

Planner Foresees Major Diocesan Changes

[This article by the Pastoral Council planning committee is based on an interview with Dr. Felix Lopez, engaged by the diocese as a consultant in implementing the diocesan goal setting process. This goal setting will begin in conjunction with the convocation of the Diocesan Pastoral Council on June 13-15. In this interview Dr. Lopez explains how this goal setting process will affect our diocese and the parishes.]

Dr. Lopez, Bishop Hogan with the approval of the consultative groups in the diocese, has contracted for your services in establishing a diocesan-wide planning program. Exactly what are you going to help our diocese do?

I will provide advice and assistance in establishing the goal setting process for parishes, institutions, and departments of the diocese. It is a new way of administering and managing their affairs which is based upon achieving results rather than activity. I will not be telling the diocese what to do. It is up to the people to decide what it should do. I am fundamentally an organizational psychologist and I will be helping with the technical aspects of the process, overcoming pitfalls that these programs are subject to and often cause them to flounder.

It seems strange for a diocese to turn to a businessman for assistance in establishing its goals. What sort of background do you have which enables you to assist in planning?

This is a question I am always asked. I'm not really a businessman. The human resources consulting firm that I head assists a great number of industrial, governmental, and religious organizations. I help them apply concepts from the behavioral sciences. In essence, the Church is doing what it has always done from its foundation, that is, borrow from contemporary society that which is good and useful for it in fulfilling its purpose.

Basically the Church is an institution as well as many other things. It is a human and historical institution with a tradition and a culture. Therefore, it is subject to the same principles of behavior as any human institution. What I help to do is to mold the institution to the basic

needs of the individual person rather than to mold the individual to the needs of the institution. So it is not really a business technique.

Have you tried your goal setting process in other dioceses?

Since the Second Vatican Council, I have been working with several dioceses among which are Providence, R.I., Brooklyn, N.Y., Portland, Maine, and Harrisburg and Erie, Pa. In the dioceses that I have worked there have been some profound results. All their programs are still going — some for five or six years.

Dr. Lopez, almost half of the first weekend convocation of our Pastoral Council will be involved with diocesan goal setting. Do you think that this is a good use of a newly elected group's time?

The weekend is a convocation for setting initial goals. It was decided by this diocese, and I would agree with it. This is a proper activity of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, so I think it is a good use of their time. The goal setting program should be the major responsibility of the Diocesan Pastoral Council just as the parish council should be responsible for parish goal setting. My own experience is that you need a mixture of laity and religious to set diocesan goals and the Diocesan Pastoral Council will provide this.

What sort of changes can we expect on the diocesan level and on the parish level as a result of the goal setting?

In the long run there will be a tremendous reorganization of the diocese. The first thing that becomes obvious is that the present organizational structure of the diocese is not adequate for shared responsibility. Power centers will shift; you will see greatly increased participation on the part of the laity. There will be a major change in the role of the clergy, especially pastors, and the need for new skills. Parishes will find it very challenging. It will cause them to re-examine what they are doing or not doing. It will force them to broaden their concept of what a parish is. It will also affect the relationship of central administration and the parishes. Parishes will have a greater awareness of what decisions are being made and a stronger voice in these decisions.



Members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) committee interview Dr. Lopez, left. They are, from left to right, Father John Mulligan; Father Peter Bayer, diocesan director of planning; Mrs. Patricia Schmidt, and Sister Mary Ann Binsack.

Many parish staffs and parish councils have already done long range planning. Will this no longer be of use?

Not unless it is totally impractical. It really gives more strength to the long range planning which they have already done. It is my experience that those parishes which have done planning respond quickest to the goal setting program.

When will the average parishioner begin to see the effects of your planning?

The average parishioner won't see the effects of this program for several years. Based on the schedule in this diocese, the bulk of the parishes of the diocese won't be affected for two to three years. Starting in September 1975 the diocesan departments will go through the program. In September 1976, ten prototype parishes will go through the program, and in September 1977, the rest of the parishes. It will then be four or five years down the road before you see any major changes in liturgy, parish governance, religious education programs, etc.

How will your program be evaluated?

Evaluation is built into the program because every year there is a review of all the goals and objectives and whether you met them or not. There is a continual process of evaluation, examination, and renewal. Evaluation is the last step in the program each year before you set goals and objectives for the following year.

Who will evaluate your program?


The Diocesan Pastoral Council will become the review body. When the Diocesan Pastoral Council is fully developed it will help the Bishop govern the diocese. They will review the goals each year that are set.

Dr. Lopez, how do you feel the climate is in Rochester for goal setting?

This is a new experience. No other diocese has been as well prepared for this as the Rochester diocese. I do feel that there may be too much consultation in the diocese. I will address myself to this at the convocation. It is not necessary to consult on every matter.

NEXT WEEK . . . Regional coordinators assess our regions' readiness for the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr.
Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 10: 1-10. (R1) Acts 2: 14, 36-41. (R2) 1 Pt. 2: 20-25.

The Good Shepherd theme runs through Sunday's liturgy.

Some people are afraid of dogs and cats. Dogs and cats can bite and scratch. Everyone is afraid of lions and tigers. Lions and tigers can kill. But who is afraid of a lamb or a sheep? A lamb might run away from us, but we would never run away from a lamb. For lambs cannot bite, scratch or kill. Instead they are often killed by other animals because they are weak and do not know how to defend themselves. That is why they have to have someone to take care of them and watch out for them. Other animals are always trying to kill them, so they need a good shepherd to protect them.

Jesus likened Christians to sheep, not because He thought they are stupid, but because He knew they are helpless when it comes to defending themselves against the world, their own passions and the devil. They need a good shepherd.

Jesus also said that He is the Good Shepherd. Perhaps that was why one of the most popular paintings in the catacombs was that of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. What a comforting image this must have been to Christians ever in danger of being fed to lions!

But two thousand years have gone by since Jesus used that image.

Where now is the Good Shepherd? How can one hear His voice now? The first and second readings tell us. They imply that the Good Shepherd in the first century was Peter. As Peter succeeded Jesus as the Good Shepherd, so down through the centuries others succeed Peter. If Jesus passed on His role as Shepherd to Peter, why should not Peter also pass it on to his

successors—the bishops of Rome?

Like a shepherd, Peter calls out to his sheep. "Save yourselves," he urges, "from a generation that has gone astray" (R1). Three thousand responded—but not all. Only His sheep hear His voice.

Next Peter warns the sheep who have heard his call that they will suffer. They will suffer, not because they have done wrong, but simply "for doing what is right" (R2).

How Cardinal Newman suffered just by becoming a Catholic—"doing what is right." Easter Eve, I baptized ten adults. Easter week one of them told me how hard it was to go home Easter Sunday and tell his Methodist parents that he was going to Mass instead of going with them to their Easter service.

On Easter Sunday, all of us renewed our baptismal promises. If we really meant them, if we really try to live up to them, then we must expect suffering—not because of any evil we have done, but simply because we are followers of a crucified Christ.

The test of the sincerity of our commitment will be our reaction to undeserved suffering. St. Francis de Sales used to say, "To love God in sugar—little children would do as much; but to love Him in wormwood, that is the test of our fidelity." When insulted, the innocent Jesus returned no insult. When injured, He did not counter with threats. But as a lamb He was led to the slaughter.

In the New York office of Arthur Godfrey, there hung a sign, "The fire, Lord, not the scrap heap."

Godfrey said, he hung it there, because it always reminded him of a blacksmith who had great faith in God in spite of a lot of sickness in his life. An unbeliever once asked him how he could go on trusting in a God who let him suffer.

"When I make a tool," the blacksmith answered, "I take a piece of iron and put it into the fire. Then I strike it on the anvil to see if it will take temper. If it does, I can make a useful article out of it. If not, I toss it on the scrap heap and sell it for junk. Maybe God tests us that way. When suffering has come my way, I know that I've come out better for it—so much so, that I can honestly say, 'Put me in the fire, Lord; if that's what it takes, just don't throw me on the scrap heap.'"

"Your rod and your staff give me courage."

Parish Council Installed

Auburn — The installation of the first Parish Council at St. Alphonsus was celebrated Sunday, April 6, with Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, principal concelebrant at the installation Mass. A dinner for parish council members followed in the school parish center.

In his homily, Bishop Hogan made reference to the renewal efforts in the diocese.

"You can have the most up-to-date structure, but it will only be as good as the people in those structures," Bishop Hogan said in his reference to the need for parish councils to be prayerful and open in their deliberations.

The parish council is one of the ways by which the various gifts given to us can be brought together for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ; but, he said, it would not be accomplishing a lot if the parish council was concerned only with building up the parish. The vision of the church must go beyond "my parish, my diocese, my church"; it is God's Church and calls together all parishes.

He said the parishes are, through the process of change, building up the spirit of parish, and through the regional coordinator building up the diocese. Then, the pastoral council to be inaugurated this



Bishop Hogan, and Fathers Michael Conboy, Edward Palumbos and Joseph Gefell install the Parish Council members.

June will aid the bishop in the decision-making process.

Sharing in the work of the Church through the pastoral council in no way can be viewed as a threat, he stressed, for he sees himself not as the answer man, but as the man who brings his people together in a sense of co-responsibility.

He reminded the congregation that the Church exists as a living sign of God among us with a diversity of gifts and talents. But, no matter what gifts one has, it is nothing if not marked by charity.

Formation of the parish council puts into practice the Vatican II challenge to the People of God to be actively engaged in Church work, a

council spokesman said. "It is a means of revitalizing the Church and the vehicle for Christians to articulate and implement their personal contribution to the Christian community."

Henry Hoffman was elected parish council president; Norman F. Bourke, vice president; Betty Drake, secretary. Others include Msgr. Joseph G. Gefell, pastor; Father Edward Palumbos and Father Robert Rice, associates; Robert J. Hoffman, religious education coordinator; Sister Catherine Ann, Sister Mary Ellen, Leo A. Pinckney, Joseph E. Heieck, Theresa Clifford, Timothy Evans, Edward J. Kolo, Angela Rowley, Michael Stapleton, Richard A. Evans and Robert E. Lubanski.