

Priests Council Wary of School Report

The report from the Urban Catholic School Ministry Task force has raised a number of questions in the minds of the diocesan priests who have studied the document.

The report is the work of a team commissioned last year by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan. The major thrust of the report is that urban schools should systematize the delivery of their services and should join together to provide those services.

The priests' questions, ranging from financing to philosophy, were aired at the last meeting of the council.

Although no action was taken whether or not to endorse the report or the work of the task force, the concerns raised by the council, it was agreed, would be presented to Bishop Hogan.

The lengthiest presentation in the council discussion was given by Father Conrad Sundholm, who expressed his constituents' fears that the plan, rather than offer a solution to the problem of the parish-by-parish closing of parochial schools in urban Rochester, would simply create more bureaucracy.

Father Sundholm questioned whether a better approach would be to upgrade the quality of teaching in the public schools. He further noted that the stress placed in the paper on the teaching of Catholic doctrine would not truly meet the needs of the growing number of non-Catholic pupils in Catholic urban schools.

The question of whether the entire diocese would "have to foot the bill" was asked by Father James Baker of the Livingston-Stauben region. He said that group already was overburdened financially with its own school problems.

The funding question was again raised by Father Charles Latus who also observed that the plan as given is too general. He further questioned the relationship of parish councils to the proposed system.

Father Thomas Streb also spoke to the issue of financing the schools and observed that the rural areas of the diocese and other urban areas of the diocese are experiencing financial difficulties.

The implementation of the recommendations in the report, Father Ronald Stacy felt, could fall by the wayside. He said there "There are no real teeth in the thing."

Father James Boyle also noted the report was too general in its recommendations.

Father Leonard Kelly, one of the principal movers in the establishment of schools of religion in the nation, told the council that parish schools are not necessarily the best medium for educating in the Faith. He questioned whether it was right to "concentrate on the few to the neglect of the many." The staffing of parish schools and the financial difficulties associated with them, he said, are problems that could be alleviated with the establishment of schools of religion.

Father James Marvin, council president, also asked who would administer the proposed system.

Fielding the council's observations were Sister Roberta Tierney, diocesan superintendent of schools, and Msgr. George Cocuzzi, vicar of Urban Ministry.

Sister Roberta noted that ideally funding for the system should come one-third from the parents, one-third from the parish and one-third from the diocese. The report states that the diocesan contribution would be through the office of the vicar of Urban

Ministry.

She further said that the response from the religious congregations indicates that

staffing parish schools would not be a difficulty, under the new system.

Msgr. Cocuzzi warned the

council that philosophically it must support the idea of a Catholic school system or the process of parish school closings will accelerate.

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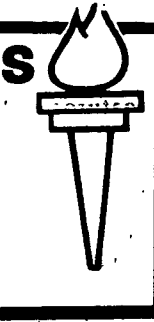
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Splash Down!

Father John Firpo, priest intern at St. Andrew's Church, tries out the seating on the Dunk 'Em that will be featured at St. Andrew's annual festival, slated for June 16 through 18, on the parish grounds. On Thursday and Friday, the fun starts at 6 p.m. On Saturday events get rolling at 1 p.m. William Gagnier is chairman of this year's event. Robert Miller is cochairman.



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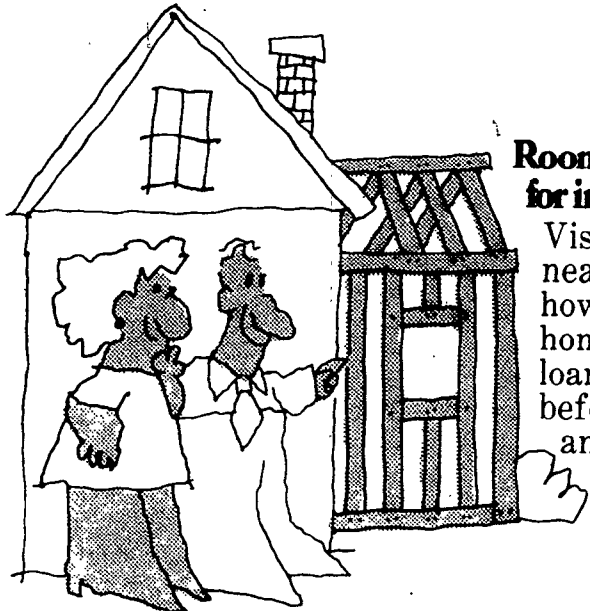
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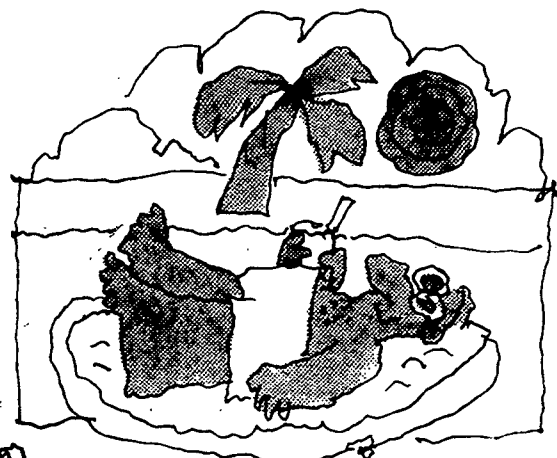
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