Coordinators Cite Pastoral Council Necessity

[This article is based on interviews with the 10 regional coordinators on the readiness of the regions for the Diocesan Pastoral Council. It is part of a series of articles prepared by the Diocesan Pastoral Council Steering Committee.]

All ten regional coordinators feel that the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) is a necessity. They believe that its establishment will bring about a broad view of diocesan needs. As **Msgr. Joseph Gefell** of the Cayuga-Seneca Region states, "The Diocesan Pastoral Council will get the feelings of people throughout the diocese."

Some regions are not as ready for the Pastoral Council as others. Part of the problem is that a large percentage of the lay persons do not know what is happening. Parish councils have been challenged by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan to educate both themselves and members of their parishes on the nature and purpose of the DPC.

Father Richard Tormey of the Yates-Ontario-Wayne Region explained, "We may not be ready, but we should start. Because we have no precedent to follow we must begin so we may grow while learning. Parish councils have much growing up to do but not necessarily before the Pastoral Council begins."

Father Thomas Burr of the Northeast Region of Monroe County added that his region is "not quite ready, but to wait until it is fully ready would only delay its initiation too long. Structurally speaking we are ready, but attitudinally much needs to be done."

Parish councils will be affected in varying ways by the DPC. "It will certainly challenge parish councils to look at needs beyond their own boundaries," remarked **Father Roy Kiggins** of the Southeast Region of Monroe County. He continued, "As the Diocesan Pastoral Council develops, more parish councils will look to their membership for capable lay leaders to represent them. The Diocesan Pastoral Council should assure parish councils of a vehicle for making their feelings heard at regional and Diocesan levels."

Father Michael Reagan of the Chemung-Schuyler Region felt that "the Diocesan Pastoral Council will give a broader vision and direction and effect greater involvement on the parish councils."

The coordinators presented a diversity of issues which they visualize the Pastoral Council taking. Many felt that diocesan goal-setting and priorities should be the initial thrust. They hope that the DPC will be a stimulant for diocesan departments, the regional coordinators, and the Bishop. They also anticipate there will be discussions on such matters as vocations, education, diocesan personnel, communication, and the size of regions.

Father Conrad Sundholm of the North Region of Monroe County predicted that "the DPC will be taking a look at present diocesan structures, finances, and the mission of the diocese and the parishes."

Delegates to the regions and the DPC will have to become familiar with the areas they represent. It will be necessary that they have the ability to follow through on their responsibilities. They will need to use effective channels of communication and perhaps create new ones. The personal contact of all delegates with their constituents is stressed as essential. **Father William Amann** of the Northwest Region of Monroe County saw the flow of information "from the Pastoral Council through the regional conferences to the parishes and vice versa."

The question of whether the regions are fairly represented on the DPC met with a favorable response from the coordinators. "Seeing it in action," forecasted **Father Eugene Sweeney** of the Livingston-Steuben Reion, "will tell the story."

Regions as a whole are not "excited" about the formation of the DPC, says **Father Elmer McDonald** of the Southwest Region of Monroe County. "Who is really excited about anything these days? Concerned, but not excited," he feels. More information will be needed to make the Pastoral Council a reality to most people.

Our regional coordinators are looking to the DPC to help bring "true collegiality." If there can be such a thing as "diocesan spirit," they feel that the Pastoral Council may help establish it. They think the regions will be an essential "link" in the chain of ideas and information. They hope that parish councils will come to a greater awareness of their part in the "larger Church."

In the words of **Father Albert Cason** of the Tompkins-Tioga Region, "I feel the regions are ready and waiting for a Pastoral Council and I hope it will bring a closer identity with the diocese."

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ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

Mr. William F. Buckley is a newspaper columnist, editor of National Review and moderator of the weekly TV program, Firing Line, which interests many for its topics, panelists, and for Mr Buckley's adroit development of the program. Recently he wrote an article about Episcopalian experimentation in liturgy and language. On Saturday night, April 5, over Rochester Channel 21, he had a panel discussion with a progressive Episcopalian priest and a traditionalist Episcopalian, Professor Harold Weatherly of Vanderbilt University. Since "the axle that squeaks gets the grease," this is a letter sent to him.

Dear Mr. Buckley;

This is the Voice of Opportunity! This evening I watched Firing Line Episcoplaian experiments with the Book of Common Prayer and the liturgy. While I found the subject interesting, the panel discussion was unusually drab and sparkless. Hence this Voice of Opportunity.

Our Bishop Hogan of the Diocese of Rochester invited a layman, Dr. Irving Arkin to be the speaker at our most recent clerical conference for our priests. The conference was a howling success. I think there has never been a conference more thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed than this.

Who is Dr. Arkin? He is Stever Professor of Theology at the Jesuit St. Louis University. He was born in the German consulate in New York City because his father was on the consulate staff for the German government, and his mother wanted him to be born on "German soil," hence the Consulate. When things began to go bad under Hitler in 1935 the father decided to transfer the family's residence and citizenship to the United States, though retaining a thorough devotion to German culture. Dr. Arkin was an ordained Lutheran minister. Then under the influence of Bishop Sheen, he became a Catholic. He continued in the field of religion, patrology being a specialty of his. He is married, about 48 years old, and has three children.

His speaking voice is terrible, but he has a sense of humor which is hilarious and effective in bringing home a point. He has an earthiness which I presume he would restrain on the TV. He reminds many of Jack Benny. Best of all his orthodoxy would satisfy both traditionalists and moderate progressives.

Will you consider him for your Firing Line? I think he would be a huge success, giving spark, intelligence, humor to the program. And I think you would have such a wonderful time that you would not need a couple of stiff Scotches afterward to raise your spirits, though you might have them anyway to celebrate a happy occasion. My own interest is that in the program, the Catholic Faith would be properly and cheerfully presented.

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Col. and Mrs. Stephen Dillon of Malibu, Calif., are friends from Biggs Air Base, El Paso in 1956. They are the parents of 12 wonderful children. Here is a recent letter

Do you remember the religious goods store, The Madonna Shop in El Paso? Miss Margaret McCarthy runs it. Recently over the phone she said that the rosary devotion never did drop in the El Paso area, partly because of the devotion of the Mexican-Americans. Then she added: 'A salesman for religious goods actually discontinued carrying rosary beads because the devotion had dropped so greatly in other areas. Recently he came into the store with a big line of beads, because the demand for them has returned, **especially among the young**.' Bishop Sheen, in his Cassette Taped Conferences, remarked that when Catholics were dropping the beads, the hippies picked up the idea of using them: love beads. Now Catholics are recovering a buried treasure.

All this is the prelude and conclusion of the promise I made to send you the book, The Church and I, by Frank Sheed. The book is a sensible book; and I have always remembered how impressed I was that you belonged to a study group in California which used as its text, Sheed's Theology and Sanity — which certainly is no text for the dilettante! My blessing to all your family. I had always hoped that some of the Dillon boys would enter the priesthood.