

Discuss Independent Lay Groups

Washington—(NC)—Seven members of the hierarchy held informal, but "very frank and very friendly," exchanges here with representatives of the National Association of Laymen, and at the end both groups expressed satisfaction with the communication achieved.

The bishops agreed they had spent an evening with laymen who are deeply committed to the Church, and the NAL members gained added insight into the complexity of the Church and the role of the bishops in this time of transition.

The two groups met at a dinner at which Archbishop Joseph T. McGucken of San Francisco was host. The archbishop is episcopal chairman of the Department of Lay Organizations of the United States Catholic Conference.

The NAL members pictured the independent lay organization as a rapidly growing phenomenon in American Catholicism, and attributed the rise to a desire on the part of an increasing number of Catholics to have a more significant exercise of responsibility and initiative in the Church.

The bishops made it clear that they regarded the choice of an independent structure as perfectly legitimate for the Catholics who wished to make it. However, they said they were particularly interested in exploring the type of relations such structures might have with the National Council of Catholic Men and the National Council of Catholic Women, with the pastoral councils in the process of formation in many dioceses, and with other lay organizations that have been formally established in the Church. It would be a serious mistake, the bishops maintained, to underestimate what the groups have accomplished in the past and what they are actually accomplishing now.

It was recognized that criticism of programs and other ecclesiastical policies might become more common in the future. It was said, however, that such criticism will be valuable only if it is carried out with respect and charity. To conduct it in this way, the bishops felt, would be a crucial

test of responsibility for any independent lay group.

The laymen presented NAL position papers on such topics as human dignity, Christian unity, parish life, communications, education, diocesan and parish administration, liturgy, marriage, and the family to the bishops. They asked that their views be considered by the bishops' committees that draft National Conference of Catholic Bishops policy statements in these areas. Archbishop McGucken said he thought the chairmen of the relevant committees would be quite willing to receive these expressions of NAL thinking.

Laymen and bishops seemed

to concur — though challenged in some quarters — that the Church is inevitably a structured community and that the central problems in this area are those of developing the best structures and the best relation of structure to life. They agreed upon the need for additional and improved communication.

They differed in their estimate of the loss to the Church resulting from the defection of Catholics, particularly the young. The laymen felt this was more extensive than did the bishops.

In addition to Archbishop McGucken, members of the hierarchy present at the dinner in-

cluded Coadjutor Archbishop Leo C. Byrne of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Bishops John J. Russell of Richmond, Va.; Frederick W. Freking of La Crosse, Wis.; James J. Hogan of Altoona, Pa., and James W. Malone, administrator of Youngstown, Ohio. Also there was Auxiliary Bishop James P. Shannon of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The lay group was headed by NAL president Dennis Landis of Minneapolis, and included Mr. and Mrs. William Caldwell of Cleveland, Marianne Barry of Milwaukee, Don Kerston of Fort Dodge, Iowa; Bernard Buss of Aurora, Ill.; Paul Sprehe of Oklahoma City and John Ban-

Senate Moves to Scuttle 'Man in the House' Rule

Washington—(NC)—If the Senate has its way, the old man in the house rule—the bane of liberal thinkers and impoverished families—will no longer rule the welfare roost in the United States.

In a recent 39-36 vote the Senate approved a mandatory requirement that all 50 states and the District of Columbia provide welfare assistance to dependent children, even when their father is an unemployed father in the home.

Under the welfare laws of 28 states and the District of Columbia, permanent aid to dependent children is denied children whose fathers — although

unemployed—live at home.

Such families have only been eligible for temporary aid—up to about six months. After that, nothing, unless the man leaves home or the mother lies about his whereabouts.

Many—including Daniel Patrick Moynihan of the Harvard-MIT Urban Studies Center, who wrote a controversial report on ghetto family life—have charged that the rule is responsible at least in part for breaking up families. Fathers have left, rather see their children go hungry.

The Senate vote was immediately praised by Father James T. McHugh, director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's family life bureau.

"This is a realistic step in the right direction," he said.

Father McHugh said passage of this measure "supports thinking that welfare should be family centered, rather than centered on the individual."

The Senate measure still must pass the House before it becomes law.

Educators Fail To Map Master Plan

Washington, D.C.—(RNS)—More than 100 of the nation's leading Roman Catholic educators failed to agree on mapping a master plan for Catholic education as their five-day conference ended here, but anticipated that an acceptable program should be approved by mid-January.

In a conference which debated everything from possible government subsidy of certain parochial school programs to special programs for ghetto students, the consensus was hard to ascertain. At the very outset the conferees were told that the National Catholic Education Association hoped to have such a document drafted.

A preliminary draft of 16 pages gained fairly broad support, but by the time the conference was over it appeared evident that unanimity was impossible. Principal objections developed over wording, although there was considerable question over just what should be the overall objectives of Catholic educators.

NCEA appointed a 12-member committee to rewrite the comprehensive position document. They are scheduled to meet here next month.

Father Albert Koo'b, executive secretary of the organization, said of the original draft, "It was too large a document to be digested in such a short time."



Bedroom With Leaky Roof

So. Vietnam — (RNS) — A weary soldier huddles under a poncho on a pile of sandbags to catch a little rest during a lull in jungle fighting near Phuc Vinh, South Vietnam. Nearby, his buddy keeps watch in the monsoon downpour. The GI's are from the Army's First Division which underwent heavy sniper and mortar fire in the area.

Taize Community Called No Answer To Mission

Chicago—(RNS)—A Francis-

can priest-sociologist holds that the life style of the Protestant monastic community of Taize holds "no real answer for Christian mission."

Father Sigmund Dragastin, writing in the December-January issue of The Critic, national Catholic bi-monthly published by the Thomas More Association, also said the celebrated ecumenical community does not offer a "model on which Catholic religious communities are to reform themselves."

Father Dragastin, affiliated with the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, lived "around the corner" from the Taize brothers Chicago community during the past year.

The brothers' style of community, ecumenism and inner-city living is "not well adapted to the needs of Christian mission our time," asserted Father Dragastin.

The Franciscan said he found that in Taize-Chicago, "apostolate and professional commitment are subordinated to the exigencies of life together . . . a dedicated professional academician or a Christian engaging in social protest in a politically ambiguous situation would find life in the Taize Community intolerable."

Taize-Chicago was founded in 1966 by six brothers from the community in France, and located in a ghetto on the city's South Side. Two Franciscan

priests joined them. Nine months later, the community announced it was moving to a Near-North Side site.

"The brothers were ill-equipped to tackle the problems of the ghetto or to engage in political activity even at the community organization level," commented Father Dragastin. "They opted, therefore, simply to be good neighbors. By at least one standard, they were not notably successful."

Turning to the implications of Taize for the reform of Catholic orders, the Chicago priest said Taize-Chicago has been "an outstanding success" in one measure by the large numbers of Roman Catholic nuns, priests and seminarians who drop in to visit the French Brothers — hoping to catch the living experience of their rule.

But the Taize rule, continued Father Dragastin, makes "community" everything — meals and prayers together. He said, are given an emphasis "that is just now being mitigated in many Roman Catholic orders." And Taize's familial approach tends toward an "overarching paternalism."

Because the community "is itself the mechanism out of which all things are to grow," asserted Father Dragastin, "such things as theological differences are seldom or never discussed. One gets the impression that the members feel such discussions are divisive. All such problems will be solved by living together in unity."

Two More Dioceses Start 4-4-4 Seminary Program

Rockville Centre, N.Y.—(RNS) — The Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre have agreed to merge their seminary training programs at the college level.

In a simultaneous announcement by officials of the two dioceses, it was disclosed that all four college years of Rockville Centre candidates for the priesthood will be taken at the Brooklyn diocese's Cathedral College of the Immaculate Conception in Douglaston, Queens.

Msr. John J. Fleming, rector of Cathedral College, and Father Christopher Huntington, rector of Rockville Centre's St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary in Uniondale, said the move resulted from an agreement between Archbishop Bryan J. McEntegart of Brooklyn and Bishop Walter P. Kellenberg of Rockville Centre.

"This in turn was the result of a conviction both on the part of our diocese and the New York State Commissioner for

Higher Education that much would be gained by this merger," said Father Huntington.

The new plan will go into effect next September.

According to Father Huntington, the merger means a definite change in the training of priests in the Rockville Centre diocese. It will alter the so-called 6-6 division of the 12 years to what is known as the 4-4-4 division: four years of high school, four years of college, and four of theology, he said.

Nun Named College Head

Sparkill, N.Y.—(NC)—Sister Mary Lucille, supervisor of education for schools in Missouri conducted by the Dominican nuns of Sparkill, N.Y., has been named president of St. Thomas Aquinas College for women here, effective immediately.

Seek Ok For Laity To Give Communion

Munich, Germany — (NC) — The German Catholic Bishops' Conference has asked the Holy See to grant permission for laymen to distribute Holy Communion at Mass on Sundays when churches are very crowded.

Allowing laymen to assist the priest in distributing Communion would avoid the delay that results when the distribution of Communion takes as much time as the rest of the Mass, it was said.

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