

# Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

A great worry among organizers of parish councils is how to get the people to act.

If we use the old device that psychologists call "projection," we find it convenient to point to our fellow parishioners and say, "They're apathetic." This is a lazy way of rationalizing why we are resting on our own oars: "I could get so much done if my fellow parishioners were only as willing to work as I am."

In an age of depersonalization and complexity, a leader who is convinced that people are not apathetic learns to constantly evaluate himself and his actions for 1) his friendliness and 2) his concern for the self-interest of others.

Let's see this in action, by running through an organizing meeting for a council and watching how it might be approached in two nearby parishes.

In St. Apathy parish, a small committee of men, appointed by the pastor, have agreed to work on organizing the council. After a few unenthusiastic meetings, the committee has scheduled a parish-wide meeting to talk about the parish council. They have decided on bulletin announcements and a sermon by the pastor to attract the parishioners.

In nearby Pope John XXIII parish, a small committee of men, appointed by the pastor, have agreed to work on organizing a council. After a couple of muddled meetings, some of the men went out to see other parish councils at work firsthand. They also decided that their small group was not representative of the parish. They enlarged their steering committee to include women, other group interests and the various geographic areas of the parish. They took assignments to talk with people, between meetings,

so they could list what people were talking about and concerned with.

On the basis of these meetings they took a map of the parish and divided it into smaller sectors. Steering committee members were assigned to serve as temporary chairmen to organize home-meetings in each area or little parish. Others on the steering committee were asked to be temporary chairmen for committees that encompassed some of the concerns that parishioners were talking about; for example, worship, finances, the school, etc.

After countless long hours of discussion and hundreds of pots of coffee, the council organizing committee set a date for a parish-wide meeting. They, too, wanted the pastor to preach on the council and to include bulletin announcements. They also selected one of their members to talk from the pulpit on the Sunday before the meeting.

St. Apathy parish attracted the same "regulars" to the meeting. They went home afterwards talking about the apathy of the parish. They muttered to themselves they would do something about it. "One of these days."

John XXIII parish had a fairly good turnout. They had the "regulars," plus some new faces, people who had not been seen except at Sunday Mass. And there were a few who hadn't been there too regularly. The people left the meeting with a definite date for the next meeting. Some of them had assignments to committees. All of them had a spirit that something was "moving."

The key difference between the parishes was the approach — based on friendships (growing out of face-to-face contact) and a concern for the interests of others.

## Federal Tax Credit Urged For Parish School Parents

New York — (RNS) — Dr. Seymour P. Lachman, vice president of the New York City Board of Education, has proposed a system of federal tax credits for parents as the most expeditious means of providing funds for non-public schools.

Rather than relying on state aid to non-public schools, as is usually done, Dr. Lachman said, such education could draw on "much more plentiful" federal

revenues. He said such a program would not cut into "limited state or local revenues" available to public schools.

Under Dr. Lachman's proposed plan — which would require Congressional changes in the federal income tax laws — parents of parochial school pupils could claim tuition costs as a deduction on federal income taxes.

He said, "This would allow a tax saving . . . which is in effect a tax credit or direct subsidy to the parents."

Dr. Lachman, who was recently appointed director of the Foreign Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee, outlined his proposals to the Association of Orthodox Jewish Teachers here.

He said the recent federal court rulings barring direct "secular educational services" for parochial schools, and reported divisions within New York State's Fleischmann Commission on parochial aid forecast a "possible major confrontation."

"Not even the strongest advocates of the complete separation of church and state could logically argue that this would be in violation of their constitutional principles," Dr. Lachman said in defending his tax-credit proposal.

## Boston College Prexy Resigns

Newton, Mass. — (RNS) — After 3½ years, Father W. Seavey Joyce, SJ, has resigned as president of Boston College, one of the nation's largest Jesuit universities.

The resignation was announced by Father Joseph L. Shea, SJ, chairman of the university's board of trustees. It becomes effective June 30, or as soon after that date as a Jesuit successor can be named.

Father Joyce, in a statement, indicated that the principal reason for his resignation is the "major transition" in the development of the university's facilities and a restructuring of the governing body there. He saw it as the "appropriate time" to select a new president.

## 'One Parish'

# How About Trying Film Festival?

New York — Parishes seeking novel and effective ways to observe Lent this year have been advised to consider a movie festival.

"What is wanted and needed is a way of enabling participation, of encouraging the involvement of persons we lead to examine their lives in the light of God's love embodied in Christ," reports the St. Clement's Film Association. "There are many ways this can be done. The use of significant expressions of the film art is one of them."

The St. Clement's Film Association, a New York-based organization that promotes the use of film and TV for religious purposes, lists a number of film shorts, TV documentaries and even feature-length films for use in Lenten programs.

Among feature films suggested are *La Strada*, *Nights of Cabiria*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *The Pawnbroker*, *The Virgin Spring* and *Taste of Honey*.

The idea of using films to stimulate reflection during Lent is not entirely new. All Saints Catholic parish in Houston has scheduled a "Monday Night at the Movies" series during Lent, featuring such films as *Nobody Waved Goodbye*, *David and Lisa*, and *The War Game*.

The American Lutheran Church has for the past several years been promoting church study of feature films such as *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* and *The Leaning Tree*.

The latter, a study of black photographer Gordon Parks' growing up in a racist town during the 1920s, is typical of the much-heralded but little-shown films that more and more church groups are scheduling for parish showings.

In its "Film for Lent" guide, the St. Clement Film Association offers parishes discussion guides, instructions for running a Lenten film series and the films themselves for a rental fee.

"It must be recognized," the association comments, "that the language of the screen is not of itself sufficient for the evangelical proclamation. Film will

not do the job which must be done by persons, by persons inspired, strengthened and enlightened to select the right films and use them wisely. In brief, what film — or any other significant artistic work — can do is to help prepare the soil for the seed of the gospel."

Several formats are suggested by the association to parishes interested in using films for Lent:

"Show the series on Sunday evenings, showing a full-length feature or several film shorts. Supply artists materials and invite all to express themselves on a papered wall which then images the total group experience."

"Invite the community to come to the church for Friday evening film showings. Coffee and refreshments are served and there are opportunities for discussion — and contributions

(to offset rental costs)."

"Screen a feature film at the church. Afterwards, all are invited to move to several nearby homes for refreshments and discussion."

"Provide films to the local cable or commercial TV stations with the promise of giving adequate publicity to their telecasting. Home viewing groups tune in."

"Supply the films to local theaters for single showings to which the community could be invited. Sermons, discussions and community projects could result."

Detailed information on rentals, titles and descriptions of film shorts available, plus instructions on how to arrange Lenten film showings can be obtained from the St. Clement Film Association, 423 West 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10036.



## BLOUSE 'n SKIRT SAVOIR FAIRE

It's fashion's very newest view for Spring '72. Putting now separates together for your own new look of prestige, like these two: A slinky double knit nylon blouse—tucked into a woven cotton plaid skirt that falls crisp and clear to the floor. Pretty wonderful fashion thinking at these prices—the blouse, \$26; the skirt, \$40. For instant individuality—just see our great new separates story, featuring now in McCurdy's Fashion Gallery, Second Floor, Midtown.