

# Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

Of what value are council and committee minutes once they have been read and approved?

Too often they are buried in volumes only historians open, or they get carried away by succeeding secretaries until it becomes impossible to find a complete set of them.

Minutes are valuable tools, if they have been written succinctly and comprehensively, and if they are used correctly.

Minutes serve as an instrument of evaluation.

The publicity chairman or other person called on to write something about the council, or the officer given the task of preparing the annual report, will bless the recording secretary and officers who have seen to it that there is a complete set of minutes.

Council leaders who wish to take a concrete look at where the council is going should find a clear picture in the minutes: "Have you noticed how many more parishioners lately are coming to the council meetings to voice their concern about the drug problem in the community?"

The minutes serve to remind members of "homework" to be done, and reports to be pre-

pared for the upcoming meeting.

When minutes are produced and sent in advance to the members, they save time at the council or committee meeting, since the reading of the minutes may be dispensed with and their approval asked "as presenter earlier."

The minutes may also serve with communication; for, in addition to the council leaders, key parishioners (e.g., parish correspondent for your diocesan newspaper) and other community leaders, may be put on the list to receive minutes regularly.

A digest of the minutes might also be prepared to run in the next Sunday bulletin to keep all parishioners informed.

A great part of planning for the future consists of evaluation, and much of it can be aided by good minutes. For example: "We've been discussing the problem of the school in nearly every one of our meetings, but we haven't come up with any satisfactory solutions."

Minutes may also help you to spot leaders: "Do you notice how many more successful reports we've had from the Community Life Committee since Mary became chairman?"

## 'One Parish'

# Finding What Parishioners Think

In one parish, the people learned via a letter that they could expect shortly "an ordinary visit by a couple of people from our parish to spend some time talking about what you want to talk about."

The home-visit program—an effort to discover what parishioners think about their parish, what they would like to see it doing, and how they might be encouraged to take more active part in parish life—was directed by a "core committee" of a dozen people.

They broke the parish area into 29 geographic districts, each district headed by chairmen. They in turn recruited visitors, who were given the names of 5 to 10 parish families to visit.

If a visitor couple has heard several families raise questions about changes in the liturgy, the couple might call neighbors together for a home Mass, including an explanation of the changes.

If there have been questions about the parish council, the visitor could arrange an informal meeting with someone from the council who could provide answers.

During the visits, the parishioners were asked to fill in cards to update parish records and to indicate any special skills or interests they might have. These cards, which the people could place in an envelope and seal, could be given back to the visitors, mailed to the rectory, or dropped in a collection basket.

One of the prime purposes of the home-visit program, the pastor explained, was to reach the "untapped talent" in the parish, and to be certain everyone in the parish had received a direct personal invitation to become involved in some parish group or activity.

The home-visit project in the parish is operated under the parish council's Communications and Public Relations Committee.

In another effort to get a "feedback" from parishioners, one parish did away with its homilies one weekend and replaced them with a literal "man in the pew" poll, distributing a questionnaire and having the worshippers fill them out then and there.

The pastor called the poll an indication of his parish's willingness to put Church democracy in action "at the local level. We want to give our people what they want and what we feel we can best reach them with."

A total of 1,657 parishioners filled in the questionnaire, which sought to gain their opinions on a variety of topics:

**Sermons based on current moral issues**—This drew the largest "yes" vote, 1,217, with only 149 saying they disapproved of such homilies.

**Homilies based solely on the day's Gospel reading** were approved by 854 to 380. A "dialogue sermon" got 581 votes in favor and 470 against.

A periodic report by parish council chairmen in place of a homily that weekend was favored by 666 people and rejected by 396.

A question about choirs at Mass saw them being favored by 1182, but 406 said they did not care for them. A by-product of the questionnaire on this point was that 53 people signed up for the choir.

Women lectors, which the parish now has, were favored by 1,059 opposed by 406. The parish is almost 50-50 on the question of women ushers, 760 being against, and 738 being in favor.

Individual passing of the collection basket from person to person was rejected by 930 to 595. But 935 approved of the collection being brought up to the altar and offered as a gift from the congregation, while 538 disapproved of that practice.

The parishioners voted 886 to 656 against having Communion distributed by laymen, but there was a close margin of defeat for the idea of taking Communion in the hand, 841 to 779.

## Jesuit Disputes Cardinal On Fr. Drinan Role

Kansas City, Mo. —(RNS) — The Jesuits' New England provincial superior, Father William Guindon, SJ, has charged that an intimation by Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia that Rep. Robert F. Drinan (D-Mass.) — a Jesuit — should resign was "completely impertinent."

The congressman's superior said he was happy that he approved Bob Drinan's running for Congress, which is on a specially Christian ground.

He added that the Jesuit congressman's candidacy and election had a specific effect on U.S. policy with respect to the issues of war and peace.

Cardinal Krol's remarks were part of an interview on national television. Asked about Rep. Drinan's role, the cardinal cited pronouncements made at the recent world Synod of Bishops in Rome, which, he said, pointed out that "the priest was not to invade the competency of the laity" and "not enter partisan politics."

Cardinal Krol, who also is president of the U.S. Catholic bishops' conference, never naming the Jesuit, implied that in light of this pronouncement, Rep. Drinan was involved in partisan politics and, therefore, should resign, although he did not express it specifically.

## CYO Hoop

St. Monica's basketball team is leading the CYO's Southern Division with an 8-1 record according to George Scherer, the division's coach advisor. In the same division, St. Jerome's team has a 7-1 record to place second.

In the Southern High School Division, Fran Larkin, coach advisor, reports that St. Louis continues on top with an 8-0 record.

Calling Rep. Drinan's congressional career "a variation of his teaching role (he was dean of the Boston College Law School), Father Guindon said:

"It's because he took this stand in a conscientious way, which we worked out in dialogue, that I think it was completely impertinent of Cardinal Krol to attack him on the grounds of resigning in conscience.

"I don't think Cardinal Krol is equipped to know the issues in this case. I think it was really unwarranted, unjustified statement."

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