

Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

"How can we get more people to vote in our parish elections?" asks a reader.

A complete manual could be written on the topic. From my own experiences, coupled with some notes and clippings, I would suggest the following actions.

Tie-in with the liturgy. Your parish is essentially a worshipping community. It is only common sense then, from an educational point of view and from the pragmatic choice that most parishioners can be reached at the Masses, that certain aspects of the nominations and elections be held as part of the worship service.

Reports one council chairman: "We first tried voting in the school building, but we just couldn't get people to walk to the other end of the church property. After we tied the nominations and elections to the liturgy, our voter participation actually more than tripled."

Fit the elections into a community context. If the parish leaders have been sitting on their hands all year, they can hardly expect their fellow parishioners to show much interest in the elections.

On the other hand, if the council is playing an active part in the parish and the neighborhoods, the parishioners will want to exercise their right to retain certain members and to elect other leaders.

Set up a nominating committee. In a parish of any size, it is impossible for every parishioner to know all the people who have been involved in promoting the spiritual and physical progress of the parish. A nominating committee can do the interviewing, researching and checking with nominees to put up a slate.

Involve everyone in the nominating process. An additional slate of candidates can be drawn up by the parishioners themselves.

Undergrad Women Begin at ND

Notre Dame, Ind. (RNS) — The first undergraduate women began classes here at the University of Notre Dame, breaking a 130-year-old tradition at the formerly all-male institution.

Some 365 women — 125 first-year students and 240 transfers — are among the Notre Dame undergraduate student body of 6,660 this Fall. The total freshman class is 1,635.

Although women undergraduates are new on Notre Dame's campus, students from neighboring Saint Mary's College have been in Notre Dame classrooms since a student exchange program began in 1965. Notre Dame's Graduate School has long been open to women.

Neurologist Appointed

Dr. Robert J. Joynt of Pittsford, professor and chairman of neurology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, has been appointed to the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

The board is the certifying body for psychiatrists and neurologists in the U. S. and is responsible for establishing training standards for these specialists. Dr. Joynt's appointment is for a four-year term. The board consists of six neurologists and six psychiatrists.

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selves. Nominating petitions can be arranged, or parishioners might be asked to nominate two or three persons, with the candidates then placed on the ballot according to the greatest number of nominations.

One parish mails a nominating ballot to each parishioner, which he is then expected to bring to church.

"We mail a nominating ballot to every qualified voter. That means each person 16 and older who is registered in St. Joseph's Parish," says a council chairman. "The voter returns his ballot, containing names of his two candidates for nomination, into a ballot box which is left in the church for a specified length of time."

The persons who get the highest number of nominating votes, and consent, then have their names printed on the election ballot. The election ballot is mailed and returned in the same way as the nominations.

Personalize the elections. Especially in larger parishes, it is difficult for parishioners to know all the people who are on the ballot. I've been in churches where a bulletin board was used to pin up photos and biographies of those running for offices. Other parishes have printed a special bulletin with the photos and biographies of the nominees. The last method gets more attention and readership, especially if the bulletin is mailed to each parishioner.

One parish ballot, that is mailed to each parishioner, has the photo, biography, and a statement from each nominee on what he (or she) wants for his parish.



New Officers

Making plans for the 1972-73 season are the new officers of the St. Philip Neri Women's Club. Seated with Father Charles B. Connell, moderator, are Jeanne Brescia, president, and Linda Malta, second vice president. Standing from left are Betty Meteyer, treasurer; Rosemarie DeRose, recording secretary; and Sharon Lazzara, corresponding secretary. Jo Maas is first vice president. The new officers will preside at the first meeting of the Women's Club on Tuesday, Sept. 26.

Divinity School Names Dr. Torgersen to Post

A prominent American Baptist pastor, the Rev. Dr. Gordon Torgersen, will become director of church relations on Dec. 1 for Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozier Theological Seminary.

The Rev. Theodore A. Keaton, director of development, said Dr. Torgersen, as the schools' first full-time specialist on church relations, will interpret the programs of the Rochester seminaries to the denominations and the churches served by their graduates. He will seek to strengthen the sense of partnership between church and seminary, Keaton said, not only in

terms of financial support but also in terms of resources available to the churches from the seminaries.

Dr. Torgersen has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Worcester, Mass., since 1951. The 1500-member congregation is one of the leading churches in the American Baptist denomination.

In ecumenical endeavors, he was the first president of the Interfaith Clergy Association of Worcester, and from 1967-70 was a member of the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches of Christ.

His appointment at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozier will represent a "homecoming" for the Torgersens. After receiving a B.A. from Macalester College he earned his Bachelor of Divinity degree at Colgate Rochester in 1942. As a student, he served the South Livonia Congregational Church as pastor.

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