

Buffalo Diocese Orders Drastic Budget Cutback

Buffalo, N.Y. — (RNS)—One of the most drastic cutbacks in operations of any diocese of the U.S. Catholic Church is planned by the financially hard-hit Diocese of Buffalo.

Following a three-hour closed session with pastors of the diocese, Bishop James A. McNulty reported the following decisions that are at once drastic and dramatic in portraying the diocesan financial problems:

- Five inner city parochial schools will be consolidated at an Inner City Educational Center.

- Four high schools and a high school annex will be "phased out" by September 1971.

- Tuition will be increased for all students attending the remaining 17 diocesan high schools, effective in September 1971.

- Stoppage of all plans to construct a new emergency hospital.

- A 33 per cent cutback in all budgets of 15 diocesan services and related services.

- Reduction of the Bishop's Fund budgets in 1971-72 from \$866,000 to \$600,000.

- Relocation of the diocese's minor seminary.

- Projected sale of five major diocesan properties.

- Consolidation of seven major diocesan offices and facilities.

Also affected by the cutback are the following operations of the diocese itself:

- Youth Department, a cut of \$26,000, about 30 per cent.

- Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, reduced by \$18,000, around 30 percent.

- Religious Vocation Office, cut from \$29,952 to \$20,100.

- Family Life Department, cut back about \$19,000, one third.

- Spanish Apostolate, reduced by \$7,000, almost 33 per cent.

- Diocesan seminaries — the biggest cut of all — from \$336,000 to \$243,000.

Also facing heavily reduced budgets for 1971-72 are the Labor College, the Catholic Center Building, the Catholic Pamphlet Society, the Foundation for International Cooperation, the Coordinator of Inner City Schools, the St. Jude Center and the Cursillo Program.

According to Bishop McNulty, "today's program of economy could never have been accomplished" without the aid of such bodies as the Priests Senate, the Lay-Priests Steering Committee for Finances, the Budgets Review Committee, the Final Resources Committee. Working with these units, the bishops said, were hundreds of "dedicated people" who represent the Catholic community.

At the high school level, it is possible that the "phased out"

schools will not flood Buffalo's public schools system.

Students and teaching personnel, according to Msgr Leo E. Hammerl, superintendent of schools, will be absorbed in other nearby high schools. "All pupils now attending these schools scheduled for closing can be accommodated in other diocesan schools."

High school tuition next Fall will rise from \$350 to \$400 for each pupil, plus \$50 from his home parish and \$50 from diocesan funds. Said Bishop McNulty: "A serious attempt will be made to hold to this line in future rates, but no guarantee of such a figure is possible at this time."

High schools having students who cannot meet their tuition rate (not including the parish and diocesan subsidies) will have to raise the funds to finance the boy or girl. And the 17 remaining high schools in the diocese, after next September, will be able to count on only \$250,000 from the Diocese of Buffalo to make "capital repairs." The diocese's total assistance will amount to \$750,000 for the repairs and a \$500,000 subsidy covering some 10,000 students.



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