

55 Priests Attend 1st Non-Metro Workshop



Photo by Susan McKinney
Father John McRaith, [left] Father Louis Miller, CSSR, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and Father Bernard Quinn pause for a brief chat during the workshop.

By SHARON DARNIEDER

Rural America isn't disappearing, according to facts presented to about 55 priests at a Non-Metropolitan Parish Workshop last week, but it is changing.

They were told that as non-metro parish priests they should not only be aware of changes in the Church but also of social, cultural and physical changes in their areas as well, and that they should help their people become aware of, and adjust to, such changes.

The two-day workshop, April 30-May 1, was co-sponsored by the Office of Pastoral Ministry, the Rural Life Division of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), Glenmary Research Center and Liguorian Publications.

Father Douglas Hoffman, director of Pastoral Ministry, received help from Father George Wilant and Sister Alice McLaughlin, SSJ, both from the Office of Human Development's Rural Division.

It was the first time the program was held anywhere and it featured three key speakers, Father Bernard Quinn, director of the Glenmary Center, Washington, D.C., Father John McRaith, co-director of USCC's Rural Life Division and Father Louis Miller, CSSR, editor of Liguorian Magazine.

All three are known for their interest and expertise in various aspects of the non-metro field. Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, who attended part of the workshop, said he was pleased it was being held in the diocese, and expressed his joy at the "large number of priests who attended."

The concern for the workshop was "here," said Father Quinn, "and if it works we hope to take it elsewhere."

Each speaker handled a different aspect of non-metro life

Openness Stressed To Bishops

[From Courier-Journal services]

New York — Representatives of both the diocesan and secular press stressed the need for openness and dialogue at the annual meeting of the state's bishops here last week.

The prelates also were told by mass media experts that the Church has failed to use contemporary communications media adequately to tell what the Church is all about.

Kenneth Briggs, religion writer for Newsday, told the bishops that while there is a "wide audience for local articles illustrating national trends in the Church," problems in communication stem from a lack of openness on the part of Church leaders.

The bishops were told by the mass media representatives to make greater use of experts in the field who would volunteer time to aid the Church in expanding its communications efforts.

Attending from the Rochester

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Photo by Susan McKinney

Father Louis Miller

and ministry, but they were united in their overall goal — to give non-metro priests some background in the past, explanations of present trends and hope for the future.

Father Hoffman outlined the purpose of the workshop as three-fold: to provide an opportunity for reflection on the changing situation in rural areas, to identify the challenge and opportunity and to identify the key role of priests in the changing role.

Although he continuously referred to himself as an "armchair philosopher," Father Quinn presented facts, statistics, maps and charts with the air of one who hasn't spent much time in an armchair.

According to his figures, of the 1.5 million people in the diocese of Rochester, 47 per cent, or 742,000, live in rural areas and towns of 10,000 or under. The other 53 per cent, or 857,000, live

in towns that have a population greater than 10,000.

On the basis of these figures, Father Quinn described the Rochester diocese as "about in the middle. Other dioceses are much more rural and some are more urban."

Father Quinn explained that many small towns in America are undergoing change today and experiencing an increase in scale.

"When you talk about scale," he said, "it's something that's turned up — you get the same thing as before, only on a larger scale. However, when you're talking about people you don't get the same results."

"By scaling up a small town you don't retain everything that was there when it was on a smaller scale," he added. "You can't go back to the way it was

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Ordination Slated For Father Spilly

Father William V. Spilly will be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan at St. Christopher's Church Friday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m. Father Spilly will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving at noon at St. Christopher's on May 12.

The theme of the ordination is The Spirit of God Sends Me Forth. Father Spilly explained that "Priests, like Christ our High Priest, are sent by God to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. This oftentimes means risking playing it safe and living in word and deed as Christ would have us live."

The ordinand is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Spilly of Whiting, Ind. He will celebrate a mass of Thanksgiving at his home parish of St. John the Baptist at noon on May 19.

A graduate of St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind., where he received his B.A. in History, Father Spilly attended St. Bernard's Seminary for two years as a member of the Society of the Precious Blood. He concluded his studies at St. Bernard's as a member of the Diocese of Rochester, receiving his Bachelor of Divinity degree.



FATHER SPILLY

His field experiences include pastoral work at Calvary — St. Andrew's and St. Thomas More Churches. He has worked for the diocesan Office of Human Development and the diocesan Time of Renewal Office. He was engaged in Clinical Pastoral Education at Blue Hills Hospital, Hartford, Conn.

Priests' Reaction: Workshop a Success

Reaction from priests who attended the Non-Metropolitan Parish Workshop April 30-May 1 at Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua, was for the most part favorable.

"It was good to see the things they discussed verbalized," said Father David Mura, Immaculate Conception Parish, Ithaca. "I was glad to see the encouragement and recognition given to the non-metropolitan parochial ministry."

"We know this is where a lot of the action is and we're glad to see the diocese recognize this officially through a workshop such as this," he added.

The speakers, Father Bernard Quinn, director of the Glenmary Research Center, Father John McRaith, co-director of the USCC's Rural Life Division, and

Father Louis Miller, CSSR, editor of Liguorian Magazine, were all experienced in various facets of non-metro ministry.

Those present gained from their expertise although Father Richard Stanton, pastor of Our Lady of the Lake, King Ferry, said he would have liked to see "a little more emphasis placed on towns and hamlets that have, say, only 200 people or so."

Although some of the 55 priests who attended had definite ideas on what they hoped the speakers would cover before the workshop started, Father Robert Smith, pastor of St. Januarius, Naples, spoke for many others when he said, "I didn't really know what to expect but I thought the entire workshop was excellent."

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Orchestrating

And elsewhere in the diocese, staff writer Pat Petraske and photographer Dave Witbeck capture the activities of a typical hospital day at St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell. This week's centerfold.

Miss Jenna Marchinock of Notre Dame High School puts her musical charges through their paces. At the same time, Courier-Journal photographer Susan McKinney was on hand to catch the spirited group photographically. Page 7.

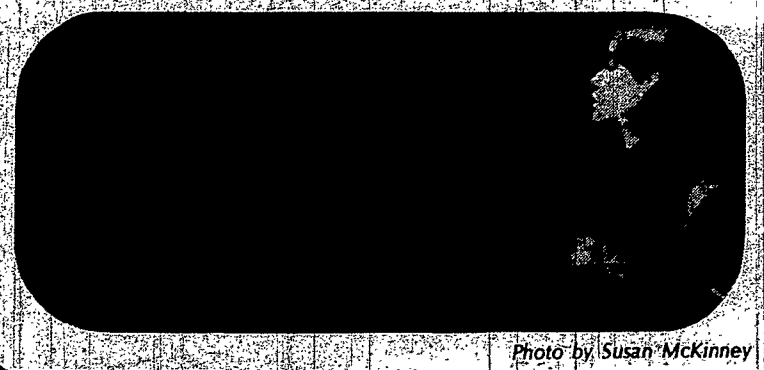


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