

3. Particularly am I in grateful respect of your dedication to your own continuing education as workers in the pastoral ministry of the Church. We can all learn from your high regard for personal and intellectual development as men and women in ministry.

4. I am pleased to see efforts being made to cooperate across congregational lines. This is very encouraging. These opportunities for sharing of gifts and insights cannot but enrich the whole Diocese.

5. I am very aware, too, of the blessings that our contemplative Communities have brought to the Diocese. Their dedicated daily witness to the value of silence, prayer and mortification offer a challenge and an inspiration to all of us. I am grateful, too, for their hospitality which has welcomed each year priests, Sisters and laity to enjoy a "desert experience" removed from the confusion and activity that can suffocate the spirit.

There are, nonetheless, areas of growth which stand before you to be explored, and tendencies in your work which can hinder your effectiveness. I ask you to consider the following:

1. As dedicated servants of the Church, continue to be open to the new challenges and emerging ministries that come before you in this time of our history. A careful search of your own congregational tradition will reveal to you that your founders were flexible and generous in responding to the needs of their day.

2. Let us never forget that the Spirit speaks to us through the voices of those we serve. Attentive listening to their needs can keep us from promoting our own self-interests.

#### DIOCESAN SEMINARIES

The Diocese is blessed to have had seminaries of its own to provide the necessary steps to form young men to serve in the sacramental priesthood. The role of the seminary today in the Church is vital, and so I would like to direct the following thoughts to you:

1. Over the years you have more than justified the dreams of those who have made St. Bernard's Seminary, St. Andrew's Seminary, and Becket Hall such a splendid reality. The number of priests who have served in our Diocese, in Dioceses throughout the country and beyond bears witness to this. More important than numbers you have contributed a unified spirit among the priests and the strength of friendship and loyalty. You have provided intellectual and spiritual formation for several generations. For all this I am grateful.

2. I want to commend you today for your constant openness to self-examination and objective evaluation by accreditation boards; for the imagination you are showing in developing new spiritual and professional formation programs, such as the "desert experience" and others; for the courage to struggle with the

need to provide programs oriented to the needs of the contemporary Church in the area of pastoral ministry, such as field education and Clinical Pastoral Education, and for the academic programs developed to provide a breadth of learning for service to contemporary needs.

The work is by no means done. There are areas still in need of growth, and among them I would like you to reflect on these two:

1. I want you to continue to adapt your style to become visibly a focal point in the Diocese for the urgently needed formation of laity, religious and priests and seminarians in pastoral ministry. It is a struggle the Diocese faces at all levels and I look to you to be a model.

2. I encourage you to listen attentively to the pastoral needs emerging in the "vineyard," to investigate their implications, and to make the adjustments in your ministry that these require.

### IV. SPECIAL INITIATIVES

I wish to close this letter to the leaders of the Church of Rochester with some very specific tasks that I would like to see accomplished in the next few years. I cannot simply offer a "fiat" because I need your help and your wisdom to accomplish these tasks. I am speaking to you as the one entrusted with the care of the Church of Rochester and I am asking that you join with me in addressing these specific issues.

1. I wish to have the permanent diaconate operating within this Diocese in two years. I regard this as a pastoral necessity. There is a special need for this new form of ministry and leadership in our **urban ministry** where minorities urgently need access to the ordained leadership of the Church of Rochester. They have many gifts to offer us and I think the diaconate is the best path to receive these gifts. I also think that this form of ministry is needed in the "**one priest**" rural areas of our Diocese which often have sprawling parishes. There are, also, **particular ministries** which may be able to benefit from the diaconate — such as hospital ministry, prison ministry and youth ministry. The role of the diaconate must be carefully evaluated and I would ask that St. Bernard's take a leadership role in training the deacons. I will direct my staff to begin work on this immediately, but I will also rely on the acceptance and support which can only come from the Church-at-large.

2. I am deeply concerned about the continuing education of our leadership. I am asking that an operating sabbatical program for priests be established immediately and that it be funded adequately for the first year of operation — 1976-1977. I am asking that the Personnel Board

take charge of this and do so with the advice of the Seminary on the most effective programs in existence. I also urge priests to begin discussing the best use of these sabbaticals and ways of helping each other to make them possible. I am most concerned that those who are presently **pastors of parishes** be given the first opportunity to make use of this program.

Secondly, I want the Seminary to become the center of continuing theological education for the full-time staffs of parishes. They have the gift for an in-depth approach to studies, and also a pastoral bent. We must build on those gifts and establish the necessary programs which will keep our religious education co-ordinators, our pastoral assistants, our priests and the leaders of the schools updated on the meaning of Church and the techniques of mission.

3. I am concerned that we work closely with the renewal groups of the Diocese. I have indicated that I believe that they have brought invaluable strength to the leadership of this Diocese on every level. While I appreciate the work of all, I shall see that the Diocese assign a full-time priest leader to the Marriage Encounter Movement as of July 1, 1976. I will continue to explore ways of remaining close to the Cursillo, the charismatic movement and the Teen Seminar Program.

4. I am directing that my Administrative Assistant, in consultation with appropriate members of the Pastoral Center Staff, work cooperatively with regional leadership to design an approach to decentralization of the Pastoral Center. I believe in a high degree of professionalism on my staff and there will always be need for personnel working on the diocesan level at the Pastoral Center. But, to the extent that it is possible, I want my staff to be present in the regions as well. Much cooperation and patience will be needed by all to work this out. The call of the Diocesan Pastoral Council for regional centers of ministry deserves careful attention in this process.

5. I want to have our Church presence in the center of the City of Rochester firmly grounded to retain a high level of service as Church to all neighborhoods there. Notice I put the emphasis on service as Church. I am not sure that we can retain all the buildings that we presently occupy. But I do want the Gospel preached, the poor helped, and the worshipping community present in all parts of the City. I want the Urban Vicar to explicitly designate areas of the city as mission territory, and I ask that a solid plan of financing the mission of the Church in those areas be designed. I also expect that the pattern of zeal, innovation and joyful service that we have come to expect in the missions will be present in those areas.

6. I intend to continue to introduce planning in all areas of diocesan work. I am beginning to introduce it to the Pastoral Center staff. It is needed lest we stumble over each other in our present style of