

PRIESTS COUNCIL

Bishop's Loyalty To Rome Supported

By PAT PETRASKE

Members of the Priests' Council threw their support last week to Bishop Joseph Hogan's establishment of a task force to explore the controversial issue of First Penance. While the council strongly endorsed "the loyalty of the bishop to the Holy See," a dissenting member called the resolution "inopportune."

The resolution as read by Father Thomas Brennan states: "It is resolved that the Priests' Council supports the bishop in convening a task force to implement the recent decree on First Penance; the Council endorses the loyalty of the bishop to the Holy See and commends the exercise of responsible episcopal collegiality in the spirit of Vatican II."

Father James Marvin, president of the council, had asked the Bishop to make a few remarks "to give him a chance to expand on his position and to clarify His intention of loyalty to the Pope." The discussion which ensued gave the priests a chance to ask questions and to ask the Bishop how he plans to implement the recent decree, explained Father Marvin.

At the heart of the issue, which Father Marvin believes many people have misunderstood, is a pastoral letter issued in August concerning the declaration made by the Sacred Congregation of the Discipline of the Sacraments. Bishop Hogan had expressed a "personal disappointment with the decree as being contrary to my own pastoral experience and that expressed by the majority of the

Bishops of the United States." (Courier-Journal, Aug. 8, 1973).

In July the Vatican had called for an end throughout the world of the "experimental" pastoral practice in which children had received First Communion before confession. Bishop Hogan maintained in his letter that a "majority (of parishes) have used the experiment, have found it pastorally sound and are presently disturbed and confused."

The Bishop, explained that he "did not defy Rome" in his pastoral letter but "had expressed disappointment." Bishop Hogan said he was disappointed because the decree "was to be implemented immediately" which he believes would be "disturbing." It was also issued without warning and against the wishes of the U.S. bishops, he said.

Discussion among the priests centered on the question of whether the resolution was "in-keeping with the spirit of the Bishop's position." Father Gerald O'Connor feels "it will only keep the pot boiling. People are confused enough already."

Father Marvin, however, favored the resolution because "people want to know if the bishop is being obedient." Feedback has been received from various priests and laity, according to Father Elmer Heindl. He maintained that some of them have commented, "We do not have to obey the Bishop since the Bishop is not obeying the Pope."

The vote supporting the resolution was 16-1-1 and Father Marvin cautioned against considering the one opposing vote and abstention as criticism of the Bishop but merely that the priests considered the resolution "inopportune."

Task Force at Work On Sacrament Issue

As indicated in his pastoral letter on First Penance/First Eucharist, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan met with the newly formed Task Force Monday, Sept. 10 at Becket Hall. The Task Force was created as a result of the recent Declaration on First Penance, jointly issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy and for the Sacraments.

Its purpose is to update and rewrite the Diocesan Guidelines for First Penance, that were originally issued in September 1970. The Task Force will accomplish this by pursuing an in-depth study of the theological, catechetical and educational values involved. The group will reflectively listen to the experience of priests, parents and catechists, as well as engage in the careful examination of pastoral concerns.

The Roman declaration has dramatically called attention to some very important considerations regarding the practice of First Penance. Too, the period of experimentation, as the Congregation for the Sacraments has cited, has gleaned many spiritual riches for both children and parents. The difficult mission of the Task Force is to preserve and combine the richness of both practices. Their major concern is the growth and support of Christian life.

The search and study of the Task Force will be carried out in the spirit of Vatican II. Emphasis on listening to the concerns of the local churches is intended to reflect collegial openness. The Task Force is mindful of the recommendations of the Sacred Congregations and under the guidance of Bishop Hogan will share in the responsibility of the Bishop's teaching office.

The members:

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, chairman; Sister Michael Lappetito, RSM, executive secretary, Office of Religious Education; Sister James Lynch, SSJ, ex-officio, Department of Education; Father Daniel Brent, ex-officio, superintendent of schools; Auxiliary Bishop John McCafferty, rector, Sacred Heart Cathedral, canon lawyer; Father Lewis Brown, associate pastor, St. Anne's, Hornell; Msgr. Richard Burns, pastor, St. Thomas the Apostle; Mrs. Robert Dugan, parent-teacher, St. Margaret Mary's; Father John Healy, sacrament theologian, St. Bernard's Seminary; Sister Brigid Quinn, RSM, principal, St. Charles; Sister Jean Rodman, SSJ, religious education coordinator, St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads; Msgr. William Shannon, theologian-liturgist, chairman of Liturgy Commission, professor at Nazareth College; Sister Ellen Ward, RSM, religious education coordinator, CEDAR, Auburn.

Liturgy Set On Teaching At Spencerport

"Teaching As Jesus Did" will be the theme of special liturgy at the 12 noon Mass Sunday, Sept. 23, at St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport.

Sister Michael Lappetito, director of Religious Education for the diocese, will be guest homilist.

A social hour at the parish activity center will follow the Mass to provide the opportunity for teachers and parents to meet.



Father Douglas Hoffman addresses Priests Council.

Fr. Hoffman Outlines Goals

By SHARON DARNIEDER

Father Douglas Hoffman, recently appointed to the new post of director of Pastoral Ministry, announced his office's goals for the coming year in a report given at the monthly meeting of the Priests Council, Sept. 11.

They include a visit to every parish council in the diocese to express the Bishop's concern for a strong pastoral council and to inform the councils of the pastoral center's consultant services.

He also advocated regular meetings with regional coordinators for the growth and development of the 10 regions. (The first meeting was held yesterday in Canandaigua.)

Other goals stressed working with the Bishop and the Pastoral Council Formation Committee to establish the pastoral council, and working in strong

collaboration with the diocesan departments to break up what he termed a "log jam" between the pastoral center, parishes, and regions.

Father Hoffman said part of his plan to break up the jam is designing a communications network between the pastoral center, parishes and regions which will facilitate the flow of material among those concerned.

"It's essential for the welfare of the diocese to have strong parish councils, regional conferences and the diocesan pastoral council," he said. The last council mentioned is still in formation.

He added that he "wanted to see them developed to a strong level as soon as possible because services from the pastoral center are being aimed towards a merging lay leadership."

The Year of Renewal Survey results also were discussed at the meeting. The survey was done

this year by Father Daniel Holland, former director of the Year of Renewal, and polled some of the attitudes of the Catholic people.

This information is now in Father Hoffman's office, but has not been utilized yet. He said he expects to begin working with the material soon, and added that he would welcome suggestions from priests on how to use it.

A motion made by Father John Mulligan, to form a priest's council committee to prepare practical alternative uses for the survey information, was passed by the majority of members present.

Committee members include Fathers John Mulligan, James Boyle and Frank Lioi.

It also was resolved that Father Hoffman will attend Priests Council meetings occasionally to keep members up to date on his office.

Diocese to Review Ecumenical Policy

By PAT PETRASKE

Machinery was set in motion at the Priests Council meeting to establish an overall consistent position on all ecumenical matters in which the diocese is involved. Father Charles Latus has been appointed by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan as a convener for a committee to establish the policy through a reactivated Ecumenical Commission.

Three members of the council volunteered to act as a liaison group to Father Latus whose committee will conduct a fact-finding study. Bishop Hogan has requested the study in order to provide information for a mandate to get the Ecumenical Commission going again.

The council met Sept. 11 at Becket Hall.

The Ecumenical Commission of Catholic laity, priests and sisters was established by Bishop James E. Kearney in 1965 to help form diocesan policy in ecumenical affairs. It has not functioned for several years, according to Bishop Hogan. The study will explore not only the question of reactivating the commission but the issue of diocesan policy towards the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries (GEM).

Bishop Hogan explained that he was concerned about the relationship with GEM, which he said serves only six of the 12 counties in the diocese. "I also question how serious is the Church's commitment to GEM," the Bishop added.

Through the study, which is to be completed by Dec. 15, input will be obtained from 18 community organizations from St. Bernard's Seminary as related to Colgate-Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Center of Theological Studies, and from the various campus ministries.

The study will investigate areas of cooperation, types of structure, membership, financial commitment, official lay and clerical participation and relationship

with charismatic groups. Bishop Hogan said that the findings will be reviewed with the committee and the Administrative Advisory Board to "devise a plan for establishing a Commission, along with structural reporting lines to assure a coordinated ecumenical approach."

In other matters Father James Moynihan, process director, presented the program for a diocesan development office that the interdepartmental staff favors. According to Model "A" of the decision-making process, the Priests and Sisters' councils, the interdepartmental staff and the regional coordinators are to be consulted before new diocesan departments are inaugurated.

The proposed fund development office "will answer

GEM President Gets New Post

Rev. Gene Ferguson, pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church and president of Genesee Ecumenical Ministries, has been appointed minister of urban mission for the Methodists.

Mr. Ferguson described his duties as working as a liaison between social action groups and the local churches. He will also design a structure for the denomination's mission.

He said he expected his post would be similar to that of Father Charles Mulligan, diocesan director of the Office of Human Development.

He also said he would serve as associate to the Methodist's district supervisor, Rev. Robert Rowsam who has care of the 58 Methodist churches in the area.

The appointment becomes effective Oct. 1.

Mr. Ferguson is married to the former Joy Reves and they have two children.

a need for new revenues which will supplement parish assessments and enable the diocese to continue and, if need be, expand into new and necessary apostolates according to Father Moynihan.

Combining two of the three alternatives presented by the commissioned consultants, the Financial Advisory Board has recommended the recruitment of a full-time executive director to manage the program and the engagement of a professional counsel on a per diem basis to assist the development director.

Father James Boyle questioned the relationship of the proposed development office with the new Office of Planning whose director is to be named soon. "The offices of development and planning will go hand in hand. The planning office is strictly for blueprints, the development office will find ways to implement them," Father James Marvin, council president, replied.

SW Region Offers Teacher Training

A teacher training program will be offered during October and November by the Southwest Region Education Committee for all parishes in the region. The eight-week course will be held at St. Pius X School, 3032 Chili Ave. on Tuesday evenings, from 8-10, beginning Oct. 2.

The sessions will combine doctrine for adults with methods of presenting doctrine to children at various age levels. Topics will include Scripture, the Sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist, Morality, the Church and Christology.

Registration forms may be obtained in the parishes. A fee of \$10 will cover books and other materials. Deadline for registration is Friday, September 21.