

Rigorous Schedule Set for DPC Convocation

What would it be like to be a representative at the Diocesan Pastoral Council convocation on June 13 through 15? You would be attending one of the best planned convocations in the history of the diocese.

Preparations for the Pastoral Council began more than four years ago when Bishop Joseph Hogan appointed Auxiliary Bishop John McCafferty as the chairman of the Diocesan Pastoral Council Formation Committee. The Diocesan Pastoral Council/Convocation Steering Committee has been intensively planning the convocation for the past six months.

The Convocation will be held at Becket Hall on the Campus of St. John Fisher College in Rochester. "All members of the Council will remain overnight on Friday and Saturday," explained Sister Mary Ann Binsack, the executive secretary of the Pastoral Council. "Being together for three days is an essential part of building a real community among all the participants."

Registration will start at 6 p.m. Friday, and the convocation will open at 8 p.m. with a welcome by

Sister Mary Ann. Bishop Hogan will then lead the members of the council in a period of prayer, one of the many times that members will invoke the Holy Spirit together. After the prayer, the bishop will address the council concerning his expectations.

The keynote speaker of the first evening will be Father Sebastian Falcone, professor of Scripture at St. Bernard's Seminary. Father Falcone will outline and explain the general purposes of the diocese. His insights will serve as the framework for the council's deliberations. Following Father Falcone's address, the council will break into five groups to discuss Bishop Hogan's and Father Falcone's ideas. The first evening will conclude with a prayer service and a refreshment period during which the members will have an opportunity to get to know each other better.

Saturday morning begins with a brief period of prayer and features a three-part session with Dr. Felix Lopez who will explain the goal-setting process which the convocation is initiating in the diocese. Following a break for lunch and some free time, the council will return to work with

Dr. Lopez, this time to actually begin to compose tentative goals for our diocese. Goals will be written in each of five areas of concern. The five areas are: worship and life, teaching mission, social mission, pastoral organization, and supportive services. Members of the Pastoral Council have already chosen to work on goals in one of these five areas of concern. The groups will not be working on goals in isolation, they will be consulting the goals suggested by Parish Councils from throughout the diocese. Saturday afternoon concludes with a Mass and supper. The evening includes another hour and a half spent on writing goals and ends with prayer and a well-deserved recreation period.

Sunday morning's schedule will begin with breakfast and prayer. Then the entire council will gather and each of the five groups will present and explain the goals they have written for their particular area. The morning will conclude with the council ranking the proposed goals. The council's prioritized list of goals will be presented to the Diocesan departments as a basis of their planning for 1976.

Early Sunday afternoon has been reserved for the organizational meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The council will elect officers and the other members of the Executive Committee. Some time will be devoted to discussing the date and location of the next meeting and the possibility of forming standing committees around the

five areas of concern. Undoubtedly the agenda for the next meeting will also be discussed.

The highlight of the busy convocation weekend will be the installation Mass which will be celebrated by Bishop Hogan at 4 P.M. at the Athletic Center on the campus of St. John Fisher College. Families of members of the council are invited to attend this solemn and historic liturgy and all the parishes of the diocese have been encouraged to send a delegation to lend their prayerful support to the efforts of our Diocesan Pastoral Council.

"We realize it's a busy schedule for the entire weekend," commented Father Peter Bayer, co-

chairman of the Convocation Steering Committee, "but there is much that needs to be done in our diocese and we're relying heavily on the Pastoral Council to play a very important part in setting future directions."

"Bishop Hogan has often remarked that the Pastoral Council is his fondest hope," added Father Douglas Hoffman, the other co-chairman, "with the prayerful assistance of all the parishes of our diocese, I'm sure this convocation will fulfill the Bishop's high expectations."

[Next week . . . the final step: Bishop Hogan's appointments to balance the Diocesan Pastoral Council]

The Church 1975



Fr. Andrew Greeley

At a time when so many sad events are happening in the Church, the departure of the John XXIII Community in Oklahoma City may seem to be a relatively minor incident. It was only 60 families, more or less. What difference does it make to a Church that has lost almost one-third of its college-educated members under 30 to lose three-score families?

I knew some of the people involved, as well as the priest who was their pastor. I have not seen them for many years, but they were strong, solid, committed Catholics four or five years ago—proud of their faith, proud of their commitment to combine the new with the old, innovation and loyalty. Something must have gone terribly wrong.

From a distance it is hard to tell, of course. Even up close one would have difficulty sorting out the various factors. Obviously the archbishop behaved with the kind of sensitivity that one would expect from a chancery office canon lawyer. He must have been sent to Oklahoma City with instructions to "clean up the mess" created by his charming, permissive, but not always well-organized predecessor, Victor Reed. It's never easy to be the man asked to put the lid on Pandora's Box after it has been opened.

The John XXIII Community, as far as I can tell from the accounts, was not forced out of the Church. It chose to leave. I don't care what the provocation was, I have to say that such a decision was most ill-advised and unfortunate. As one priest remarked to me, "Why leave? Stay and bother them!"

It would appear that the John XXIII Community followed many other disillusioned social-action groups down the primrose path of sensitivity-training. Once you get into the bag of spending all your energies discussing your relationships, the rest of the world pales into insignificance.

What really counts is what you think of me and what I think of you, and how open and loving and trusting is our confrontation with one another—and the more confrontations, the merrier. All this can be great fun, but you don't need a Church to do it.

I would very much like to be able to leave the Church. Locally and nationally it has no need of my services. It is dominated by authoritarians of the right and romantics of the left. Competence, rationality, civility, intellect, professional training—all things I have stood for all my life—are rejected in principle. There is really nothing left for me to do in the Church except to find a few people for whom I can say Mass occasionally. Such a Church is not exactly what I had in mind when I became a priest. So the question occurs to me sometimes, why be a Catholic?

And the answer comes back loud and clear every time: How could I be anything else? It's not much of a Church just now (though it is great comic theater), but it's the only Church I have. Being a Catholic is kind of like being Irish; it's a bad thing until you consider the alternatives.

Was it a problem of faith for the John XXIII Community? That is not a judgment I would make, especially about people who were once my friends. Perhaps their failure was one of understanding. Perhaps they no longer understand that faith is impossible if you try to do it alone. You need a much larger community to reinforce you, to challenge you, to comfort you, and even to make your life miserable on occasion.

I respect their freedom of conscience, as I respect everyone's. But I wish they hadn't left. As one German theologian remarked to me, "We tried leaving at the time of the Reformation. It didn't work."

CONTEST WINNERS

Two fourth graders at Annunciation School were winners in their grade division of a county-wide poster contest sponsored by the Rochester Safety Council. Michele Skotnicki was first and Donna Cowey, third, in the competition for posters pointing out fire hazards. The nine winners in grades 4, 5 and 6 were entertained at lunch with their teachers and families.

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