

The Priests Council Marriage Preparation Document Approved

By JOHN DASH

After nearly two years of revisions, discussions, parliamentary procedures and consultations, the Priests Council last week finally approved a document on marriage preparation in the diocese, part of which now has the effect of "extra-synodal legislation."

The document entitled "A Common Policy of Pastoral Marriage Preparation for the Diocese of Rochester" was accepted, with one revision, after nearly three hours of motions, debates and voting at the council meeting at St. Bernard's Seminary.

After the vote, Father Robert Collins, chief author of the document, commented on his

"relief" that the procedure was over.

The paper consists of eight sections of guidelines to be used by the priest or deacon in the preparation of couples for the sacrament.

The ninth and last section contains explicit regulations to be followed throughout the diocese.

The final paragraph originally read "failure to observe any or all of procedures in section IX shall render the marriage illicit with canonical penalties to be determined by the ordinary."

After a great deal of debate the paragraph was rewritten by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan to read, "All exceptions to the procedures in section IX must be approved by the Ordinary."

Father Louis Hohman said that his bloc saw the document as separating the "good guys from the bad guys" in the witnessing of marriages. He said, and others agreed, that each region has its "Marrying Sam" and he hoped the document would do away with such practices in the diocese.

Bishop Hogan questioned the difference in considering the paper as a policy or as a guideline.

Father Collins answered that the first eight sections could be considered as guidelines and the last policy with episcopal sanction.

This brought reaction from the council that, an entirely new element had been injected into the deliberation. Several blocs had previously noted that the paper should have the force of law in order to clarify the paper's importance.

At this point, Father Joseph Dailey voiced his opinion that the document created an "impediment" to marriage, when the paper's intent was to clarify procedural legalities in the role of the witness.

Father Kevin Murphy and Father Dailey said that the consultative services called for in the paper were not available to priests in the Southern Tier.

This was denied by Father Collins who said such "facilities are available (throughout the diocese) even if they are not exclusively Catholic."

Father William Donnelly then noted the paper "is not concerned enough with special cases," a reference which later brought from Father Bernard Newcomb a request for a clarification on the responsibility

Attica Review Asked

The Priests Council voted last week to call upon Gov. Hugh Carey and Atty. Gen. Louis Lefkowitz to review the indictments in the Attica rebellion case "in the light of American guarantees of justice," with a view to dropping those indictments against the Attica defendants.

Father Ronald Stacy, who presented a draft of the resolution to the council from the Social Action Committee, called the final resolution "a solid statement, a very solid statement. No one can have quarrel with it."

He called the resolution "an expression of confidence in the governor and attorney general" and said it reflected a questioning, on the council's part, of "whether the American system of justice has fallen apart."

Other business handled by the Priests Council included a budget review by Father George Wood, a presentation of studies on long range ministerial needs by Father Peter Bayer, a presentation on the Diocesan Pastoral Council by Father Louis Hohman, and a "brain storming" session.—Dash.

Bishop Kearney Doing Well

Bishop James E. Kearney is "doing very well" at St. Ann's Home, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan told the Priests Council last week.

He said the retired Bishop of Rochester "enjoys company and the fuss; people make over him. He preaches on Sunday, says

daily Mass and takes a walk every day."

He said the St. Ann's staff was teaching the bishop to make his own breakfast; and that, while the bishop required a certain level of care, the staff was "working to get him healthier" so he could move into larger quarters in the Heritage.

Bishop Hogan reiterated that Bishop Kearney is "doing very, very well."

He also noted that the bishop is not expected to return to his East Avenue house.

Are Our Co-Pastorates Avant-Garde?

The recent meeting between the Priests Councils of New York State and the Region II Bishops put Rochester at the center of a controversy. Father James Marvin, president of the PCNY, told the Rochester council last week.

He noted, and Bishop Joseph L. Hogan concurred, that the concept of co-pastorates is a relatively new idea to several other dioceses in the state and that Bishops Hogan and Dennis W. Hickey were "constantly challenged" on the subject.

Father Marvin said he saw "great apprehension" in several of the prelates at the meeting.

In the course of last week's discussion, Bishop Hickey noted that the Rochester co-pastorates will be evaluated, starting in September with the team of Fathers Walter Wainwright and William Gordinier who are in Penfield.

ALCOHOLISM

Elmira — Judge John Frawley will speak on Alcoholism and the law as part of the Southern Tier Alcoholism Rehabilitation Service's seminar, Wednesday, May 14, at noon in the doctors' meeting room of St. Joseph's Hospital.

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GLAUCOMA SCREENING

St. Mary's Hospital will provide free glaucoma screening for the public from 1-3:30 p.m., Thursday, May 15, in the Bishop Kearney Building of the hospital at 89 Genesee St. The screening is part of St. Mary's observance of National Hospital Week, May 12-16. Glaucoma is an eye disease which causes more blindness than any condition except cataract. Most victims are over age 35.

of the campus chaplain to determine the sacramental needs of his congregation.

At that point Father Donnelly recalled for the council a discussion he had once had with the bishop. He said it was his impression the chaplain was to meet the real sacramental needs of the campus community.

Also in the course of the discussion, Msgr. Leslie Whalen, Father John Coonan and Father Dailey raised questions on the relationship between the paper and canon law.

Msgr. John F. Duffy noted that his bloc felt that "the faith dimension" of the paper should be strengthened. "Faith should be emphasized," he said, "It needs teeth in the thing."

Following agreement on the

policy paper the council also discussed ancillary questions on the forms signed prior to mixed marriages, the process for granting dispensations, intercommunion at weddings, the nature of sacred places, and the establishment of a maximum fee for wedding services.

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