

Priests Size Up Secular Mission

The three priests who presently make up the Secular Mission to the rural areas of the Diocese have spent the summer months traversing their new fields of work.

"We've tried to familiarize ourselves with the territory, explain our mission to the pastors and—in general—orient ourselves," explained Father John Hempel last week. He is the director of the team, and will work in Yates and Seneca counties.

In his first swing around his beat, Father John Gormley has tried to contact Catholic families who can help him get acquainted with the people in his area. He's also been trying to "sound out" their attitude toward the Church. He will operate in Tompkins and Tioga Counties.

Father Timothy Weider, whose "vineyard" is Steuben County, has made a special point of contacting the various social agencies in his area. As indicated by last week's Courier-Journal story (Aug. 11 issue), Father Weider has found some striking cases of poverty in the backwoods of his area. He wants to work closely with the available agencies to help those with material needs.

The three priests are stationed many miles apart; Father Hempel resides at St. Michael's rectory in Elm-Yan; Father Gormley at Immaculate Conception, Ithaca; and Father Weider at St. Mary's in Bath. They meet weekly, however, at St. John's Atoneum Seminary in Montour Falls to exchange ideas and plan for the coming week.

Early Planning

An old Army man (a Medical Administrative Corps major in World War II), Father Hempel tends to describe the team's plan in military terms.

"Phase I" is "orientation" and that's what the trio is doing just now. They're getting a personal acquaintance with the area assigned, making themselves known to the priests in the parishes by towns and enlisting their help.

"The priests have been most cooperative," Father Hempel commented at last week's report meeting. "They are anxious to help us reach people in the rural areas."

"Phase II" will be a "preaching apostolate" aimed at describing the Secular Mission to Catholic congregations in the five county area. The priests have been offered time for Sunday sermons this fall in the parishes involved.

"We want to inform the Catholics of each area of our work and encourage them to become involved in it," Father Hempel explained.

Lay Apostles Needed

An active lay apostolate will be one of the primary goals of



HOME MISSIONERS surveying a chart of their apostolate are these three priests who make up the new Secular Mission of the Rochester Diocese. From left, Fathers John Gormley, John Hempel and Timothy Weider.

the Secular Mission, all agreed. They already realize that three priests alone would not make a big dent in the vast territory they must cover.

"There are more than 900 miles of roads in Yates County alone," mentioned Father Hempel to give some idea of the distances involved in the Secular Mission.

Possibilities of lay participation are almost unlimited. "We'd like to see a parish adopt a migrant camp, for ex-

ample, and feel responsible in some way for the people here," offered Father Weider.

He noted that St. Vincent de Paul's parish in Corning has already done this.

The three priests will make full use of the permission to offer Masses in homes through their mission areas. The home Mass, plus a discussion session afterward will provide a means for developing local leadership, they believe.

Once the orientation and

preaching apostolate have been taken care of, the Secular Mission men will enter "Phase III," which will be actual plans of operating their apostolate.

They are open to new ideas, willing to try any effective means of reaching the "outer country," as Bishop Sheen described it in assigning them.

There is much to do—but they have begun.

—Father Robert Kanka

Confirmation At Age 12

Washington — (NC)—Candidates for Confirmation in the archdiocese of Washington must henceforth be at least 12 years old and in the seventh grade.

Practice in regard to the age for receiving the sacrament has varied from place to place in the archdiocese up to now, with some parishes permitting it to children in the third grade.

Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle, who issued the new ruling, said it is intended to standardize procedures and to ensure that those receiving Confirmation will be "more amply instructed in the faith, and to foster a greater appreciation of the seriousness and responsibilities of the sacrament."

Rochester School Leaders Invited to Summit Meet

Washington — One hundred and two invited participants will take part in the symposium on the future of Catholic education to be sponsored this fall by the National Catholic Educational Association.

They represent many different fields, including education, both public and non-public, government, business, communications media, and civil rights and anti-poverty groups.

Rochester's Catholic school leaders, Diocesan superintendent Msgr. William M. Roche and associate superintendent Father Daniel Brent, are two of the invited participants.

The symposium will be held November 5-10 at the Marriott Twin Bridges Motor Hotel in Washington, D.C.

distributed in advance to the participants. Their authors announced earlier, will be: Dr. Robert J. Havighurst, Professor of Education at the University of Chicago; Dr. John I. Goodlad, Dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles; the Rev. Ernest Bartell, C.S.C., economics professor at the University of Notre Dame; and Dr. John J. Meng, Executive Vice President of Fordham University, New York.

The papers will deal with the sociological context of Catholic education, new organizational structures, finances, and the role of laymen in Catholic education.

The objective of the conferences is to provide ideas and guidelines for consideration by decision-makers in Catholic education on the local level.

Confirmation Proposed Before First Communion

London — (NC) — There are "certainly no differences" between the Catholic and Anglican Churches over the sacrament of Confirmation "either in theology or practice which would separate us as Churches," a group of Catholic and Anglican theologians agreed at a conference here.

They called for "the restoration of the traditional order of Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion," so that Confirmation should be reintegrated with the baptismal rite "apart from which we believe it cannot be properly understood. . . . This would mean a delegation of the power of Confirmation to the parish priest in order that children may receive Communion at an early age if this is considered pastorally necessary," the joint statement said.

The conference, in a concluding statement, also reported that, wherever they did disagree, the differences were no more significant "than we should expect to find between different members within our respective communions."

The statement was given as "the private opinion of those involved."

The conference was attended by theologians representing the Anglican diocese of Southwark and Catholic archdiocese of Southwark.

The Catholic group was led by Msgr. Alan Clark, former rector of the English College in Rome and a participant at the Second Vatican Council. The Anglicans were headed by Bishop John Robinson of Woolwich, suffragan to the Anglican diocese of Southwark. Bishop Robinson, one of the most controversial leaders in the Anglican Church here, is the author

of several notable books on Christian thinking, particularly the best seller "Honest to God."

The conference was visited by the apostolic delegate to Great Britain, Archbishop Iginio Cardinal, and by both Catholic Archbishop Cyril Corderoy of Southwark and Anglican Bishop Mervyn Stockwood of Southwark.

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