

Priests Council Urges New Type of Retreat

By JOHN DASH

Next fall, the priests of the diocese may have the opportunity to participate in a radically different type of retreat experience. The Priests Council last week charged a group working on this new program to proceed with plans to introduce it in the fall of 1978.

Under the Needs Assessment Program, which even its promoters agree is an unfortunate name, diocesan clergy participate in a two-day Spiritual Awareness Workshop followed by some testing.

According to Father

James Boyle, who has been spearheading the movement to bring the program to the diocese, the testing involved is to help the individual priest assess his own spiritual needs and growth. "Tests are not diagnostic. The tests are not at all threatening," he said.

Father Boyle's presentation came somewhat as a surprise to council officials who had anticipated that agenda time for it would be cut. A few days prior to the council meeting, another group had finalized plans for the annual priests' retreats for next spring, a move which did not include this new program.

In the course of his remarks to the council, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan noted that he is "personally very much committed to the program."

At least 135 individual diocesan priests have also expressed their commitment to the new form of retreat.

The council meeting last week at Becket Hall was unusual in two respects. The scheduling of Monday, Nov. 7 was an accommodation to the feast of All Saints and election day. Ordinarily Priests Council meets on the first Tuesday of the month. All Saints, however, was the first Tuesday and election

day the second. The council agenda also included time for committee meetings, something not done for several years, if ever.

In the course of discussing a recent visit to Archbishop Fulton Sheen, Bishop Hogan remarked that an attending physician to the 81-year-old prelate noted the archbishop was the "oldest person in medical history," to have the heart surgery performed.

Prompted by a question from Father Eugene Sweeney, Bishop Hogan

remarked that it is a "courtesy" to the office of the bishop for groups to notify him prior to scheduling an address by a theologian from outside the diocese. The bishop further noted that he does not give "endorsements" to such addresses. He also observed that "the courtesy has always been from the

liberals, but not the other side."

Council President Father Louis Hohman has added the word "wormy" to his lexicon. It apparently means "disquieted." On one of the two occasions he used the word at the Priests Council, Father Hohman commented, "I get real wormy about marking time."

ALCOHOLISM SEMINAR AT ST. JOSEPH'S

Elmira—Two members of the Recorders Court Family Support Program will address the monthly alcoholism seminar at St. Joseph's Hospital Thursday, Nov. 17 at 12:15 p.m. in the Doctors Meeting Room. Clarence Tiffany, coor-

dinator, and Sister Dorothy Becker, counselor, will discuss their agency and its functions.

Further information may be obtained from the Social Work-STARS Department at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Homosexual Ministry Endorsed

By JOHN DASH

The Diocesan Sisters Council, meeting last week at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph, addressed themselves to two major topics and approved a motion affirming the need for a ministry to Catholic homosexuals.

The sisters had heard a presentation given by Sister Mary Claude Loeb on the question of the place of homosexuals in the Church, last month. Resolutions prepared by the council's social concerns committee, calling for greater study of the question, confirming the need for a continuing ministry to the homosexual community and encouraging participation of persons of homosexual orientation in the life of the Church, were tabled after nearly an hour of debate at that meeting. At that time, however, it was agreed that the question would be placed on the agenda for this month's meeting.

Sister Claude, who has been serving in an unofficial way as a liaison between the diocese and Dignity, an organization of Catholic homosexuals and others concerned with their place in the Church, for the past two years, reintroduced the motions at Saturday's meeting.

Sister Mary Rita Kauffmann questioned the word "toll" in a draft of the resolutions which read, "(The DSC) encourages full participation of persons of homosexual orientation in the life of the Church, the visible body of Christ."

Following a unanimous vote on Sister Rita's motion to strike the word, the DSC then passed, by a vote of 17-0 with six abstentions, the following:

"The Diocesan Sisters Council

—urges the Sisters of the Diocese in their search to understand both the unique gift of personhood and an individual's role in building up the Kingdom of God, to include persons of all sexual orientation

—confirms the need for a continuing ministry to the homophile community of the Diocese of Rochester,

—encourages participation of persons of homosexual orientation in the life of the Church, the visible body of Christ on earth."

Despite the fact that the first major snowfall of the season hampered the arrival of DSC delegates and

speakers, a large number of observers attended Saturday's meeting to hear a presentation on the role of the Vicar for Religious in the Buffalo Diocese.

Father Angelo Caligiuri, vicar, and Sister Anne Marie Fitzsimmons, associate vicar, explained for the council the history and work of their office.

Both Father Caligiuri and Sister Anne Marie were appointed to the post in 1975.

Father Caligiuri explained that the Buffalo office is unique among Eastern dioceses in that it has "a more pastoral orientation," rather than the canonical atmosphere of other vicariates.

Sister Anne Marie noted that both the Buffalo Sisters Assembly and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) had requested a team approach to an office of vicar for religious. In 1974, she said, those bodies also drew up a statement on the responsibilities and functions for such an office.

The Bishop of Buffalo then established the office and permitted the team to establish its own goals.

Those goals, Sister Anne Marie and Father Caligiuri agree are even after two years still operative.

The vicariate aims "to foster development of religious life, to facilitate spiritual growth, by motivating and providing for spiritual formation in terms of more consciousness and depth; to serve as liaison between the diocese and religious communities; to be sensitive and respond to the needs of the religious communities as they are perceived by the communities; to be available to the religious both as communities and as individuals, to encourage and facilitate greater inter-cooperation (among religious bodies); to make known the services of the diocese and to provide canonical services on request."

Sister Anne Marie noted that the office provides a number of programs for sisters in the areas of prayer and religious life. She also noted that the office has recently been engaged in developing programs for specific groups of sisters and in drawing up an official response to the draft of the new canon law regarding religious.

Both Sister Anne Marie and Father Caligiuri spend most of their time in "one to one work." Sister Anne Marie also commented that "We try to be in an advocacy role for women in ministry."

Vatican

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The May vote was the result of a recommendation by the bishops' canon law committee, headed by Bishop Cletus F. O'Donnell

of Madison, Wis.

Bishop Thomas C. Kelly, general secretary of the conference, said that the lifting of the penalty did not change the Church's

teaching that sacramental marriages are indissoluble. He also said the Vatican's action does not speak to the question of denying the sacraments to divorced Catholics who remarry.

Almanac

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as I came in, Mark Twain went out

Geger has a few other projects going. He wants to get rid of the seven-digit telephone number (too hard to remember) and of those mean little return envelopes that won't quite accommodate a standard size check. He claims that he single handedly persuaded the Postal Service to quit using numbers instead of place names as postmarks.

He seems to have a wide acquaintance with Catholic

newspapers and he likes to tell about the time a Catholic news service turned down a "spectacular" picture he provided in celebration of his 25th wedding anniversary, four years ago, he rented a 190-foot Goodyear blimp, and ran up an 80-foot banner. He offered the photograph as "a celebration of a good marriage, they said there wouldn't be much interest in it. It was published all over the country in AP papers."

He had to pray pretty hard, by the way, to get a break in New England's

cloud cover on the day of the blimp ascension.

His little book is crammed with household hints and recipes tested by his wife, some Church calendar information, weather forecasts, of course, and times of tides, plus inspirational poetry and anecdotes, and jokes galore. The laugh-getters are very carefully screened, Geger says, that no double meaning can be inferred.

"I peddle corn, the editor admits, not at all ruefully. 'I'm a cornographer.'"

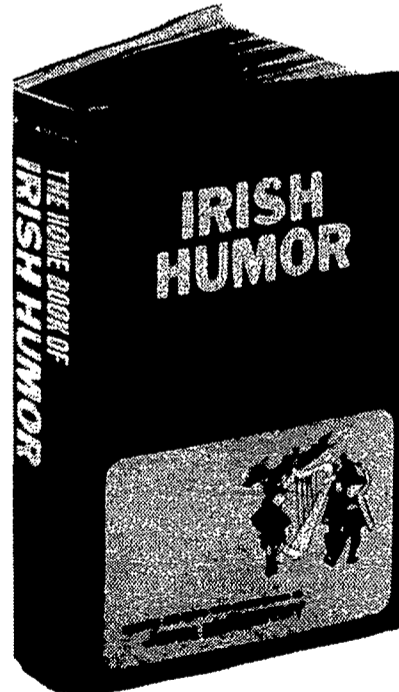
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Throughout, the editor, John McCarthy, formerly Executive Editor of Catholic



Digest, has contributed a lively series of quips and jests about the Irish, humble and great.

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