



St. Agnes Committee

Members of the St. Agnes High School Relevant Education Day committee (l-r.) Liz Fahy, Val Evans, Sister Carol Cimino, Joan Cregan, Lisa Boyle, Jeanne Hickey and Jean Beauchamp make final plans for the activities at the school today, Feb. 7. The theme of the day is "Why We Create."

Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

"I have been elected by our church membership to represent them on our parish council," a reader writes. "At our last council meeting a project requiring a considerable expenditure came up for a vote. I suggested a delay in voting until we (the council members) heard the opinions of our parishioners. I personally was for the project, and during the discussion prior to voting heard arguments that reinforced my opinion. However, other members felt they were placed on the council to decide such matters and chose to vote immediately."

"The question posed in my mind was very difficult. Am I elected to make decisions as I see fit, or am I elected to hear the opinions of the church members and vote according to their wishes, even if my personal opinion is contrary to theirs?"

"This is a difficult question. It's the type of question that worries not only parish council members, but also citizens, in general in regard to their elected officials."

"There are no hard-and-fast rules that will make one feel confident each and every time a vote is taken that one has done the absolutely right thing."

"Also, even if we were able to arrive at some guidelines for one parish, these same guidelines would not necessarily apply to another parish."

"The letter did not tell of the specifics of the project, but my gut feeling is that I would have

asked for a delay in the vote."

"The delay would be based on three possible actions: 1) That a statement of the various positions be presented to the parishioners and public hearings held. 2) That a parish-wide meeting be called to air the issue. 3) That each council officer informally poll a number of parishioners to get their reactions on the project."

"My position would be based on the following principles:

- Community building is not the same thing as efficient vote-taking. Vote-taking is a means to get an expression of intention, and to decide between two alternatives. Sometimes there are more than two choices. Then time is needed for study and dialog to get a consensus.

- As an elected representative, I have a responsibility to act on their behalf. This requires that I study the issues, and come to some decision. It doesn't necessarily mean that I have to decide on my vote today, but it does mean that I have to follow my conscience in interpreting the common good.

"If a delay in making a decision would aid the involvement of the people and give them a greater chance to participate, then I would vote for the delay. If I could not honestly say that the people would respond or have any desire for a particular issue to be thrown back in their laps, I would see no reason for further delay."

Knights-Slate Dinner Dance

The week of April 1 will be the second annual Knights of Columbus Brotherhood Week. A dinner dance slated for April 7 will climax the week's festivities and will close the organization's annual blood bank drive.

General chairman of the dinner dance, Thomas Grosodonia announced recently that the party will be held at the Towne House Motor Inn, starting with a social hour at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Stephen May and Joseph Ferrari, president of the Monroe County Legislature, will be special guests.

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Also attending will be Anthony B. Caramela, state secretary of the group, and Philip J. Spiro, state council activity director. Harold Knauf of Pope Pius XII Council will be the toastmaster.

'I Seemed Like One of Them'

Baptist Minister Enjoyed His Stay at St. Bernard's

By CONNIE LEARN
Special to Courier-Journal

Margate, N.J. — A Baptist clergyman has just returned to his pastorate here after spending a 10-week sabbatical at a Catholic seminary with the view that such an experience is invaluable in the continuing theological development of both priest and Protestant minister.

Dr. Parker Brown of the Margate Community Church said his stay at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester, N.Y., offered himself, and the priests and seminarians with whom he came in contact, new insight into pastoral problems of both faiths.

"Such a sabbatical can be a tremendous help in ecumenical matters," Dr. Brown, a pastoral minister for 20 years, said.

"Priests and ministers need to be able to relate to each other effectively, and this cannot happen if they are isolated during their theological education. By taking seminary courses together, and sharing the experience of studying, eating, conversing, debating and praying together, those of both faiths will better understand one another, thus drawing closer together."

Dr. Brown said his staying at St. Bernard's "kind of came about accidentally." He explained:

"When I first came to Margate Community Church it was with the understanding that, at the end of five years' service, I would be free for a several months' sabbatical for the purpose of studying services related to pastoral matters."

"Originally I had intended to stay at my alma mater, the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, where in increasing numbers seminarians from St. Bernard's are taking shared theological courses. When I inquired about lodging, it was suggested that I stay at St. Bernard's where there was more available room."

Fr. Joseph Brennan, the rector of St. Bernard's, was agreeable. In fact all of the priests that I met there were extremely friendly and hospitable and seemed delighted at my being there with them."

Dr. Brown made St. Bernard's his "home base," spending about 75 per cent of his time there.

"At St. Bernard's I sat in on a course on the parables of Jesus," he said, "taught by a Capuchin Franciscan, Father Sebastian, and at Colgate-Rochester I took a class in pastoral theology which was attended by several priests and about 15 Catholic seminarians."

"When I first arrived at St. Bernard's I spent a great deal of time doing something I had always wanted to do — reading extensively on the life and works of St. Francis, and all of this material I obtained at the seminary library."

Tuesdays were St. Bernard's days at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, the day seminarians gathered for the course in pastoral theology. Others were there to take New Testament and biblical studies.

Fr. Brennan and others of the St. Bernard's faculty offered courses in both the Old and New Testaments for students of both schools.

"There was no content problem," Dr. Brown said. "These

courses could have been taught anywhere." But he conceded that the interchange of the schools would have been "inconceivable 20 years ago," adding:

"This is moving very fast with faculty and student interaction, ecumenically. What both schools would like to see is more team-teaching, involving both Catholic and Protestant faculties. Naturally such subjects as canon law are taken at St. Bernard's."

The minister said he arose daily at 7 a.m. with much of his morning devoted to study, writing and correspondence.

Dr. Brown's favorite period was night prayers — "20 minutes of worship ending the day in the seminary chapel," adding:

"I deeply appreciated this aspect of my sabbatical. There was a real feeling of a community of

faith in these closing minutes of the day, with both prayers that were read and spontaneous prayers being offered. Following this, often there were student rap sessions in which I participated."

The minister expressed surprise that he had found such a large amount of material on Martin Luther in the seminary library and bookstore, as well as the fact that St. Bernard seminarians seemed to be able to relate to and respect Luther as an Augustinian monk "in a more ecumenical spirit."

"The seminarians understood church history and were stronger in scriptural studies than I had expected," Dr. Brown said. "I found a genuine regret concerning the intolerance in the past between Catholic and Protestant. These doors and windows were opened, of course, by Pope John."



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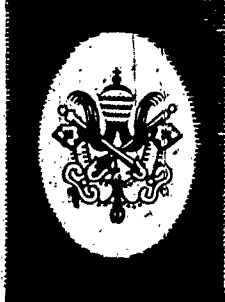
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