

Rights League Reports Gains

Chicago (RNS) — Despite no concerted membership effort, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has gained 6,000 members in its first year of existence, according to the Jesuit priest who is president of the unofficial Roman Catholic organization.

In a report to the league's officers and board of directors, Father Virgil Blum, S.J., professor of political science at Marquette University, Milwaukee, said the anti-discrimination agency is experiencing "fantastic development and growth."

The league, founded in Washington, D.C., in May 1973 to defend the rights of Catholics and other minorities, is attracting more and more members, according to Father Blum.

He added that "American Catholics, as a whole, are accepting the league with enthusiasm and acclaim, many observing that the league was long overdue."

Stuart D. Hubbell of Traverse City, Mich., a lawyer and executive director of the league, observed that the league has already made itself felt through persuasion and, if necessary, legal action, to correct misinformation and false allegation about the Catholic Church in the media, in education and elsewhere.

Among instances of league intervention, said Mr. Hubbell, are:

* The defense of Dr. Frank Bolles, a non-Catholic Boulder, Colo., physician prosecuted for distributing anti-abortion material. The charges were dropped.

* The protest over publication of a pornographic anti-Catholic cartoon in a City College of New York student newspaper. The college, as well as church and civic leaders, denounced the drawing.

* The protest concerning a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development study prohibiting the establishment of Catholic and other private schools in a Louisiana housing area. The prohibition was dropped.

League officers were re-elected during the two-day Chicago meeting. Besides Father Blum, they are: Dr. David W. Louisell, professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley, board chairman; Dr. Arthur Haller, professor of law at De Paul University, Chicago, vice president; Anthony Cieri, director of finance, Marquette University, treasurer; and Miss Ann Brosnan, international economist, Washington, D.C., secretary.

Program Chairman

Newark — Father William M. Barrett, Catholic chaplain for the Newark Developmental Center, was program chairman for a conference held recently in Toronto, Canada. The American Association on Mental Deficiency held its annual conference from June 2-7 at the Royal York Hotel. This conference draws professionals who care for the mentally deficient in every respect — from nutrition to psychiatry. Besides overseeing the program, Father also chaired the Religion Division Program and gave the Benediction at the Presidential Banquet.

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