

Priests Council Hears Personnel Update

By JOHN DASH

The final session of the 1975-76 Priests' Council met last week to hear a number of reports and to elect priests to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Those elected to two-year terms to the DPC are Fathers Richard O'Connell, pastor of St. Mary's in Dansville and Joseph Jankowiak of St. Bernard's Seminary. Elected to a one-year term is Father John Quinn, chaplain at the State University of Arts and Sciences at Brockport.

The council received information on the workings of the permanent diaconate task force; diocesan finances; an urban school ministry; the workings of the diocesan personnel board; the work of the council's own social action committee; and a proposal from the Joint Executive Committee of the three consultative bodies to establish five working committees composed of members of each body.

An item not considered because procedural difficulties prevented its placement on the agenda was a request from the Northwest Region for clarification on monies spent on the Eucharistic Congress.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan commented that he is "very impressed" with the work of the task force on the permanent diaconate.

He also said that he had approved a hike in the car allowance for priests working in parishes from \$900 to \$1,200 a year.

The bishop cautioned against "optimism over the surplus" reported in last month's council session, in the diocesan budget. The surplus figures, he said, were "very optimistic" and "until it becomes a reality we cannot count on it."

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, chairman of the diocesan personnel board, updated a report on his group and on the shortage of priests in the diocese.

Within the next few weeks, he said, the diocese will be eight priests short for parochial duties. This may necessitate staff cutbacks, he hinted.

On the co-pastorate, the bishop gave a history of establishing the concept in parishes, emphasizing that the parish's acceptance of the concept is a key factor, and the compatibility of the co-pastors another.

With a candor well-known to the council, Bishop Hickey spoke of the

failures and shortcomings of his office, to meet all the personnel needs in the diocese.

Father Kevin Murphy, at this point, asked whether or not the board was "still filling slots" rather than planning for diocesan needs—a question which was then directed to Father Peter Bayer, head of the diocesan planning office.

Father Bayer commented that in personnel placement "the ministerial needs of the people are the real guts of the matter."

On sabbaticals, Bishop Hickey said that several priests will be able to attend special courses at Dunwoodie in the Fall. Dunwoodie is a seminary down state.

Finances for the project have been established, he said. "The problem will be replacements." Among the courses open will be to contact retired priests, religious orders, and neighboring priests.

On retirements, Bishop Hickey noted that priests generally want to make their own arrangements. His office is ready, he said, to help them make arrangements for continuing ministry.

Father Ronald Stacy, spokesman for the council's social action committee noted that a statewide

organization called NETWORK, will shortly begin organizing in the diocese. The organization will encourage priests to make twice yearly visits to local state legislators to discuss issues of importance to Catholics in their districts.

Summer projects for his group, he said, include composing a paper on "Priestly Life Styles in the Diocese" and working on ways priests might provide help meeting housing needs.

Father Marvin then presented the council with seven recommendations from the Joint Executive Committee which would mean a major cooperative effort on the part of the consultative bodies in the diocese.

These recommendations: There should be five standing committees that are supported by representatives from each consultative body.

That one to three representatives from the Priests' and Sisters' Councils be assigned to the five standing committees of the DPC. The one to three are to be appointed on the basis of expertise and interest.

That recommendations of the standing committees will go to all three consultative bodies when requested.

That members from the Priests' and Sisters' Councils are accountable for two-way communications with the respective parent body.

That the agenda of the standing committees will be determined by the DPC Process.

That the present Joint Executive Committee purposes are accepted with the provision that the JEC continue to clarify its communication methods and procedures.

That the JEC would evaluate the results of this joint structuring of committees in one year's time.

He said that should such a restructuring occur accountability will be maintained by the respective bodies, that the uniqueness of each body will be maintained, and that the work which has been going on to date will not be destroyed.

The committees will be modeled after the DPC's committees on Worship and Life, Teaching Mission, Pastoral Ministry, Social Mission and Supportive Services.

It is expected that the proposals will be the source of debate at the next session of the Priests' Council in September.



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