first orientation was rescue and crisis intervention. The 60's were times of social concern and change. And so, we helped with food, with counselling, with legal and medical advice. There was much backup



In a more mundane vein, we need two new roofs. We have already been given half the amount through the kindness of a friend. If you can, we would be grateful.

Fall blessings. Enjoy the change of seasons. God appears in the colors.

Father Tom

John

David

**Prayer Of
St. Francis Of Assisi**

Lord, make me an instrument
of Thy peace; where there is
hatred, let me sow love; where
there is injury, pardon; where
there is doubt, faith; where
there is despair, hope; where
there is darkness, light; and
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that
I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console; to be
understood as to understand; to
be loved, as to love; for it is in
giving that we receive, it is in
pardoning that we are par-
doned, and it is in dying that we
are born to eternal life.

John

Deb

ST FRANCIS
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



St. Francis Neighborhood Center

936 Whitelock Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21217

Rev. Thomas Composto, SJ John K. Taylor, III

Directors

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