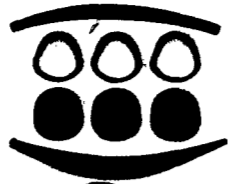


Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons



Does your council pray together?

I've been at council meetings where there was no prayer, or there was only a prefatory opening or a closing prayer.

If you accept the fact that the basic mission of the Church, and thus of any council, is to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus, to form a community in Christ, and to be of service to men, then it is strange to have a council meeting without prayer.

Parish council leaders must learn to be followers — in the sense that we gather in council not to do our will, but His will.

Such followership is more important than our leadership.

After all, the apostles would never have been viewed as leaders without Christ's invitation to first be His followers.

Father Bernard Quinn, of the Center for Applied Research in The Apostolate (CARA), writing on diocesan pastoral planning, couples planning and prayer.

"Although the Church uses human resources, its mission is accomplished not through human wisdom but the power of God," he writes. "Thus every aspect of its life and mission, including organizational decision-making, is under the exigency of prayer. In the decision-making process, prayer is no substitute for planning. But neither is planning a substitute for prayer."

"Prayer will permeate every phase of the planning and decision-making process, but prayer must also be given a formal place. In Church decision-making prayer cannot remain so implicit and taken-for-granted that no formal time is allotted to it as the process unfolds."

Father Quinn makes a suggestion that I second, and that I have seen work beautifully in the specialized movements, such as the Christian Family Movement (CFM) and the Young Christian Students (YCS).

GOLDEN AGE GROUP

The Southwest Golden Age Group, a nondenominational social organization which encourages active participation of senior citizens in dances, games, sing-a-longs and other activities, will meet at 34 Monica St., in the Panel Room at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 25. New members are invited.

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Right-To-Life Opens Office

The Rochester Area Right to Life Education Fund has set up an office at 1559 Monroe Ave. where the telephone number is 271-2121. Telephone messages are recorded during the hours when the office is unattended.

The organization called attention to a rally scheduled for Sept. 3 in Washington D.C., under the auspices of the National Youth Pro-Life Coalition. Popular musical groups and leaders of various anti-abortion movements will take part in the student-organized rally, from noon until 6 p.m. at the Lincoln Memorial.

Dowling Wins Notre Dame Scholarship

Peter E. Dowling, a June graduate of Bishop Kearney High School, was recently named recipient of the annual scholarship given by the Notre Dame Club of Rochester.

Dowling's award was announced by John Casey of the club's scholarship committee.

Dowling will major in pre-medical at Notre Dame. He, his parents and three brothers and sisters live on Parlimere Road, Rochester.

BUS TRIP

Rosarians of St. Andrew's parish and their friends will go on a bus excursion Aug. 26 to Niagara Falls. They will be accompanied by their moderator, Msgr. George W. Eckl. Reservations may be made with Wanda Flowerday, 467-4347, or Margaret Paul, 467-2589.

Problem Pregnancy?
For free confidential help call Birthright: 716-328-8700.
Office Hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., weekdays; 24 Hour record-a-phone to receive messages.

"A time for prayer especially needs to be scheduled into the process at that point where judgments are to be made," Father Quinn says. "Planning may have furnished decision-makers with alternatives for action; and the priorities implicit in these alternatives, along with their relationships to the Church's mission, may have been made clear. Yet the decision to take one course of action rather than another is essentially a value judgment to be made under the Spirit's guidance and to prepare the decision-makers to accept it with fidelity. At least at such times in the decision-making process prayer must have a formal place."

In the CFM and in other specialized movements, following the statement of observations or problems, the judgment question is often asked, "What would Christ do about it?"

The simple question helps us to put the Light of Christ on the situation and recall to our minds that it is His will that we are seeking to fulfill.

It is well then that a council open and close their meetings with prayers. These prayers might be formal selections or impromptu prayers offered by various members of the parish.

In addition, the council might leave a quiet period of meditation on each agenda for the members to consider Christ's judgment on their work. Or, they might wish to pose the question, "What would Christ do?" when alternative proposals are made.

This spirit of prayer in council must be linked to the worship of the parish community and the individual member's prayer and study of the Gospels.

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