

Priests Question Renewal Book Need

By PAT PETRASKE

The need for a proposed booklet on the Time of Renewal survey was brought into question by the priests attending the June 11 meeting of the Fourth Priest's Council at St. Bernard's Seminary.

While praising the efforts of Father Daniel F. Holland, project director for the Time of Renewal, Father James Marvin, president, questioned whether lay people had read the newspaper ads and whether they would read the booklet.

He added that a flaw in the project was "too many projects too late." The priests were made aware of such ideas as open discussion in the parishes only a few days before they were supposed to be completed.

Holland answered that the basic effort, concentrated in newspaper advertising, had accomplished the goal of "having the Church and the renewal enter into the community of people."

The publication which was slated to be placed in the hands of adult parishioners is "good" in concept, maintained Father Frank Lioi, who also questioned whether it would be read. He called for a "redefinition" of how to get the message across.

The survey, which brought 414,500 answers and comments from 7,000 households, is supposed to be used by the individual parishioners, by small group meetings and lastly by priests to get ideas for preaching, according to Father Holland.

However, Father William M. Roche suggested the booklet should be used more as a "tool" by the priests for pulpit material.

More pastoral input was desired by many of the council members.

The emphasis of the booklet should be on the people who are the most concerned, said Father Paul Brennan. "We should spend the money to educate ourselves. Nothing will succeed unless you have the priests behind it and the Bishop behind them," he said.

The questions asked in the survey centered on what Catholics wanted to know. Father Holland stressed that the booklet should challenge the lay person to "look at his own faith."

The lay people who did look at their faith reached a consensus: they care about their Church.

Father Holland in his introductory remarks on the results of the survey stated that the people feel the need for "improvement in every area of the Church."

"While they are accepting the changes, especially those concerned with the liturgy, the people are confused and say they are not getting much of a message from the diocese on religious issues. The output they do receive is distracting and conflicting," Father Holland said.

From this comes the implicit need to develop more priestly leadership. Father Holland believes the people want to be involved in the Church and it is up to the priests to tap this desire.

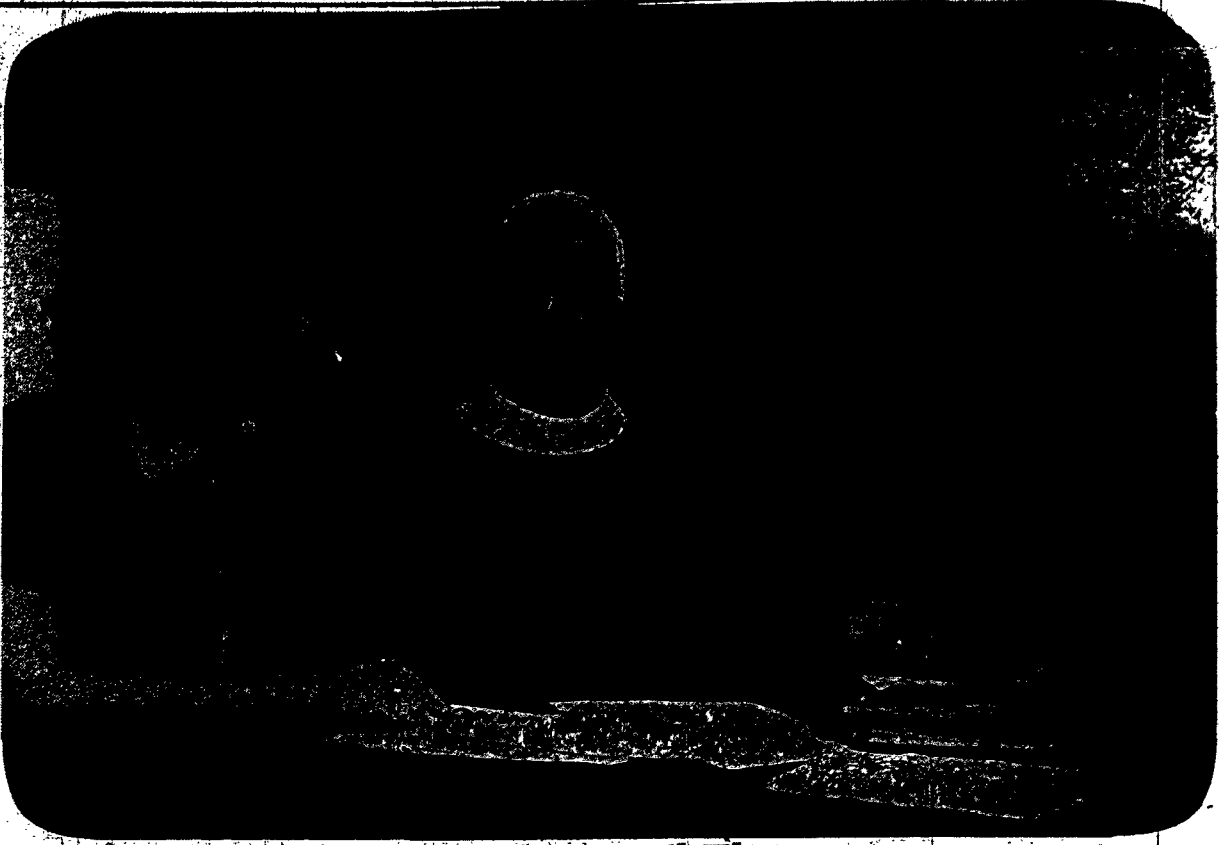
A very disturbing fact, according to the director, is the dichotomy between religious practices and attitudes on moral and social issues. "A person who attends Mass and receives the Sacraments regularly is not any more likely to have a Christian attitude towards a particular issue than one who does not," he explained.

Two trends which show a changing attitude are concerned with the parents' question of what happens to their children if they leave the Church and with the issue of divorce and remarriage.

"The trends now is that there are other ways to be saved than by being a Catholic. There is also less family outcasting if a member gets a divorce and remarries. People are doing more as they see fit than what the Church teaches," Father Holland contended.

The survey showed two immediate needs: a permanent method of training for parish councils and a means to strengthen the regions. "People do not know what other parishes are doing. Strengthening the regions would provide for a swapping of information for those areas which share the same problems," he continued.

The two tasks which face Father Holland are the fate of the booklet and the Fall Clergy Meeting which will discuss the implications of the survey. He will contact members of the Priest's Council by phone since they do not meet again until September to determine their position on the booklet, and also will get opinions from regional coordinators. A recommendation will be sent to Bishop Joseph Hogan for a final decision.



Sisters' Council Elects

New president of the Diocesan Sisters' Council is Sister Louise Weber, SSJ, at right. Other officers elected June 9 are, from the left, Sister Mary Walsh, RC, recording secretary; Sister Beatrice Curran, RSM, vice president, and Sister Judith Weber, SSND, corresponding secretary and treasurer. Sixty sisters have registered for a council-sponsored institute in ministry to be held next month.

Priests Review 'Pastoral' Draft

Continued from Page 1

and principles to govern the relationship between the Priests' and Sisters' Councils and the Pastoral Council. This inter-relationship was to be worked out "in light of experience" in the proposed draft.

The priests voted overwhelmingly to have the religious brothers represented through the regions instead of having a direct representation, the only point of agreement with the original draft. Ecumenism was provided for through participation of observers from other Christian and Jewish communities and cooperation with other religious organizations such as the Genesee Ecumenical Ministry.

Sister Mary Ann Binsack, RSM, and Father Charles Latus, both of the 18-member committee, stated that feedback from the four groups who received the constitution must be received by July 1 so that a reworked draft can be sent to the groups in the fall.

DIPLOMATIC TIES

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