

State Priests Also Meet

By BONITA BALDWIN

The Priests Council of New York (PCNY) met in Rochester two days last week, coinciding with the meeting of Region II of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Priests and bishops met in a closed session Thursday morning.

Wednesday evening, 22 members of the council gathered in the Americana Hotel in downtown Rochester to prepare for the meeting with the bishops. Father Ignatius Catanello, outgoing president of PCNY, encouraged the other priests to be as open as possible with the bishops, saying that they had come to learn and respected PCNY members as leaders in their dioceses.

Father James Marvin of Rochester, installed as new president of PCNY later in the

meeting, termed the planned encounter "an experience" and not a confrontation. He reported as a member of the liaison committee that the bishops were interested in finding new ways of recruiting priests back to the parish ministry and maintaining the morale of pastors.

Personnel concerns took top priority in the priests' response. Father Joseph Colligan of Rockville Centre expressed the desire of priests to have some say in their assignments. The option of experimental ministries, such as co-pastorates and team ministries, was requested by Father Raymond Rafferty of New York and strongly supported by other PCNY members. Father John Weiner of the Buffalo Diocese stressed, however, that the pastor's traditional way of living alone must also remain an alternative.

In a discussion of retirement and evaluations, Father Robert Sullivan of Syracuse proposed job counseling to help the priest succeed in his work as a more meaningful procedure than evaluation. Father Edward Zogby, a Jesuit from LeMoyn College, suggested retraining priests in mid-career in preparation for retirement and to free them from the psychological frustration of doing just one thing.

Sabbaticals were discussed. It was reported that St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie will be used as a state retreat house where priests may go for two months of spiritual refreshment. Father Peter Malet of New York said that many priests feel an entire semester free to study in a university might be more helpful.

In a different vein, Father Charles Mulligan of Rochester, chairman of the PCNY Peace and Justice Committee, asked that it be recommended to the bishops that criminal justice reform be a

major project this year and that the Peace and Justice committee structure be used in planning for the bicentennial.

The Priests' Council passed two resolutions. The first established a committee to work on the selection process for bishops and the second to support the redistribution of clergy out of their dioceses to areas lacking vocations.

In a brief meeting following the Thursday morning discussion with the bishops the priests restated their support for experimental ministries and instructed each member to return to their senates to discuss the matter and then to report to the agenda committee. They agreed to examine further the bishops' proposal that the Peace and Justice Committee function as a liaison between PCNY and the State Catholic Committee.



Photo by Susan McKinney

Fathers John Hempel (left) and James Marvin of Rochester listen attentively during meeting of the Priests' Council of New York in the Rochester Americana last Wednesday night.

State Bishops To Continue Gatherings

Both Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and Cardinal Terence Cooke agreed that gatherings of the bishops in Region II will not stop.

Cardinal Cooke, however, noted that, following an executive session vote, the region may recommend to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops that the official annual regional meetings be dropped in favor of two national meetings a year.

The cardinal hastened to say that he found the gatherings of priests and bishops from New York State too valuable to end. Region II is unique in the national conference in that it covers a single state.

Priests Keep Up On Peace, Justice

"The Peace and Justice Committee has done a fantastic job keeping priests' councils informed of what is going on in the state," Father Ignatius Cantanello of Brooklyn, outgoing president of New York State Priests' Council, said in a meeting of PCNY in Rochester last Wednesday night.

Father Catanello has been succeeded as president by Father James Marvin, pastor of St. Ambrose in Rochester and president of the Rochester Priests Council. Father Daniel Hamilton of Rockville Centre will be vice president.

The statewide committee, presently the only functioning committee of the State Priests' Council, is chaired by Father

Charles Mulligan, diocesan director of the Rochester Office of Human Development. In his report to the council, Father Mulligan reiterated the functions of the committee, saying that it provided priest councils with an effective voice in legislation and with means for practical involvement in issues of peace and justice. The committee also served as a liaison between councils, directing councils with questions to the council of the diocese with the most expertise in that area of social concern.

This past year several issues were divided among the state dioceses for research and action planning, Father Mulligan reported. Buffalo and New York studied housing. Brooklyn and Rockville Centre worked with the

United Farm Workers union. World hunger and criminal justice were Rochester projects. Syracuse examined aging and Albany, mental health.

The question of the relationship between PCNY and the Peace and Justice Committee was discussed. Father Mulligan stressed that Peace and Justice is an emerging committee formed only last April and that, although freedom is essential, it needs to maintain close association with its parent body, the PCNY, in order to speak authoritatively. "The strength of the Peace and Justice Committee comes from its accountability to the neighborhoods of New York State. We want to stay close to you," he told the 21 members of the council present. —Baldwin.

Bishops Not as Dull as Catechetical Directory

By MARGARET CONNOLLY and JOHN DASH

Lucky for the folks at St. Vincent De Paul Parish Council that Spring was late this year.

Since the ground was still too wet to put in his grain crops, Tom Dermody, chairman of the council, had the time to go to the bishops' meeting, and introduce himself around and speak with those in whose charge is the future of the Church.

Tom, a hale, young-looking 63, runs a dairy farm south of Churchville that has been in his family for better than 100 years.

Having read the text of the NCD, the document the meeting was convened to discuss, Tom noted that "I don't find too much fault with the way it's written."

And asked his opinion about the way the meeting was run, he asserted that he has "no difficulty" with the consultative process, and welcomes the changes which have occurred in the Church.

He will report to his council on his experience.

There was a good deal of talk among the priests about their role as teacher, with a suggestion that they may tend to abandon that role to the religious education coordinator, and others specifically trained for teaching.

Bishop Joseph Pernicone protested. Life for him, he said, is teaching, teaching, teaching, all day long. He is pastor of Holy Trinity in Poughkeepsie. Helping people to understand and cope with their problems is teaching; he pointed out; talking with the children is teaching. And when he looks in on the Bingo game once a month or so, he seizes the microphone, and with it, the opportunity to teach.

Father Alfred McBride opened his lectures with a story once told by the late Sen. Everett Dirksen. It seems the senator was promoting the marigold as a national flower one day when the galleries were filled with representatives of garden clubs around the nation. The senator's impassioned speech so impressed one woman that she ran up to him and gushed "Senator, I think your speech was simply superfluous." Dirksen nodded cordially. "Thank you, I hope to have it published posthumously." This so delighted the woman she cried, "Well, the sooner the better."

Culinary allusions abounded in Bishop Anthony Mestice's comments: "Let's get down to the hard core wheat and cut the chaff;" "Let's cut the salami and get to the meat."

But then he said, "We need a hubcap of a solid non-negotiable set of doctrines at the very core."

Bishop Francis Mugavero, a very spare man, also goes to the kitchen for an occasional metaphor. Speaking of the directory draft as difficult, rather dreary reading for the ordinary person, he said that if his parents were alive he would try it out on them. "They'd take one look and go cook another pot of spaghetti."

Bishop Edwin Broderick is most anxious to get a new title for the National Catechetical Directory. "Catechetical!" he said. "How many Protestants do you know that can pronounce 'dioceses'?"

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan thinks that some people expect the

directory to be a neat package of answers for all occasions, a handy gauge by which to measure their priests' performance.

"Perhaps we expect too much. A book isn't going to solve all our problems," Bishop Broderick pointed out more than once.

"Will it be a sort of first-aid manual," he asked. "A Dr. Spock guide for mothers, a What to Do Before the Bishop Comes?"

"Bishops don't make house calls."

The Americana is for travelers, a home-away-from-home. Ruminating on the change of perspective a Rochesterian gets in a local hotel, Father James Marvin noted that a look out a window "lets you know you are in a city."

"The windows at St. Ambrose don't do that for you," he said.

The Wednesday noon liturgy in the hotel was arranged by Dr. Joseph Kelly of St. Bernard's Seminary as "the quiet, prayerful time that Bishop Hogan said we needed." Cardinal Cooke was the celebrant, Bishop Francis J. Harrison of Syracuse, the homilist. The congregation sang psalms, unaccompanied.

Bishop Edwin Broderick of Albany, speaking of the tensions implied by "one Faith and many theologies," said he hoped people wouldn't look to the NCD as a sort of "Elmer's Catholic Glue."

Bishop John McGann of Rockville Centre, on continuing education and priest-as-teacher:

"The Sisters who teach religion take a six-week course to improve

their work; the pastor then spends three weeks debunking what they have learned. Perhaps priests and Sisters should take the same course."

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey returned from Rome just on time for the opening of the convocation, so he had jet lag to contend with. Nevertheless, he listened throughout and was pleased with what he heard. "Everybody participated even better than expected," he commented. "There was a lot squeezed into those two days."

He said he was tremendously impressed with the skill Cardinal Cooke displayed in keeping things moving.

He seemed especially pleased — flattered, even — by the presence of people from the upper reaches of academia. Msgr. Austin Vaughan, for instance, a theologian from St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers; Father Vincent Novak, SJ, director of Fordham's Graduate Institute of Religious Education and Ministry; Father Martin T. Geraghty, dean

of students at Cathedral College of the Immaculate Conception in Douglaston.

Sister Michael Lappetto's personal shorthand reduced the idea of "I can do whatever I wish, as long as it hurts nobody else," to "No-fault morality." A proposal for a popular edition of the directory to accompany the technical one came out "Double-track rewrite."

Father Daniel Brent, who oversees general education in the parish schools of the Rochester diocese, served as secretary to one of the discussion groups and therefore listened more than he spoke. As the group was breaking up to return to the general meeting, the directory publication schedule was the topic: Why rush into print with the second draft this Fall — has it something to do with the Bicentennial Year? Father Brent threw away his answer: "It might turn into a pumpkin on the Fourth of July."

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