

2. Do not lose your parish moorings. You must be in deep and constant contact with the local churches as you grow. At the same time don't be overconcerned with the need for representation of every parish to the extent that you feel you can do nothing until that is achieved. Our parishes will begin to participate as they feel a mandate within them to do so and also as they are inspired by what regional cooperation actually accomplishes. Be zealous always in your service to build up the Church.

3. Be especially attentive to the needs of the poorer parishes in the region. This can be best summarized by a quote from Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians: "I do not mean to be easy upon others and hard upon you, but to equalize the burden and in the present situation to have your plenty make up for what they need, so that some day their plenty may make up for what you need, and so things may be made equal — as the Scripture says, 'The man who got much did not have too much, and the man who got little did not have too little.'" (2 Cor. 8:13-15) I shall expect definite plans outlining some forms of such cooperation in each region.

#### CONSULTATIVE BODIES

An exciting development of the Post-Conciliar Church has been the formation of the Priests' Council, the Sisters' Council, and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Ten years ago, these groups did not exist. Now they are becoming vital components of the diocese, contributing guidance and initiative to the pilgrim Church of Rochester. I am deeply convinced of the value of these groups for the Diocese.

1. They have manifested from the start, a deep concern for a genuine sharing of responsibility in the Church today. I would like to thank them for giving flesh and blood to the meaning of the term co-responsibility in the Church. They have been the living definition of that term for me.

2. I have been especially pleased that you have shown a real commitment to unity in the Church. We started out with only broad and general guidelines and with no experience to tell us how these groups could work together. Patiently for the past three years each of these groups has been working on a common approach to sharing in the one mission of Jesus Christ.

3. You have fostered some of the most exciting developments in our local Church, such as the Diocesan Pastoral Council itself, an approach to personnel problems, conciliation and arbitration procedures, regionalism and our planning and fund development efforts. Your initiative has been strong and sure.

4. You are, perhaps, the most vital link for me with the people of this Diocese. I see you regularly and I rely on you to spread and deepen my vision by speaking to the field and also by bringing to me the voices of the people. You are a living communications network for this diocese.

It is because you have become

such a vital part of the Church that I also ask you to reflect on the following points in which I think there could be improvement:

1. You should give more time to prayer in your meetings. It cannot be a secondary part of your agenda. I do not see the whole meeting being spent in prayer, but there should be time given to genuine shared prayer about your genuinely shared mission. It is not wasting time. Prayer will lead to a deeper sense of reflection on the faith dimension of your tasks as a group. Your faith should be evident for all in attendance at your meetings.

2. Be sure the vital issues facing the Church of the Diocese today occupy a prominent place on your agenda. They should not be suffocated by an endless list of smaller items.

3. While you are not implementers of programs, I need your zealous concerns for our shared mission of word, worship and service. The Church of Rochester needs your active pursuit of initiatives that will open to us all a path to the future. This initiative should be based on solid study and a deep sense of pastoral concern for people.

4. Each of you, and surely I would include myself, has made mistakes, but we cannot dwell on these to the point where anger or disappointment in regard to each other consumes our energy and prevents us from moving forward. (cf. Henri Nouwen p. 25 "From Resentment to Gratitude")

#### THE PASTORAL CENTER

These are the people with whom I associate on a daily basis. As my staff their weaknesses are mine and their gifts are mine, so it is hard for me to speak to both aspects of the Pastoral Center.

1. Let it never be said that administration is not a ministry. You are willing and generous in your service to the people of the Diocese of Rochester.

2. I commend your efforts to make prayer a real part of your work day. We must spend time listening to God to be perceptive in our work. I have also seen a real concern for each other in some very painful situations.

3. Your flexibility and patience in continuing to adapt to new groups in the Diocese and new forms of ministry have been outstanding in the past six years. It seems that there is no resting on any laurels in the present Church. You have learned this lesson well.

4. The record of service serves to confirm for me that you are concerned with parish and region. I urge you to keep that close to your hearts.

We changed the name of "Chancery" to "Pastoral Center" several years ago to emphasize a new orientation to service. In that spirit I ask you to reflect upon the following areas where growth and change may well be needed:

1. Resist the tendency of every administration to slip into splendid isolation from those whom you exist to serve. Without continual interaction with those you serve you can become servants of yourselves.

2. Many of the valuable insights into effective service patterns will surface among those closest to the problems. Guard against the danger of thinking you have all the wisdom. In this regard, listen to corrective voices and be open to opportunities for evaluation.

3. Your insight into the transition the Church is experiencing today and the demands being made as a result, and the many unanswered questions, should not lead you into a feverish pace that seeks to renew the Diocese overnight. Your creative spirit, and others as well, can be crushed by such a pace.

4. As an administration seeking an effective organizational style, you may be inclined toward competitiveness or empire-building or overlooking certain persons with gifts. This leads inevitably to division in the house. Be ready to recognize the unique gifts of each one — secretaries, maintenance personnel, department heads — who together can explore new ways to serve each other.

I am encouraging collaboration among the various ministries at all levels in the Diocese, and the Pastoral Center should be a model for that.

#### RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Your predecessors in the Religious Orders have been working here even before we were a Diocese. You are both large and small congregations of men and women. I have a particular message for you who do so much.

1. First, I want to express my gratitude to all of you who have served so generously and faithfully. In terms of numbers alone you are the largest group of professionally and spiritually prepared leaders serving in the Diocese. And from all of you, with your diversity of gifts and perspectives there is the same spirit of dedication to the needs of the Church, whether in our Catholic elementary or secondary schools, in our nursing homes, or the many other apostolates in which you serve. The depth of this commitment is evident, too, in the prayers and sacrifices of the Sisters in our Community infirmaries, who even in their sickness or retirement are making a significant contribution to the life of the Church.

2. You have been our constant inspiration in your spirit of dedication to areas of ministry at home and in fields far from home which would have been "mission impossible" without you. Likewise, I admire greatly the serious efforts you make with regularity to renew your spirit, to reexamine your life style, and to explore new forms of service to the Church. What you are learning and doing is a source of inspiration and insight for the whole Diocese.