

On the Horizon . . . a More Mobile Church

Greater Participation by Laity to Be Fact of Life

By CARMEN VIGLUCCI, Associate Editor, Courier-Journal

In trying to picture what the Church of the next 100 years will be, three things come into clear focus:

- Increased and more responsible participation by the laity.
- A more mobile, more flexible ministry, freer to go to the people, thus making it easier for the people, particularly today's non-church-goers, to come to it.
- Increasing concern with the problems of the under-privileged, involving adjustments of church property, recruiting of lay and religious personnel and continuing funding.

Other possibilities to alter our future have presented themselves, especially the ecumenical movement which is already a fact. Whether this trend will lead to a truly one, catholic church within the next century is a matter of conjecture and still faces potent theological, administrative and political roadblocks.

But in bringing the outlook into the narrow picture of the problems at hand and their possible solutions, perhaps the greatest dilemma facing the church is its present shortage of religious, particularly priests.

It seems evident that the first way to meet this crisis is to secure and hold more vocations. Bishop Sheen has taken this tack in a number of ways—streamlining the seminaries, urging laymen to support Serra Clubs (organized to promote vocations) and by calling on all diocesan churches to include prayers for the intention of gaining vocations.

Early this Fall the Pope granted the request of the U.S. Bishops' Conference to establish a permanent diaconate. In essence it allowed, with the permission of individual bishops, a permanent diaconate that could be conferred only on married and unmarried men of mature years (25 and older); that married men who receive the dia-



Laymen pay visit to statue of Bishop McQuaid at St. Bernard's Seminary. It is the only monument in the diocese to its founder.

conate cannot remarry if they later become widowers; that unmarried men who receive the diaconate cannot marry afterward.

The Rochester Pastoral Office said there are no plans now for recruiting and training prospective deacons, but left the door open to future implementation of such a plan.

St. Bernard's seminarians ordained to the diaconate at the end of their third year of studies (a year before priesthood), have assisted at diocesan churches on weekends, distributing Communion, preaching and baptizing. This program was arranged to give the seminarians practical experience in pastoral work but has been of broad value to the priests with heavy Sunday duties.

However, even with permanent diaconates, the Church, with its mandate from Vatican II for greater mission emphasis,

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