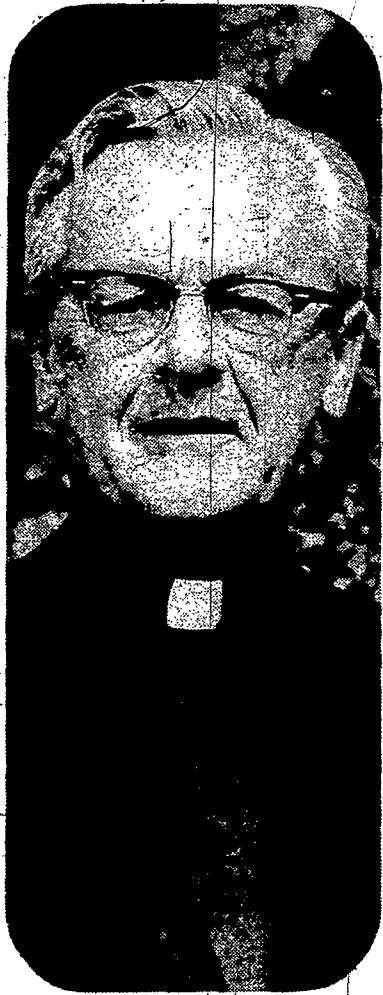


COURIER-JOURNAL

PARISH COUNCIL PROGRESS REPORT



Dear Co-workers in Christ:

Shared responsibility was one of the central themes of the Second Vatican Council. It reminded us that our common baptism brings to us a common call to build Christ's Kingdom. I am pleased to see the progress in our own Diocese in the past ten (10) years in sharing responsibility through parish councils in each parish.

This "report to the diocese" gives us some statistics to look at. The real picture, however, is much more. If we have, in some measure, brought our local parish communities closer to Christ and his ways, then there has been progress. If not, we must get started immediately.

I very much want to see prayer have an essential role in council meetings. We are not setting up boards of directors. Through invocation of the Spirit, thanksgiving for blessings received, petitions for aid in the midst of our confusion or uncertainty, the parish councils will become one more instrument for building a worshipping, teaching and serving parish.

May God bless all of you — my priests, sisters and laity — for the generosity you continue to show, that God's word be better known and his love more evident in our lives.

Your leader in Christ,

+ Most Reverend Joseph L. Hogan, D.D.
Bishop of Rochester

Dear Friends:

This "report to the diocese" of progress in the areas of parish councils gives us a glimpse of the development of a significant new factor in the life of the Church today.

There were a few hints in the Vatican documents as to the scope of the work of councils and much has been left to local initiative. In our own diocese, three stages can be detected:

First, a period of "spontaneous development," in which a number of parishes chose, on their own, to create forums where parish concerns and directions could be discussed between priests and parishioners;

Second, a period of organization development, initiated in a motion by the Priests' Council in 1970, calling for parish councils in each parish and establishing a Pastoral Formation Committee headed by Bishop McCafferty which prepared and published the first **Diocesan Guidelines for Parish Councils**:

Third, hopefully, we are entering a period of spiritual development, signaled by the Bishop's call for more prayer-centered meetings and embodied in a revised set of guidelines, **The Parish Ministry Handbook**, which invites parish councils to shift their attention away from organizational concerns to the threefold pastoral mission of the parishes — word, worship and service.

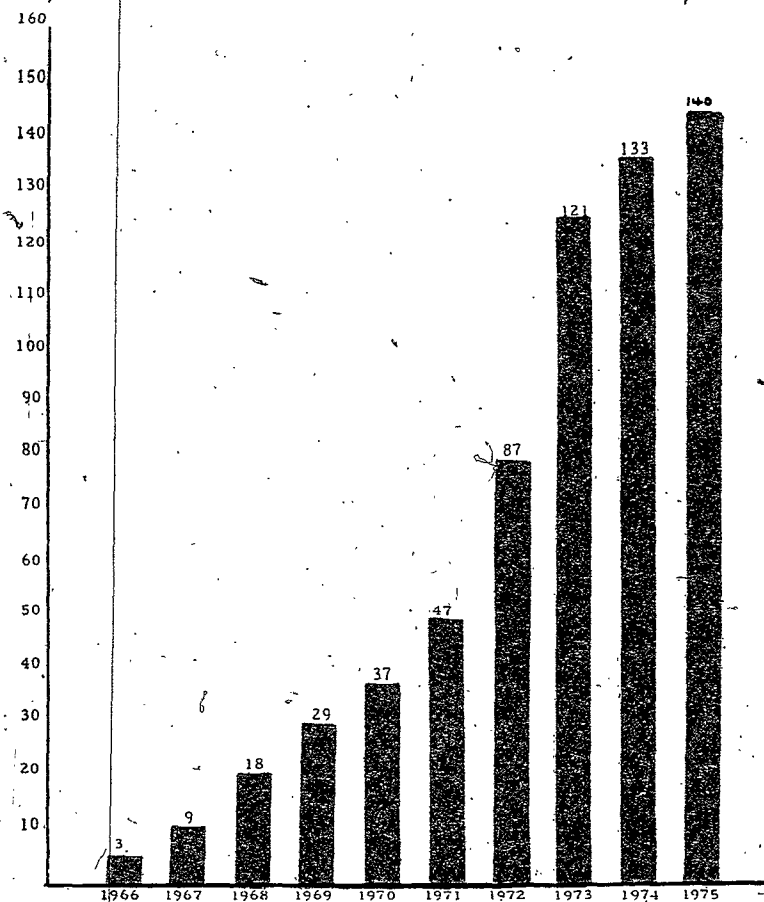
May we be creative in finding new ways to involve our councils actively in the service of the Kingdom.

In Christ,

Rev. Douglas C. Hoffman
Director of Pastoral Ministry



Growth of Parish Councils In the Diocese of Rochester



PULL OUT THIS SECTION

Statistics and graphs furnished by the Diocesan Department of Pastoral Ministry.