

Tribunal

The Diocesan Tribunal offers hope — "more hope than ever before for people who thought there was none," according to Father Robert O'Neill, officialis.

He was talking about people whose marriages are dissolved in civil court.

Civil divorce itself carries no ecclesiastical penalty; it is remarriage without annulment by the Church court that calls down excommunication.

In the days when applications for annulment would a circuitous route to the Roman Rota, marriage was considered solely as a contract witnessed by the Church "by which is given and received a right to acts suitable to the generation of children," Father O'Neill said. Vatican II shifted the emphasis to

"an intimate partnership of life and love" (Quadium et Spes, paragraph 48).

In a precedent-setting decision in 1969, the Rota granted an annulment on the grounds of "an inability to establish a community of their whole lives."

It is not so much this change as a simplification of procedures that has enabled the diocesan court to dispose of very many more cases than formerly were handled here, Father O'Neill said. The year's total probably will be about 420 cases, and one third of them will be abandoned for lack of evidence, he predicted, adding, "We never make a negative decision."

Most of the cases brought before the Tribunal can be settled there; only the most difficult are taken to

Rome in 1970, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops dispensed diocesan tribunals from the requirement of pursuing an appeal in a higher court. The canon law procedure is set in motion by application of the parish priest. Decisions most frequently are made on psychological grounds.

"We are not terribly liberal," Father O'Neill said, "if anything, we are rather conservative in our evaluation of what marriage is. We feel it takes two people properly prepared and living up to this lofty ideal."

There are three priests on the Tribunal, but one of them, Father Donald Curtiss, is away, studying canon law. Father Richard Brickler is vice officialis. Sister Anne Helene Brien, SSJ, joined the staff last November. She helps interview the petitioners and their relatives and friends in the search for evidence.

There are two secretaries, one of them part-time. A professional psychologist gives his assistance. Several seminarians have helped in

their diocesan years. Several priests of the Pastoral Office have served as "defender of the bond." The chancellor comes into this naturally, "being by definition promoter of justice." Not all business concerns marriage; other matters of canon law arise, including the "due process" which starts in a conciliation commission and may go as far as the tribunal.

The department is not far from breaking even because, in the accounting system, there is no charge for accommodations or utilities. This year, \$46,000 was budgeted, largely for salaries, but income from fees was \$36,000. A fee of \$200 is charged to cover expenses; no one is turned away for inability to pay.

Given more money, Father O'Neill would hire a psychologist or psychiatrist, he said, reporting, on the side, that the Brooklyn Diocese pays such a professional \$250 per day. More secretarial help would enable him to get everything on



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tape, and typed out, instead of summarized in hand-written reports.

"It would be better," Father O'Neill concluded, "but not more just."

Urban Ministry

The Vicariate for Urban Ministry is a unique diocesan organization in that it is really not a department. Msgr. George A. Cocuzzi is the vicar and he explains:

"The vicar for urban ministry functions as a vicar general, that is, in the place of the bishop, except that he is restricted by territory or by the type of ministry for which he is responsible. In my case, I was commissioned to act for the bishop and in his name in the territory of the central city of Rochester. This territory has been defined as made up of the 28 parishes completely in the city, excluding those partially in the city and partially in a suburb."

Msgr. Cocuzzi as the vicar is in fact an arm or extension of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and "works in concert with the bishop and the concepts the bishop has laid down." Msgr. Cocuzzi explains further that "matters (urban) that normally would be reported by parishes and departments to the bishop now come to me."

The vicariate came into being in June 1975 "because the diocese felt that existing difficulties (the collapse of the CICP school system) and the nature of the development of the city — where problems somehow seem to be magnified and always increasing — needed a focusing of diocesan attention," Msgr. Cocuzzi explained.

"I can act as a kind of catalyst in establishing cooperative efforts for the things we want to see established," said Msgr. Cocuzzi, who lives and works out of St. Francis Xavier parish on Bay Street. He also said that the vicariate someday may be extended to include other urban centers throughout the diocese.

In addition to efforts to set up some sort of urban school system, Msgr. Cocuzzi has been working with Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey on personnel problems in the central city, meets weekly with diocesan financial officials on problems of inner city parishes, and has been working with diocesan planners to survey buildings owned by the diocese to ascertain if there is any excess diocesan property not being used or not being used well.

"Maintaining such buildings creates a financial problem," he noted. Perhaps the money would be better spent in other urban ministry services, he said.

In addition, Msgr. Cocuzzi meets with any diocesan departments having an impact on urban life, such as Black Ministry, Spanish Apostolate, Human Development. He also works with Sister Barbara Fox, the advocate for minorities in the diocesan schools system.

"Such matters come to my attention insofar as they would

otherwise go the bishop," Msgr. Cocuzzi explained.

One of the sticky and complicated problems facing the vicar has to do with the common interests of city parishes, among themselves as against the diocesan concept of regionalism wherein city and suburban parishes are grouped.

"The vicariate supports regionalism," Msgr. Cocuzzi said. "And yet city parishes have a great deal in common and much more to do with each other than they do with suburban parishes in the same region. For instance, St. Michael's and St. Bridget's can do more cooperatively on a day-to-day basis than they can do with outer parishes. This is not at variance with regionalism but it helps for better cooperation for ministry in the area."

After the CICP school system folded, Msgr. Cocuzzi said of inner city school problems, "We began to realize that other schools were in the same kind of trouble. I don't think schools can survive on an individual basis — there must be some kind of system. And, although I stress, there are no prior conclusions, this system may not be specifically urban — it may include schools on the edge of the city. There must be a unified effort to save the Catholic school effort in the city otherwise it will not survive."

Speaking of progress to date, Msgr. Cocuzzi said that he has "not been able to maintain the kind of

commitment and direct contact with parishes in the outer rim of the city that I would have liked." But in this regard he is more hopeful now because of two factors — Human Development has set up a specific urban position; and Sister Mary Wintish has joined the vicariate. "I'll be able to get out into the field more," Msgr. Cocuzzi summed up.

He does not have a department budget as such but is able to draw from the \$200,000 the diocese has been setting aside annually for urban services. At first this amount was meant for schools alone but in recent years has been used in other areas as well.

"While I do not have a specific budget," Msgr. Cocuzzi said, "I am able to allocate some of these subsidies to parishes or specific ministries."

As example, he pointed out Corpus Christi school, which absorbed some 100 pupils from the CICP. "We were able to help the parish financially to keep them going."

Though he was the entire staff for a long time, he has recently added a secretary, Sister Joan Maier ("she is more than a secretary, somewhat like an administrative assistant") and Sister Wintish, who has returned from urbanology studies in St. Louis.

As for cooperation from departments, "they have been very responsive."

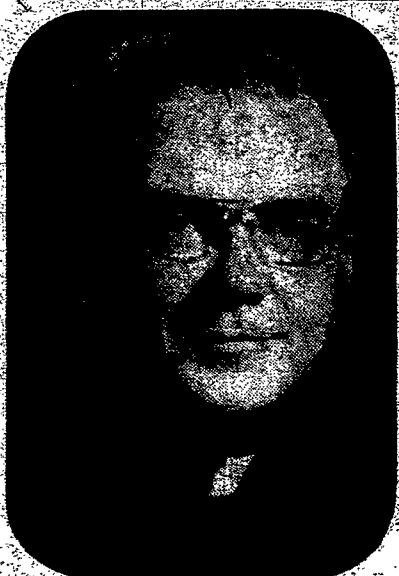


MSGR. COCUZZI

Msgr. Cocuzzi, in evaluating how his office reaches the grass roots, feels "that the Church has many faces and I think the most immediate is in the parishes and the neighborhoods. The urban Church has its own particular characteristics — a kind of conglomerate of parishes and specialized ministries out of those parishes."

Toward presenting the best possible Church "face" to central city people, Msgr. Cocuzzi feels his vicariate is important because "it's a personal thing. I am the bishop's personal representative, as a consequence they can engage the episcopal attention more readily than they might otherwise."

Vocations



FATHER CONNOR

Father Gerald Connor would like more priests to single out young men in the parishes with the words: "Hey, I'd like to work with you. Did you ever think of becoming a priest?"

If the priest can begin relating with his parishioners in that fashion, never changing his attitude if the answer is negative, the diocese might see a greater increase in religious vocations, he feels.

Father Connor has, for the past several years, been director of vocations for the diocese. At one time there was a dramatic decrease in the numbers of young men entering the seminaries and young women entering the convents, but recent years have seen a gradual reversal of that trend.

In his office at Becket Hall, Father Connor outlined the basic

duties of his many-faceted work. He expects he spends about 60 percent of his time in individual counselling, advising those thinking of entering religious life and aiding those already on the road to the priesthood or sisterhood with the crises which arise in their pursuit of their goals. (He also is spiritual director at Becket.)

He does "some talking to groups" and organizes special promotional events and materials for vocations.

Among the programs under his aegis are a pre-seminary retreat, held annually at Becket, a Stella Maris Weekend, in which youngsters are able to mix with and speak with seminarians, and the diocese's Prayer Campaign for Vocations.

He has had designed and distributed promotional materials and is presently trying to find funding for a series of television advertisements on vocations.

He furthermore is trying to establish stronger links between his

office and the diocesan high schools.

But nevertheless, "I can't do step one." He explains that the initial contact with young men and women must come from the pastoral teams in the parishes.

He and his "almost full-time secretary" are the sole staff of his office which was funded last year for \$14,852, most of which is expended in salaries for himself and his secretary. He draws half of his salary from Becket and half from his office.

He notes, as an aside that at meetings he attends with other vocation directors he hears great plans for promotional work, but remains unconvinced of the results of those plans. He cites an instance of a diocese completely revamping its vocations office, installing expensive equipment and employing a large staff, which received less applicants than Rochester seminaries, though it is twice as large.

He would like to see, however, religious sisters staff the local office. He would like to see separation of the duties of the head of the office from the spiritual directorate of Becket and more money.

Father Connor himself raises the question of clerical celibacy as a deterrent to promoting vocations.

"We don't know the value of celibacy except in practical terms. With the present sex mores in this country the witness value of celibacy has increased 1000 percent."

He notes that anywhere he goes more than 75 per cent of the time the subject of celibacy comes up in conversation with laymen. "It's one of the highest value systems we have," he says.

CARL ARENA'S
TOP OF THE PLAZA

Teen Seminar

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According to Father, Teen Seminar began when the traditional Baltimore Catechism era of religious education was coming to an end and also when the Sodality "Gave its last breath."

Financially, it is the parents "dipping into their pockets" which is the mainstay of the department. Father's salary as well as a supplement of \$20 per child per

program is taken care of by the Diocese.

Father considers educational films an important asset to all program phases. There are 11 films which he sees as tremendously beneficial but with the cost of films running between \$300 and \$400 each this could mean an expense of \$4,000.

"Right now," he said, "we're material poor" so he indicated if

there were extra monies to be had they would be earmarked for visual aids.

There are 70 parishes involved with the Teen Seminar Program and through the efforts of Father Hammond, staff, board of directors, parish reality leaders, and all those committed to youth, a Christian education as well as a Christian living experience is being brought to young people and their families.