

At the Priests Council

Ministerial Needs Group Issues First Study

By SHARON DARNIEDER

The Priests Council long-range ministerial needs committee reported on the present distribution and future availability of diocesan priests at the Dec. 4 council meeting at Becket Hall.

It was the committee's first in-depth report to the council. It was set up in April. A resolution was made at that time to invite religious orders to staff some parishes but to have those orders subject to the same guidelines as diocesan priests, and subject to the approval of the parish council at the church in question.

Committee chairman, Father Douglas Hoffman, director of

pastoral ministry, presented the findings which constituted part one, or Study A, of their work.

In addition, the committee Studies B and C will further develop survey information.

The committee's purpose is to provide background material for those in the diocese who will be responsible for inviting an order to take charge of a parish.

Study A data is based on material provided by Auxiliary Bishop Dennis Hickey's office. The report lists 379 priests in the diocese. Of these, 329 are active and 50 are retired. Of the 329, 10 work weekends only and 13 still work full time.

Of those that are active, 20 work outside the diocese and 67 are special workers. Of the 242 priests left in parish ministry, 12 are co-pastors, 144 are pastors and 86 are associates.

To date there are seven parishes run by religious orders with a total of 18 priests.

Father Hoffman was pleased with the discussion that followed his presentation, because, as he

put it, "our committee felt that before we hadn't been given a clear idea of what the council wanted from us."

After he spoke, council members said in passing that the information the studies will provide is exactly what they're looking for.

Other questions answered for the committee included an explanation of their time

schedule — they're under no pressure to finish the project quickly. Father Hoffman was also told the committee could be expanded.

Following up on the latter, copies of Study A will be sent to the Sisters Council.

Other committee members are Fathers John Healy, John O'Connor, William Hart, Peter Bayer and Daniel Brent.

Constitution Seen As First Priority

By SHARON DARNIEDER

The pastoral council formation committee is "narrowing down to the point where their real priority is to get the constitution done," said Father John Mulligan, in a report given to the Priests Council at its Dec. 4 meeting.

Father Mulligan, who represents the Priests Council on the committee, said that after the first draft of the constitution for the Pastoral Council was sent to those concerned in March, the committee busied itself coordinating the responses received for improvement and change.

He noted that since then, the introduction has been prepared and accepted by the committee. He pointed out that it's designed to tell why the diocese is having a Pastoral Council and states the "unity shared in spirit, the diversity given by that spirit and that the pastoral council is an attempt to merge unity and diversity together."

Footnotes will support the committee's contention that the constitution is based on such reliable sources as Scripture, Vatican documents and material from Bishop Hogan.

Father Mulligan also outlined the committee's schedule for the council on the first three constitution segments.

Saying that these are the "key sections" he mentioned that in addition to the finished introduction, the nature section, describing what the Pastoral Council is, will be completed in December and presented to the committee.

In January, the purpose section, or what the Pastoral Council does, will be worked on. When all segments are completed, the revised constitution will again be presented to those involved outside of the committee for approval.

In other Priests Council business, a report presented by the council's personnel finance committee resulted in the passage of two resolutions.

Members voted to send their information about priests and Social Security to all priests in the diocese through the Pastoral

ECUMENICAL SHARING

Naples — The Thanksgiving Ecumenical service was held this year at the Naples Presbyterian Church. All who attended brought canned food as their offering. The food was donated to the Friendship House in Middlesex.

Center's office of communications.

Of special interest here, according to the personnel finance committee's report, is that any priest who had opted not to join can re-apply but application must be made to the Internal Revenue Service. It also stated the law does allow for the termination of exemption, but once terminated this decision is irrevocable.

The second motion concerned the committee's report on possible inequities in the cases of special workers, and noted that any questions or problem situations are to be handled individually by the committee.

Members voted to have the committee pass along this information to all diocesan priests.

The bishop's remarks at the council included observations and information about the recent National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB).

While there, he was appointed a member of the committee for priestly life and ministry, chaired by Chicago's Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Grady.

He also indicated that he was especially pleased that the conference "for the first time in its history has spoken out in resolution on social issues, endorsing wholeheartedly, without a protesting voice, the economic boycott of lettuce and grapes."

Mentioned too was the unanimous resolution passed by the Committee on Social Justice endorsing a boycott of Farah products.

The bishop's remarks sparked some discussion of a standing social action committee, and according to Father James Marvin, president, "reinforced once again that our council needs such a committee."

"We'd like to work along with the bishop in these things because we feel they're as important as he does," he added.

He said he felt the committee was needed because "there are so many social issues coming up that could be dealt with immediately," by it, rather than forming ad hoc committees each time.

He said there is a statewide Social Action Committee of the Priests Council of New York (PCNY) "but we can't send any representatives since we don't have a committee."

The remainder of the council meeting was devoted to a continuation of the role clarification session for members directed by Father Sebastian Falcone and begun Nov. 5 and 6.

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