

COURIER-JOURNAL

20 Pages

Wednesday, February 4, 1976

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

20 Cents



New Leader

Photo by Susan McKinney

Father Jerome R. Robinson, OP, right, was installed as executive director of Diocesan Black Ministries Sunday at Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester. From left are Msgr. George Cocuzzi, vicar for urban ministry, and Bishop Joseph L. Hogan who installed Father Robinson.

DPC Clears Up Snags, Readies Plans for Action

By MARTIN TOOMBS

The most constructive meeting in the short life of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) may have been the special meeting last Saturday at the Sheraton Inn in Canandaigua. Procedural questions that plagued the earlier assemblies were the focus of discussion and action. The changes made could be a major contribution to the future working of the council.

Proposals establishing definite procedures for the council were presented by the DPC Task Force on Organization, formed at the December meeting. The proposals dealt with roles of the members from the regions, procedures for the flow of proposals and their approval and the disposition of the tentative goals.

The relationship of the liaison member to the other representatives from the regions had caused confusion over duties. The proposal

delivered by Marilyn Muench called for abolition of the separate roles, and for a division of liaison responsibilities in each region among the three representatives. A further statement, requiring all representatives to contact the parish councils they were assigned during September or October raised questions on whether it would be possible. Approved was the requirement that contact be made, if not by appearing at a parish

Continued on Page 2.

SALT Priests Support Bishop in Rectory Case

At the regular monthly meeting of the priests involved in the diocesan intern program last Wednesday (Jan. 28), those in attendance formally adopted a letter of support sent to Bishop Joseph L. Hogan in the controversy over his suspension of priest-intern Father James Callan.

The 14 priests in attendance sent the letter to Bishop Hogan "to convey to you our support of your very painful decision to suspend Rev. James Callan, Priest-Intern."

In addition to voicing support for the Bishop, the intern supervisor criticized Father Callan for ignoring the wishes of his "brother priests."

Father Callan was suspended from performing his priestly ministry in this diocese after he refused to live in the rectory at St. Ambrose Church, following his transfer from St. Peter and Paul in Elmira, a move protested by some groups in Elmira.

The letter was signed by Father Elmer J. McDonald, interim director of the Diocesan Intern Program and pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Greece. (Father Edward E. Steinkirchner, director of the intern program was in Dallas, Tex., attending an intern supervisory meeting). The letter was sent also in the names of Fathers Charles Boyle, Michael Conboy, Raymond Heisel,

Michael Hogan, James Marvin, Emmett Murphy, John Norris, John Philipps, Thomas Reddington, Conrad Sundholm, Raymond Wahl and George Wood.

The letter described the formulation of diocesan personnel policies, the necessity of the intern program and the reasons for the signers' own involvement in the program. The letter to Bishop Hogan closes by noting, "By his act of disobedience not only has Rev. James Callan chosen to defy you, but also to ignore the wishes of his brother priests."

The letter:

Dear Bishop Hogan,

At the monthly meeting of the Diocesan Intern pastors, held Wednesday, 28 January, 1976 at Holy Name of Jesus rectory — attended by Rev. Charles Boyle, Rev. Michael Conboy, Rev. Raymond Heisel, Rev. Michael Hogan, Rev. James Marvin, Rev. Elmer McDonald, Rev. Emmett Murphy, Rev. John Norris, Rev. John Philipps, Rev. Thomas Reddington, Rev. Conrad Sundholm, Rev. Raymond Wahl and Rev. George Wood — the group asked me, acting as interim director of the Diocesan Intern program, to convey to you our support of your very painful decision to suspend Rev. James Callan, Priest-Intern. A great deal of time (from April

1971 until November 1971) was spent by the priests of the Diocese and our Priest Council regarding Personnel Policies. In the Preamble of that Personnel Policies document it was noted and accepted by the priests of the diocese "because he shares his priesthood and pastoral responsibility with the bishop and the entire presbyterium of his diocese, the priest cannot exercise his ministry in isolation, but only in the closest collaboration with his bishop and his fellow priests, as well as with the people to whom his ministry is directed."

That document also notes "Since

Continued on Page 2

The Cruc

* The Personnel Policies Document of the Rochester diocese.

* The Diocesan Intern Program.

According to diocesan officials these constitute the crux of the issue of the controversy over the suspension of Father James Callan from his priestly ministry in this diocese as of Jan. 22.

Not the protests over his recent transfer from St. Peter and Paul in Elmira.

Not Father Callan's work in Elmira Eastside Ministry, which diocesan officials commend.

Not Father Callan's public criticism of "luxurious" rectory living.

But, simply, certain rules governing the life-style of all diocesan priests and which anyone coming into the priesthood understands. These rules are stated in the diocesan Personnel Policies Document.

The document came into effect on Aug. 10, 1971. Before it was agreed upon by the priests of the diocese, it had been first presented to the Priests Council on April 20, 1971.

The document was discussed by the council and given to an ad hoc committee for revision. It was presented again to the Priests Council on June 8, 1971 and sent back to committee for further revision. After two more committee meetings, committee members met again with the president and vice president of the Priests Council to continue revising the original document in light of the recommendations of various priests blocks and council members.

On Aug. 3, the Priests Council approved the document, paragraph by paragraph, and sent it to all priests for voting at regional meetings. It was approved.

Because of the collegial nature of the ratification of the document, many see it as a "priests' agreement." That although the Bishop approved it, the document is basically of priests, by priests and for priests. Thus, Father Callan's refusal to abide by it is seen as a rejection of his fellow priests as well as defiance of his bishop.

What does the document say? Its preamble states:

The priest is thus called to a position of personal responsibility in the exercise of his ministry, and

he therefore needs the freedom to act responsibly and creatively within that ministry. At the same time, because he shares his priesthood and pastoral responsibility with the bishop and the entire presbyterium of his diocese, he cannot exercise his ministry in isolation, but only in the closest collaboration with his bishop and his fellow priests, as well as with the people to whom his ministry is directed.

The document, states however, that priests may live outside the rectory if "a) The agreement of all the priests concerned should be given to the arrangement; b) The approval of the Personnel Board should be given, and, in difficult cases, its mediation sought; c) The arrangement should be accepted by the people being ministered to."

Father Callan fulfilled none of these requirements in deciding to reject rectory living.

Furthermore, diocesan officials point out, regulations governing priest-interns are even more restrictive, not permitting extra-rectory living. A priest is considered an intern for three years following his ordination.

Thus, in the eyes of diocesan

Continued on Page 2

The Background

Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey is the executive secretary of the diocesan personnel committee. In this role, he has been concerned with the Father James B. Callan case since it began surfacing a year and a half ago.

Bishop Hickey has provided the Courier-Journal with the following step-by-step description of the progressively controversial case until it reached its climax with the priest-intern's suspension on Jan. 22 and the subsequent stories in the secular media.

This description also constitutes the gist of a letter from Bishop Hickey to St. Ambrose parishioners read at Masses last Sunday at the church.

At the completion of his deacon internship in October 1974, Father Callan was assigned to Father Edward Foy's St. Peter and Paul parish in Elmira. Almost from the beginning, the supervisor-intern relationship failed.

It became incumbent upon the Bishop, therefore, to find another trained supervisor so that Father Callan would not be deprived of a worthwhile internship.

(Most pastors are not in the

intern program, only those who need or want interns and who successfully complete the Supervisor and Leadership Training program.)

Although there were other such supervisory priests in the Elmira area they already had interns. Thus assignment had to be elsewhere.

Meetings were held with Father Callan to help determine an appropriate assignment. One was suggested but was not acceptable to Father Callan. The Bishop did not insist on the assignment.

A review of alternatives began and the most suitable parish was St. Ambrose in Rochester where the pastor had training and is a supervisor of some skill, Father James Marvin, also president of the diocesan Priests Council, was willing to accept Father Callan.

The two met and came to mutual agreement on every subject except rectory living. Granting the privilege to live outside the rectory is not Father Marvin's prerogative. Bishop Hogan made it clear that rectory living for interns is a must and is non-negotiable. Father Callan was formally assigned to St. Ambrose.

The priest-intern was asked to

Continued on Page 2