

Permanent Diaconate 'On Back Burner Too Long' Bishop Hogan Tells Council

By JOHN DASH

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan told the Priests Council last week that establishing a permanent diaconate program in the diocese has "been on the back burner for too long."

His remark came during an address in which he also informed the priests that the planning system in use in the diocese is under review and restructuring. He will issue a document of Pastoral Directives later this year, he said, to give "a pastoral dimension" to the process, "a real vision of what the Church is all about."

Bishop Hogan said, "The planning — obviously we're having some problems with it. And how to interpret the fact that you haven't given me any representation — I haven't analysed that... I presume that the Priests Council is in favor of having planning continue; but you're questioning the present Lopez approach and the timetable."

"It's a matter of personal concern, may I say."

The focus of the discontent with the process came up at a Sept. 25 training session headed by Dr. Felix Lopez, chief architect of the diocesan planning program, the bishop noted. He called that session "a real bad scene."

As a result of the session, Bishop Hogan said, Dr. Lopez was asked to return to Rochester and to prepare a new proposal.

The new proposal will reduce the time involvement and be much more viable on the parish level, when the program enters that stage, the bishop said.

A new ingredient, he added, will be the elimination of the highly technical language in a field that is "alien to most of us."

He said that the input of the diocesan consultative bodies, the experience he has garnered in the years he has been bishop and at regional meetings over the past few months, will enable him to prepare a document of pastoral directives.

Among the topics to be covered, he said, will be the permanent diaconate. He said the permanent diaconate "has been on the back burner for too long and he wants the program to get going right away."

During the discussion of the minutes and agenda, Father James Baker attempted to spark discussion of an editorial cartoon which appeared on page one of the Courier-Journal of Oct. 29.

Father Baker attempted to propose a resolution drafted by the priests of the Livingston-Steuken region: "Resolved, that Livingston-Steuken Region protests the tasteless and disrespectful cartoon on the front page of Oct. 29 issue of Courier-Journal."

Father Baker moved to include the issue in the agenda, but his motion died for lack of a second.

In his presidential remarks, Father James Marvin surfaced the issue of the Priests Council support for the Lopez system. He said that while the council indeed voted for the office of planning and the job description for that office, no council had ever approved the Lopez system and that "red flags" had been waved more

than a year ago when the system was brought to the council's attention.

Other council matters included a proposal from Father Kevin Murphy to study separating stipends for the sacraments from the priest's regular salary.

Father William Donnelly moved that the council members take the question to the blocs to see if there is a need for such a study.

One council member interjected that such a study was "almost an exercise in 'Are you in favor of Victory Gardens?'"

A close vote passed the motion, 8-7, with four abstentions.

Father Charles Bennett presented the priests with a working paper on disability coverage. The council will publish the working paper and discuss it in their blocs. Father Bennett received a round of applause following his presentation.

On behalf of his bloc, Father Ronald Stacy presented the council with a proposal to study the separation of the religious and civil roles of the priest in performing marriages. The council unanimously passed the motion of Msgr. Leslie Whalen to return the proposal to its authors for further research. A question also was raised over the authorship of the proposal when Father Peter Bayer, whose name was presented to the council as an author, denied having ever signed it.

Father John Coonan, in a related agenda item, asked for clarification of the duties of the Marriage Policy Committee.

Father Paul Murley presented the council with standards for religious care of those in nursing homes. The council decided to request the presence of Sister Judith Reger, a principal author of the standards, to clarify her work.

At the end of the day, the Priests Council formally adopted a number of by-laws to its constitution.



Pittsford Event

A Christmas Village, with Santa Claus holding court in the square, will be the background for a sidewalk cafe and booths featuring a wide variety of holiday gifts and decorations made by Rosarians of St. Louis Parish. Showing some of the things made for the sale are, from the left, Joanne Paradies, general chairman; Lucia Still (standing), Ellie Hockenbrock and Gertrude Rombaut. The fair will run from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 15, in the school hall, 54 S. Main, Pittsford.

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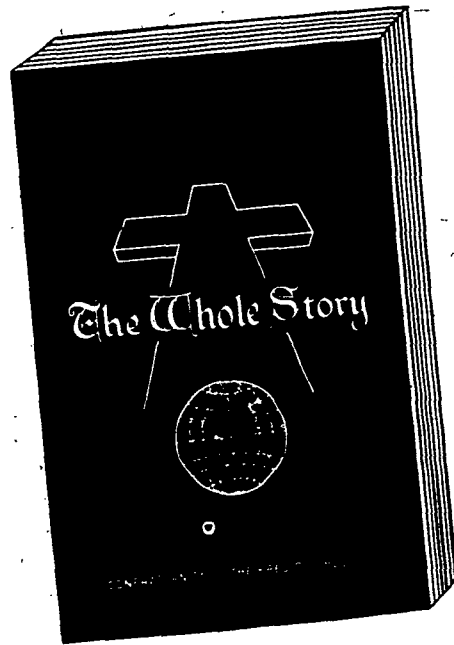
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