

WILL POOR, BLACK ATLANTA PROBLEMS TEST FIRST BLACK CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP?

by Chester A. Higgins, Sr.
NNPA News Editor

When Pope John Paul II appointed Eugene A. Marino to be archbishop of Atlanta, Ga., the first Black ever so honored, the move was viewed with public and private enthusiasm.

The Biloxi, Miss.-born (of a Black American mother and a Puerto Rican father), soft spoken Josephite priest, had certainly paid his dues as an auxiliary bishop for 14 years in the Washington, D.C. Roman Catholic archdiocese where he spent a lot of this time in ecumenical endeavors. He is highly thought of by those who know him and with whom he works. He is regarded as a sensitive man, with liberal, but not dogmatic tendencies, who has a passionate feeling for the poor and downtrodden.

Recently, some observers have wondered aloud if the archbishop-elect's move to Atlanta may, indeed, be what, at first blush, it appears. His successful work in Washington, D.C., is indicative of his readiness to serve in the deeper south, some say. For the nation's capitol, despite its cosmopolitan veneer, is essentially a southern area. Anyway, they continue, Atlanta is not your typical fundamentalist, bible thumping, redneck, yahoo protestant embracing-only, Roman Catholic, Jew and all other religion hating center still rabidly intolerant of Blacks and foreigners. It does have, after all, a Black mayor of national note, Andrew Young, a civil rights warrior of the revolutionary 1960s-70s. They also point to Atlanta's bustling business air — "a town that's too busy to hate" and the intellectual atmosphere resonating from its many colleges and institutions of higher learning.

But then there is the festering presence of nearby Forsyth County and the historic reputation of Georgia's long not-so-secret romance with the Ku Klux Klan. In 1915, William J. Simmons, a former Methodist preacher organized a new Klan in Atlanta, as a patriotic Protestant fraternal society. The KKK grew rapidly in the mid-1920s, numbering more than two million members. In 1946, Samuel Green, an Atlanta physician, revived the Klan. Green died in 1949 and the Klan split into many competing groups. One of the strongest and most virulent

led by a rabid racist, J.B. Stoner, of Marietta, Ga., who has served time on an attempted bombing conviction in Birmingham, Ala. Stoner now heads a lunatic group called Crusade Against Corruption with a slogan aimed at Blacks and homosexuals, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center (formerly the Klan Watch) in Montgomery, Ala. Its slogan: "Thank God For Aids."

Will this historic climate ultimately pall the efforts of Marino who will be sworn into office on May 5? Perhaps not. For the strong fundamentalist bias in the area has somewhat eased over the years. And since the diocese was founded 30 years ago — he succeeds Atlanta Archbishop Thomas A. Donnellan who died Oct. 5 at age of 73 — catholic membership has risen to 156,000 of which 10,000 are Black. Even so, Southern Blacks are also a conservative breed. The small number of catholics in the Atlanta archdiocese is testament to their strong adherence to Protestantism. However, at another level even Martin Luther King, Jr. was not totally accepted by the local clergy, most of them Black.

Archbishop-elect Marino in a telephone interview with NNPA declared he is not concerned about the negatives. "I'm going there to stress the positive. I will work to convert the uncommitted. My Josephite family fashioned me into a minister of Christ and, after the beautiful example of St. Joseph, taught me how to love and serve God's people with great generosity." He said he is looking forward to interacting with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Change and

Masjid Muhammad Services Scheduled

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The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

- Masjid Muhammad begins Jumah Prayer promptly at 12:00 p.m. Friday.
- Sisters class starts at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday (for women of all ages).
- Taleem & The Jr. Taleem Program (ages 3-15 years old) commences on Sunday at 1:00 p.m.
- Masjid Muhammad is open every night for The Isha Prayer.

All Praise is due to Allah (The Creator)

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THE NAACP AND YOU!



Rev. Jesse D. Scott
President
Las Vegas, NAACP



YOUR VOTE IS VERY IMPORTANT

Your vote really does count towards making a change for the better in our society. Voting is a right that you have that is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America. Voting is a process that all of us should exercise to select the men and women we want to represent us in government. You should not rest until everyone in your family, as well as your friends, register and vote on election day.

—IGNORANCE AND FEAR ABOUT THE NAACP—

To be ignorant means not to understand something. Therefore, all of us are ignorant about something to a higher or lesser degree.

But there is a state of being that is worse than being ignorant and that is to

other religious entities in the area.

Dr. Lawrence N. Jones, dean of Howard University's School of Divinity, and one of the few observers who spoke for the record, told NNPS: "He (Marino) has fine gifts... he is a Catholic clergy with commitment to church and God. He is a calm, orderly person who meets all people well. I'm sure he will represent the church and the (Black) race well. In addition," Dr. Jones added, "I think he will be received very warmly. However, if he tires to move too strongly in the areas of social justice he might well have problems, as so many other (ministers) have."

be ignorant and not want to learn. The lack of knowledge leaves one empty and powerless.

To fear means to doubt and to show lack of confidence in oneself. The late great president of the U.S., Franklin D. Roosevelt, said to America during the great depression, "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself." Fear is a negative quality that obscures the very appearance of hope. The following is the best definition of fear that I have ever seen, which says that fear is false evidence appearing real.

Just recently I had an experience that I have not had in all my 35 years working for the NAACP, which really makes the case for one being ignorant and fearful at the

same time. A young Black man came to the NAACP office without an appointment to see me. This young man appeared to be about 25 or 30 years old. As soon as he came in, he began to ask me what the NAACP is all about. He wanted to know if the NAACP was a political organization, to which I replied, "yes."

Later he overheard me tell someone over the telephone that the April meeting of the NAACP would be held at Second Baptist Church. Subsequently, he asked me why the NAACP met in a church. It was at this point that I began to ask HIM some questions.

First I asked him where he worked and he said "at one of the public utilities," and that he had complaints against the company. Then I wanted to know what he had against the church. It was at this point that this young man told me that he was a Jehovah's Witness and that the church teaches him not to get involved in politics. It appears to me that this young man's problems are compounded, inasmuch as he is ignorant of the

Suicide Survivors Support Group Organized

Nevada ranks first in the nation in the rate of suicide's each year. The rising rate of suicide victims has created a new social problem as a victim's family and friends try to cope with the trauma.

The Suicide Prevention Hotline is responding to this need with the organization of a support group, survivors of suicide, for family and friends of the suicide victim, according to a spokeswoman for the hotline.

Trained professionals will oversee the meetings which will start in April.

Anyone interested should call the Suicide Prevention Hotline at 731-2990. Callers should identify themselves as interested in the S.O.S. support group and give their name and phone number.

potential and the power of the NAACP as an advocate for his freedom against the power structure and of the fear he has about what his church will do to him if he gets involved in a political organization like the NAACP.

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