

Bishop Discusses 'Call to Action' at Council

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan fielded some pointed questions with candid answers at last week's Priests' Council meeting — questions dealing with the recent "Call to Action" conference in Detroit.

He had commented earlier that he found the assembly, which had devised a number of controversial recommendations for action by the nation's bishops to be a "cross-section of God's people" that it was "prayerful" and that in its deliberations there was evidence of "excellent charity."

He said he left the conference convinced that "the Church in America is very much alive."

Father Louis Hohman asked the bishop if he wanted a diocesan vote on the recommendations forthcoming from the conference to which the bishop replied that he wanted "reflection on the documents, definitely through the consultative bodies" and through the grass roots as well.

Father Conrad Sundholm then indicated his bloc's concern that while the matter under consideration at the conference was to have flowed from wide spread discussion, the diocese had not participated as extensively as had been hoped. He said the Rochester delegation was not widely representative of diocesan concerns. He cited a case in point that a prominent member of the Rochester Right to Life group felt her group's concerns were not represented at the conference. "She felt that the delegates were primarily a Human Development group," he said. "I too have difficulty with the representation," he noted. He said further that the issue would be brought up at the next conference for his region.

The bishop admitted negligence in promoting material in preparation for the conference. He said a "matter of time" —

shortage of time" precluded selecting the delegation from the diocesan consultative bodies. He said Father Charles Mulligan, head of OHD, had presented him with a list of names for delegates and observers at Detroit, "and I judged the delegates worthy."

Father Sundholm objected that the conference was an attempt at "town hall theology. It seems to me that we're into a whole different approach to theology."

The bishop replied that final decisions on the Detroit recommendations are up to the bishops. "Detroit gave us an idea of what is on peoples' minds."

Father Hohman injected that Detroit had not decided theological issues.

Bishop Hogan agreed. Citing the recommendation of the ordination of women to the priesthood "and the episcopacy, that's what gets to me," he joked.

He said that recommendation merely encouraged the bishops to study the question. The recommendation was as wide as possible, he said.

Father Robert Kreckl told the council that "We, as priests, should accept the responsibility" for neglecting to prepare for the Detroit conference and for the lack of response to the program.

Father James Marvin, president of the council agreed. "We failed to respond to the invitation."

"Then let's not tell people the delegates were representative," Father Sundholm rejoined.

To which Father Ronald Stacy objected that the consultative bodies did have input "through their social action committees."

In other council matters, the

priests voted to eliminate the "church usage fee," a fee occasionally charged for special ceremonies such as weddings, if the parties using the church are parishioners.

Vocations Statistics Reflect Urgent Need for Action

As of Tuesday, Nov. 2, the average age of priests in the Diocese of Rochester was 48.3 years.

Priests between the ages of 60 and 69 account for 25 percent of all active priests in the diocese.

The average age for pastors and co-pastors is 55 years. The average associate pastor is 38 years old. Priests in other duties average out to 44 years old.

Seventy-one percent of the diocesan priests have come from Rochester and Monroe County; 28 percent from other counties. Auburn boasts 8.3 percent of the diocesan priests are native sons. The Priests Council sat in what seemed to be a stunned silence as Bishop Dennis W. Hickey ticked off the above numbers last week.

The Bishop pleaded with them to address themselves to the urgent, short range need for diocesan vocations to which his statistics point.

Earlier, the priests had voiced concern over the lack of vocations in the diocese, citing the ordination of women, the ordination of married men, and the relaxation of the celibacy discipline, as possible solutions to the problem.

"Those are long range goals," the bishop told the council. "Here's the short range facts."

The bishop's remarks came at the end of a presentation by Father Gerald Connor, vocations director. That presentation had both good news and bad.

Father Connor's statistics on men entering the seminary indicate a gradual upswing from the downswing of recent years.

Yet, he told the priests that the diocesan vocations office, as presently structured "with a half time priest and three quarters of a secretary," is inadequate to fulfill the duties envisioned for it by the latest official documents.

And again, while his office seems to have a better statistical track record than those, more fully staffed and budgeted, of neighboring dioceses, "There is one thing I cannot do, I cannot do step one in moving someone to a religious vocation."

He encouraged the priests to make the initial one-to-one contact in attracting vocations.

He sees his office as a "support system for people in the field."

College Board Adds Argento

Francis C. Argento of Pittsford has been elected to the executive committee of the board of trustees of Rochester Area Colleges, Inc.

A trustee of St. John Fisher College, Argento will serve on the nine-member committee with eight area college presidents. He is president of Specialized Warehouse Corporation, a Rochester-based public warehousing organization.

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The priests also were presented a report on a convocation of church personnel administrators at Notre Dame University and were told of

final plans for the next Priests Council meeting. That meeting will be held at St. Michael's on Hemlock Lake and will extend for two days. — Dash

to promote vocations, and to foster the environment for vocations."

He sees the work of the "total Christian community" as necessary in the process of drawing out vocations.

Father admits a sense of defeat with his office. "I have decided to live with the constraints (budget and personnel) as they exist and let it go at that."

Yet, "Someone has to make the decision to change the vocations

situation and we have to change the way the vocations office is operating," he said.

"There are whole areas this office doesn't even pretend to touch," he told the council. "In no way do we have a vocations office in as basic a sense as outlined "in the priestly formation directives from both Rome and the U.S. bishops.

The entire situation will be a major concern of the priests at their December meeting. — DASH

St. Philip Neri Census Underway

Census takers from St. Philip Neri Parish are conducting a house-to-house canvas this week to determine the number of Catholic families within the parish boundaries.

The last parish census was taken in 1970. Since then many families have moved away while others have moved in, according to Father Charles Connell, pastor.

"It is important to know who we are to serve in order for us to plan for the future," he explained.

Each worker, he said, will wear a special badge identifying him or her as a census volunteer.

The census card can be completed when the volunteer calls, or at the family's convenience, and returned to the church rectory. Parishioners who are not contacted may obtain a census card by calling the rectory at 482-2400.

The census is being coordinated by the St. Philip Neri Parish Council Parish Relations Committee. Mrs. Nancy Sinaguglia is coordinator.

Diocesan Budget Process Explained To Council

In response to Priests Council concerns over the Bishop's Ministerial Review Committee (MRC) and its role in preparing and reviewing the diocesan budget, James Noonan, the bishop's administrative assistant, last week presented the council with a step-by-step accounting of the process for determining, reviewing and monitoring departmental budgets.

He also delineated the roles played by individuals and bodies in that process.

A finance advisory board analyzes and recommends approval, clarification or disapproval of income projection, as presented by diocesan finance officer Thomas Weber.

The MRC with the bishop, based on the ministerial review of the departments, recommends approval of goals and objectives of the departments.

The departments then, based on recommendations from the MRC, prepare their budgets.

The MRC with the Bishop then reviews the overall budget of each department and, using consensus as a basis, resolves questions and determines final budgets.

Thomas Weber then returns final approvals to departments and monitors their budgets throughout the year.

In preparation for next year's budget the following process will be used:

In early December, 1976, Weber will prepare a total maximum income available and present this to the Finance Advisory Com-

mittee, which in turn will analyze it in detail and recommend a bottom line. Weber then informs the diocesan staff of that bottom line.

On Dec. 13 the MRC will approve overall departmental goals and objectives. At this time the body will have before it the present 1976-77 costs and the additional requested costs. The goals are then returned to the departments.

Shortly thereafter, Weber will send budget sheets to each department for preparation and return by Jan. 28, 1977.

From that point until Feb. 11, Weber will review, line by line, each budget, with its department head, for refinement. Weber then reviews the overall situation with the bishop. Should expenses exceed income, the Staff Planning Committee also is involved in this review.

At the end of February, the overall budgets will be returned to the MRC for final review. Using consensus as a basis, that body will resolve questions and recommend approval.

On March 4, Weber returns the final approved budgets to the departments.

From March through May the Staff Planning Committee with the Bishop prepares an overall summary of goals and objectives for the departments.

In June the bishop will present his goals and objectives to the consultative bodies, inviting ongoing review by using members elected to the MRC by the Diocesan Pastoral Council. — DASH

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