

Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

How has the parish council changed the life of your pastor?

That's one of the questions I have been asking in my current survey of councils. The survey respondent is asked to list at least two specific ways that the council has changed the pastor's life.

Here are samplings of the answers to that question, with respondents being associate pastors and laity from throughout North America.

"Yes!" exclaims a Wisconsin council leader. "He is becoming more broadminded. He has advanced from holding that the parish council should be advisory to realizing it has to be policy making."

"It has made him less trusting," says an Illinois council member. "He finds great need to proclaim that he is the boss."

Court Action On Welfare Supported

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given in the South is less than that given in the North. Father Charbonneau continued: "I feel that the more equitable solution would be some type of assistance that would allow people to live in their own locale without looking to other areas for higher assistance."

"But, most people move looking for employment," he said, "and find themselves in a strange part of the country without work and they need to apply for assistance." The panel of three federal judges upheld and made permanent a temporary injunction against the residency requirement that had been issued July 12 by Judge John T. Curtin of U.S. District Court in Buffalo.

"While the Catholic Charities directors in no way condone abuses in welfare or fraud on the part of the welfare recipients," Father Charbonneau continued, "nevertheless we feel it is our Christian duty to oppose residency requirements for those in need or merely to hand them a ticket back to their place of origin."

"In times such as these with inflation and unemployment rampant, with taxes escalating, the first place for budget cutting always seems to be the POOR."

"While we sympathize with Gov. Rockefeller in the fiscal crisis, it is our thought that many budget cuts should be made before we begin to deny the poor what is necessary for life."

State Atty. Gen. Louis Lefkowitz said the decision would be appealed as soon as possible in the U.S. Supreme Court.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in striking down similar legislation in other states, ruled there must be a "compelling state interest" before a residency requirement could be imposed.

According to Rochester social services officials, 30 families were refused welfare aid here under the residency requirement before a temporary injunction against the measure was issued.

Eight of the turned-down families accepted money for transportation back to their home states, and the other 22 stayed here without welfare aid.

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His two latest schemes to wreck our council are editing the minutes to his liking and trying to convince us to holding bi-monthly meetings instead of monthly ones."

Also from Illinois: "Father stated that it has made more work for him, but it is well worth it. It has also given him the opportunity to know the members of the parish better. I think the sharing of the problems with the parishioners has given him assistance in making decisions."

An associate pastor in Tennessee writes of his pastor: "He has made the transition from formulating all plans and decisions alone to sharing these with his parish council. This was somewhat difficult for him, and he has really set us an example of willingness and perseverance. It took a great deal of patience on his part, and doubtless added another star to his heavenly crown!"

The Tennessee priest continues: "This is a questioning parish — I think the pastor has discovered that questions do not mean 'bucking the pastor,' but rather are a request for facts on which to base discussion and decisions for the best interest of the parish. (He need not be defensive.) He has the pleasure of a good and working parish council. This allows him some time to use his creativeness; to increase his knowledge, or just to sit down and think! (He seems happy.)"

From Georgia: "I believe he has been surprised at the different views, and our independence — but I doubt there has been any significant change in his life."

From New York: "As our pastor is one to want to do things in his own way, the council has been a big help in getting minds together to aid him in his problems. The people are now aware of the fact they must increase their giving to keep going."

Also from New York: "The pastor has become more authoritarian in his decisions and has refused to take the council seriously."

A similar complaint from Maine: "It has made him more miserable; he doesn't believe in them. It also keeps him a little more accountable."

Letters to "Our Parish Council" should be addressed care of the Courier-Journal, 35 Scio St., Rochester, N.Y.

Parish council leaders are asked to send their constitutions and by-laws to the author of "Our Parish Council" column. In return, Bernard Lyons will send a brief questionnaire to answer. In appreciation for your cooperation, he will send a free and autographed copy of his book "Programs For Parish Councils." Please send your constitution and by-laws, with your name, address and zip code to: Parish Council Resources, P.O. Box 3455-Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Ill. 60654.

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Budgeted Schools Meet

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chael's, St. Bridget's, Holy Redeemer, St. Francis Xavier and Mt. Carmel.

The Pastoral Office and the Education Department had told pastors and principals of these schools on July 16 to accept cutbacks in secretaries, cancellations of new kindergartens, and decreases in money for libraries, textbooks and audio-visual aids.

The economies were dictated by diocesan fear that the Supreme Court ruling against aid to parochial schools would mean that no New York State money would come to the schools in 1972. During 1971 nearly \$1.3 million from the state helped diocesan schools.

To preserve the innercity schools in future years Bishop Hogan indicated that other parochial schools in Monroe County may have to help the poorer parish schools as a premise for their operation.

Specific mechanisms for this assistance have not yet been developed, school authorities said, but a financial advisory committee is being organized to explore all possible avenues of fund-raising. Voluntary contributions and the establishment of an emergency fund are being explored.

Father Albert J. Shamon, Vicar for Education, explained that the crisis requiring economy for the coming school year had not been created by the diocese which has annually increased its subsidy for poorer schools.

"We are still hopeful for state funds in the next 12

months, but lawyers indicate that the hostility of the courts toward state aid would make it imprudent to budget the expected funds at this point," he said.

He stated that budget cuts laid on the innercity schools operating with diocesan funds would not impair the quality of the education in any way nor seriously alter the pupil-teacher ratio.

After the Supreme Court ruling the Department of Education advised all 92 parish schools to make budget cuts because expected state aid may be killed by the courts.

Because the inner city schools are directly financed by diocesan funds, diocesan authorities announced specific economies would be made in non-essential expenses to keep them within the shortened budgets.

Bishop Hogan explained that the point of budget cuts was to operate the six schools, without losing any of the children presently enrolled.

"Approximately 25 percent of our diocesan budget goes to subsidizing the innercity schools. We must ask for this

belt-tightening in these schools. We cannot raise our present parish assessments — the sole source of income available for all diocesan expenditures."

"Our philosophy of the importance of maintaining schools for the inner city has not changed one iota, the Bishop said. "We know the critical importance of attacking the poverty cycle through education. We intend to continue giving witness to the Church's concern for the poor through these schools."

Although only parents and priests from Immaculate Conception met with the Bishop and heads of the diocesan education departments, the decisions from the lengthy meeting will apply to the entire innercity budget dispute, according to Father Daniel Brent, superintendent of schools.

Representing the Immaculate Conception parents at the meeting were Mrs. Beatrice Johnson, Mrs. Mary Hall and Mrs. Betty Hall. Fathers Robert Kreckel and Paul Brennan, co-pastors of the parish and Sister Barbara Fox, SSJ., principal, were present.


Development Grant Awarded

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man Development last year raised \$8.5 million, contributed by Catholics across the country. One fourth of the amount collected in each diocese remained in the diocese for local use. Applications for a share of the national fund are studied first

by a volunteer committee of people experienced in dealing with the problems of poverty. Their recommendations are reviewed by the Bishops' Committee on Human Development and the campaign staff. Auxiliary Bishop Michael R. Dempsey of Chicago is national director.

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