

# Non-Metro Workshop

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because certain things have happened.

Two of the things that have happened to scale up small towns according to Father Quinn, is an increase in the radius of interaction (people in rural America today go farther to get the things they want) and a rise in the scale of social systems (activities that were once performed by a family are now increasingly being done by businesses which often reach all the way up to a national level.)

"As you expand the area of interaction, the boundaries expand and finally they expand so much that they tend to overlap. As a result, one of the key factors is that the people who know you do not know each other," he said.

"The small town can no longer be described as a place where you hear gossip about your sins on the way home from committing them," he added.

Personal and functional relationships are also being separated, he stated, and often those in small towns no longer do business with their friends.

"In the past, small towns have projected the image of folksy, friendly, homey places where everyone knows everyone else," he said.

However, he explained that today's society is changing all this and that "people who hold on to the old image are prevented from achieving the functionality of the future."

He's in favor of functional localities (such as the Genesee Finger Lakes locality), and suggests that "if they (small town folks) are not to lose what they really value they're going to have to stretch their minds and take in

the whole functional locality. This includes working with those they may not see again," he added.

"If we're going to have the great accomplishments of civilization we're going to have to live with scale."

"In American society we've equated the large scale with the good," he said, "but as Christians and Catholics we need to take a different perspective."

He told the priests not to identify progress with scaling up but rather to scale up what should go up, and leave alone what can be handled on a small scale.

"The Church should not think exclusively of scaling all its activities up," he said, "but should act ahead of secular society and retain a portion of that which is folksy and homey."

Father John McRaith, who followed Father Quinn with a presentation of the challenge the non-metro parish presents in the '70s, noted that a challenge stems from two sources.

"The problems rural people face will seriously affect all of society," he said, "and the opportunity present in a rural parish to develop real Christian people is very great."

"As we look at the frustrations we face as priests," he went on, "we have a choice and can say simply, we'll survive, or we can work to change things gradually."

"In our country we're committed to liberty and justice for all," he said, "but somehow we can't seem to get a handle on it as a nation and maybe it's because we, as a Church, haven't helped enough."

He stressed that we need to

have the Church step in and help find ways to affect the ills of mankind. And he emphasized that he felt it all begins on the parish level with the pastor.

"Nothing happens in the Church today unless it happens at the parish level," he said. "And the key man in the Church is the pastor. If we really expect the Church to address the issue then we've got to look at the pastor as the key man."

Two of the issues of concern he brought up as related to the non-metro ministry were land reform and food and fibers.

He noted that there are two ways to look at land — as a commodity or as a national resource. As Christians, he noted we should prefer the latter.

Private ownership of land should be strictly for the good of other people, he commented, and he said he was beginning to become concerned as he "sees round the country certain individuals buying up vast amounts of land."

He told the priest the same thing was true for fiber and food and that "large corporations are slowly taking over the processing of much of the food we eat" and other commodities.

"We have to be alert to these areas in society that are going to become oppressive 10 or 15 years from now," he said, "so we can begin to point them out to the people."

Father Miller concentrated on the spirituality of priests and said they "must develop an ever-deepening life of prayer and closeness to the people" in their areas of ministry.

"The times call for a new style of leadership — open, alert and deeply spiritual," he added, "and

Father Jerome Schifferli, (left) asks Father Quinn about information received at the workshop. Several diocesan offices, among them Education, Human Development and Family Life, set up booths aimed at showing services they had available to those who work in non-metro ministry.

our leadership must reflect this new style."

He cautioned that priests should administer to their temporal duties with all the skill they can muster, "but people want their priests to be first, and foremost, men of God."

He said that part of pastoral spirituality must be "discerning openness to the signs of the times," and he used as examples the increasing freedom and opportunities open to women today and emerging, new nations.

He also mentioned new

methods of prayer, such as the charismatic movement, and said that to reaffirm their spiritual life today, priests should go beyond routine prayer and should strive to be more contemplative.

Father Miller also said priests should "begin to be aware of what part of their day is spent in prayer with God behind closed doors and what part is spent with the people."

"Both are elements of that kind of leadership in prayer the priest has as a duty to his people," he added.

## Priests Reaction

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Father Smith was so enthusiastic that he said he hoped the diocese "could have something like this every two months."

"Not the same thing as this time," he hastened to add, "but some kind of workshop for the priests and pastors in the non-metro area. It could concentrate on one specific area each time."

The four priests who were interviewed several weeks before the workshop and asked for their expectations and comments offered mixed reactions at the close of the workshop.

Father Joseph Dailey, pastor of St. Mary's of the Lake, Watkins Glen, one of the four, said he wished there could have been "more of an opportunity for us to exchange ideas among ourselves, in addition to the discussions with speakers after their presentations."

He added that although he enjoyed the workshop and found "a lot of material available that I found interesting," he was disturbed by what he termed a "lack of yardsticks."

The pastor of St. Mary's Dansville, Father Richard O'Connell, praised the workshop and noted that it helped him understand what's going on in the overall changing social scene.

However, he agreed with Father Dailey in that he thought more time should have been given to those present to share problems, solutions and events faced on a day-to-day basis.

Father Quinn's presentation helped me understand some of the alienation people from a smaller town often feel towards

those who move in from another area," he said.

"We've got to face up to the fact of scaling up society, but still stay small when we can be small, and become big when we must be big," he added, echoing another of Father Quinn's ideas.

Father William Darling, associate pastor at St. Mary's, also thought the workshop was excellent, but said that "as far as showing me practical, concrete ways (to help in non-metro ministry), I don't really think that was expected."

"I think what is expected of me now," he continued, "is to reflect on what they've said and apply it in my own way to my ministry."

"The things they did bring up may have been present all the time," he added, "but they're not the types of things you sit down and really think about on your own."

Father Darling noted that he was impressed with the research and the expertise the speakers brought to the workshop and said he felt what they discussed held a great deal of significance and importance for anyone connected with non-metro ministry.

Father Paul Ryan, of St. Michael's, Penn Yan, also got a lot out of the workshop and said he thought it gave a "broader perspective and far better insights into what the problems and realities of the non-metro ministry are," to those who were there.

He added that he felt Fathers Quinn and McRaith helped the priests see what these problems were and how to face them and that Father Miller followed with some practical tools and suggestions. — **Damieder**

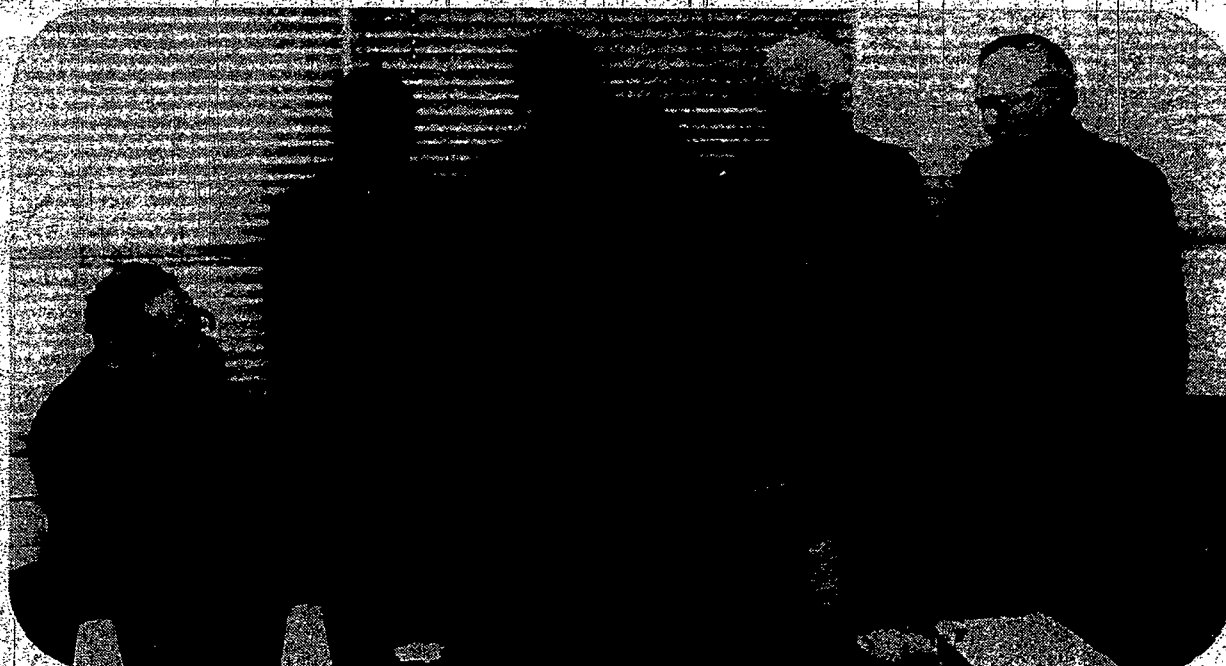


Photo by Victor L. Ridder Sr., Publisher, Catholic News of New York.

Attending last week's meeting of the state's bishops in New York City were, front row, Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty; Cardinal Terence Cooke, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan; rear, Father Louis Hohman, episcopal adviser to the Courier-Journal; Anthony J. Costello, Courier-Journal general manager; Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey; and Father James Marvin, president of the diocesan priests council.

## Bishops Meeting

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diocese were bishop Joseph L. Hogan, Auxiliary Bishops Dennis Hickey and John E. McCafferty, Father James Marvin, president of the diocesan priests council, Father Louis Hohman, episcopal adviser to the Courier-Journal, and Anthony J. Costello, general manager of the Courier-Journal.

The meeting was one of a series of bishops' meetings throughout the country in preparation for the Fall meetings of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Welcoming the 27 bishops to the New York Catholic Center, Cardinal Terence Cooke, archbishop of New York, explained

that the bishops "have narrowed our concern to the specific ways in which we attempt, within the complex and promising world of communications, to proclaim the good news of salvation — to teach religion and inspire people to a finer way of life."

While calling for wider and more effective use of available means of communication "to bring the Gospel to even the most isolated or distant human beings," the Cardinal cautioned the bishops that "we must understand how and to what purpose the communications media function."

The Cardinal continued, "We are not specifically interested, at

this meeting, in the general information and entertainment being offered by the mass media. During these two days we are concentrating on exploring ways in which the Catholic community can employ the scientific and popular advances in communications to bring Christ's message effectively to the largest number of people."

The Christian message, he said, "outtranks any other message being printed or broadcast today. Our question, here, is not the message but rather what opportunities are available or can be created, in the fields of modern communications for us to deliver that message effectively to the largest audiences."