

Priests for Tomorrow



Updated Seminaries

By FATHER LOUIS J. HOHMAN
Diocesan Director of Vocations

To meet the needs of the present and the future, the Diocese of Rochester got a head start in the updating of its seminaries. To a certain extent this was forced by existing circumstances.

Up until 1964 the diocese had two seminaries — St. Andrew's Preparatory Seminary founded in 1870 and St. Bernard's, the major seminary, founded just before the turn of the century. In its later years St. Andrew's consisted of four years high school and two years college. St. Bernard's consisted of the last two years of college and four years of theology.

The first problem to this arrangement occurred with the rising costs of higher education. The cost of maintaining a small college, especially one which was operating in two separate locations, was becoming prohibitive. The proportion of faculty to students would have to be much higher than most colleges, the library would have to be much larger for a proportionately smaller use, the scientific equipment would serve a many fewer students and so be much more expensive, at least on a per capita basis.

In short, the small college was rapidly becoming a very expensive proposition. By small we refer to one having under two hundred students.

This situation brought on negotiations with St. John Fisher College to bring about a situation whereby all our college seminarians (last two years of St. Andrew's and first two of St. Bernard's) would attend St. John Fisher and live in a separate residence on campus to be called Becket Hall.

The seminarians became full-fledged students of St. John Fisher, subject to all its academic requirements, and participating in any curricular program judged consistent with their status as seminarians. The immediate result of this was a greater exposure to their peers, with at least the possibility of better understanding. In terms of the decrees of Vatican II which call for more cooperation between clergy and laity, we felt it would be an excellent training ground. The same could be said in regard to understanding the problems and viewpoints of the laity of the future. It could very well be the beginning of a more ongoing dialogue between the two.

In this connection there is much talk about seminarians "knowing what is going on in the world." We are quite aware of the fact that simply being in the world does not make one know what is going on. While it is true one cannot understand the world even living in it without the insight that comes from growing maturity. And this maturity, we feel, will come from a delicate balance of discipline and freedom held in place by a Christ-centered spirituality.

There are those who equate discipline with an almost complete restriction of freedom. They feel that the best discipline is that quasi slavery to bells summoning one to every exercise and activity the day holds. This concept is rooted in a monastic view of seminary life, and would, I suppose, be all right if the monastic way of life were to be a continuing thing. But life in the diocesan from-

priesthood is anything but monastic, and one soon finds out that the only thing regular about it is its irregularity. The average parish priest must be especially able to budget his own time and get the things done which need to be done at the right time. It boils down to training in the proper use of freedom.

The proper use of freedom is an area which receives considerable emphasis in the new seminary training. The freedom well nigh absolute which some institutions of higher education tend to give their students we think ridiculous. One does not become automatically mature by reason of becoming a college student. Freedom, desirable as it is, is highly explosive and must be given gradually. Freedom should grow as maturity grows.

We feel that much instruction must be given constantly in the relationship between freedom and responsibility. We define responsibility as the ability to make an affirmative response to the demands of any situation. When a person is not able or unwilling to meet those demands, then his freedom must be restricted until he is able. In our case, repeated failures would demand dismissal from the seminary. The reaction to this system has been, with few exceptions, most gratifying.

We find the sincere student, seeking direction in his choices. When these were simply imposed from above, there was a marked tendency to "play games" with authority and get away with what one could. May be some still do, but at least they know that the full responsibility lies with themselves and that makes a difference.

THE THREE principal areas of discipline, apart from the moral law, are the spiritual life, studies, and in relation to one another. In the spiritual area the seminarians must be taught in season and out of season the necessity of a developing prayer life and self-denial, but that both must be self-chosen, under direction after ordination, no one supervises the young priest's life or his program of self-denial. Therefore we feel he must learn early to do it on his own and to do it out of love for Jesus Christ.

Regarding their relationships to one another, we try to build a truly Christian community of priests and students with its base in the Liturgy. Mutual respect, justice, love and concern are indispensable ingredients in such a community and require great discipline.

The discipline of study takes care of itself. The college student today is being pressured to meet the demands of scholastic excellence. Meeting those demands requires great discipline and the results are right there on paper twice a year.

After two years we sincerely think the advantages of our seminary program far outweigh any disadvantages. The trouble is, the final results will not be assessable until some ten years from now.



Nuns at Scripture Study

Mother Katherine Sullivan of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, noted biblical scholar, gave a series of Holy Week talks on Scripture to nuns of the area at Sacred Heart Academy. She is shown, third from left, with Mother McDonnell, Academy principal, — both in the new religious habit of their order — with representatives of other orders at the Good Friday lecture.

'Magnificent Challenge' For Today's Priests

Vatican City — (RNS) — Priests today face "a magnificent challenge," Pope Paul VI told a group of newly-ordained priests at an audience here.

"We urge you never to lose your high ideals and your zest for the Church," he said.

"The Church has a great need of holy and dedicated men," he told the new ordained priests, "especially in this time when the realm of the spirit is being challenged on all sides."

Pope Paul said they "must be prepared to present the message of Christ to a world that questions the usefulness of religion."

"Modern progress and scientific achievement has made men become self-satisfied and self-reliant," he said. "Instead, all this should bring men closer to God and to each other."

Council Impact

New York — (NC) — Father Andrew M. Greeley, author and sociologist, will return to the Catholic Hour radio program on the Sundays of April.

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Group Named to Study Liturgy Experiment

Washington — (RNS) — Seven Roman Catholic priests, four laymen and a nun have been appointed to the study committee on liturgical adaptation whose primary concern will be to evaluate proposals for liturgical experiments.

However, according to Father Frederick R. McManus, director of the secretariat for the Bishops' Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, there will be little for the unit to do in that regard. There have been very few requests to experiment, he said.

Last November, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops passed a resolution which encouraged proposals for liturgical experiments. If the American hierarchy accepted such proposals, a petition would be sent to the Vatican seeking permission to try out the rites in controlled circumstances.

"Almost all requests have been in the broadest terms," said Father McManus, "such as requests to be designated as a 'center of liturgical experiment' of course, such suggestions will be considered if the American episcopal conference does receive any permission to experiment with liturgical services."

"What the (bishops are) looking for, however, is more detailed plans and formulas which can be evaluated by the new committee to see whether they merit experiment at all. So far we have received only a couple of such concrete proposals," Father McManus said.

Members of the study committee on liturgical adaptation were announced by Bishop Vic-

tor J. Reed of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, one of three episcopal representatives on the committee. The other two are Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan of Worcester, Mass., and Auxiliary Bishop Warren L. Boudeaux of Lafayette, La.

The four lay members of the committee are Miss Virginia Sloyan of the editorial staff of The Liturgical Conference, Washington; Mrs. John Julian Ryan of Goffstown, N.H., writer and executive editor of The Living Light, a publication of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; Robert Rambusch of New York City, artist and liturgical consultant; and Dr. Barry Ulanov, professor of English at Barnard College and adjunct professor of religion at Columbia University.

The nun named is Sister M. Carol Frances of Mundelein College in Chicago.

COURIER-JOURNAL
Friday, March 31, 1967

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