

COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

20 Pages

Wednesday, February 22, 1978

20 Cents

Diocese to Push for Tuition Tax Credit

BY JOAN M. SMITH

On Feb. 14, the Diocesan Strategy Planning Committee for Tuition Tax Credit met to formulate a campaign to promote the passage of existing tax legislation bills now before the House and Senate. The proposed legislation, The Tax Credit Act of 1977, (S2142), sponsored by Sens. Robert Packwood (R. Ore.) and Daniel Moynihan (D. N.Y.) and its companion bill, HR 9332, sponsored by Reps. William Frenzel (R. Minn.) and James Burke (D. Mass.) would give tax credits to all who pay

tuition fees for education at any level (public, private elementary, high school and college). Credits could be applied to as much as 50 per cent of tuition costs but could not exceed \$500 per student.

Recently, HR 9332 has been before the House Ways and Means Committee for hearings and will be voted on by the committee in April. It is this vote which concerns members of the Strategy Committee which includes Sister Roberta Tierney, director of Diocesan Education; Timothy Leahy, superin-

tendent of Catholic schools; Mrs. Gina Ouweleen, president of the Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents; George Kuipers, Citizens for Educational Freedom; Timothy McGowan, political ministries for the Office of Human Development; Father Leon Hogenkamp, president of the Diocesan Association of Secondary Schools Administrators and Sister Barbara Hamm, representing the elementary schools administrators. Their concern is that the bill must pass through the Ways and Means Committee with

a majority vote in order to be brought to a vote on the House floor. If it doesn't pass the committee vote it becomes a dead issue and it is this critical fact which prompted the diocesan committee's campaign.

Their primary action will be directed to grass roots support because it was agreed this is the support necessary to give impetus to the bill's passage. Parents, students, teachers and special interest groups will be contacted. To make the public aware of the importance of the bill, the committee will be preparing

for distribution, background information, fact sheets and sample letters to encourage individual action in the form of petitions and personal letters to congressmen. Special emphasis will be on the 35th Congressional District of New York, represented by Barber Conable (R.) who serves on the Ways and Means Committee.

Regarding the thrust for grass roots support, Sister Roberta declared, "We have to get people excited. We have to build information — build support."

Other strategy plans

called for were personal contact with Rep. Conable and media utilization.

According to scheduled legislative action, the tax credit bills have a difficult road ahead of them. If the House bill (HR 9332) passes the Ways and Means Committee vote it will go to the House vote in May. In June the Senate Finance Committee will hold hearings on the bill. Then in September, the Senate will vote on the Packwood-Moynihan bill with both bills going into conference. Final decision is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 1

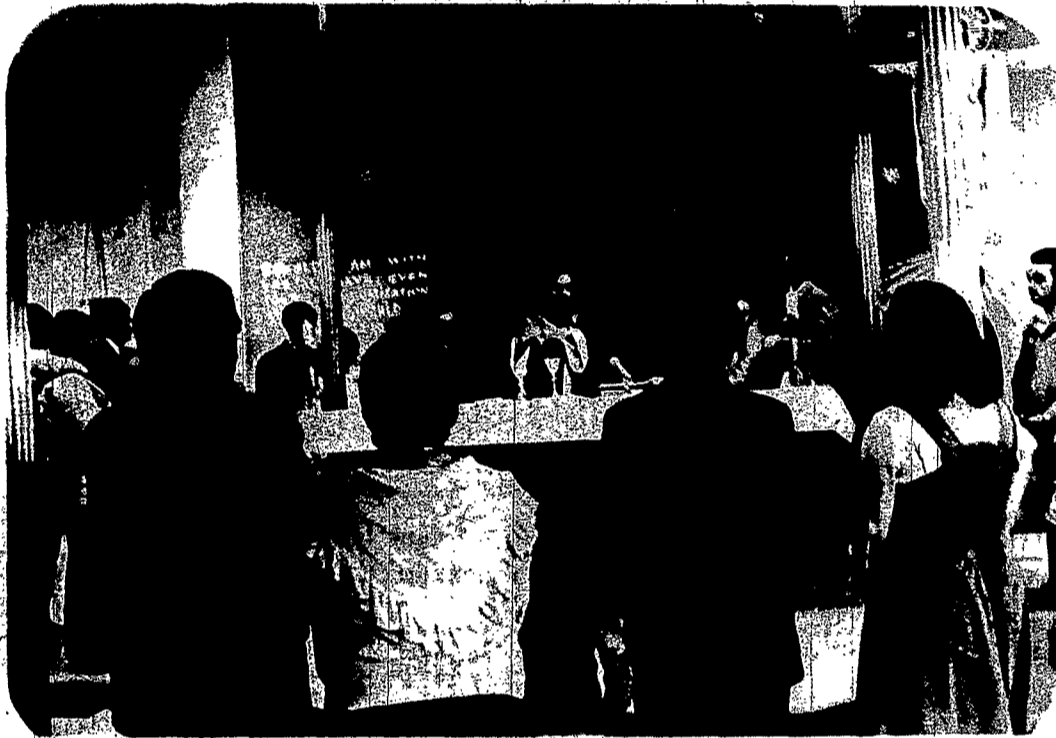


Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

NFP Day

Father James Hewes of St. Mary's parish in Canandaigua celebrates Mass as part of a special Natural Family Planning program Sunday at St. Mary's Hospital. Story, other photos, Page 17.

Pope Urges More Research Into Billings' NFP Methods

Melbourne (RNS)— Pope Paul has asked for more research into natural methods of birth regulation, in a message noting the "difficult demands" made by *Humanae Vitae*, his 1968 encyclical.

The message was sent by Cardinal Jean Villot, Vatican Secretary of State, to Archbishop Thomas Francis Little of Melbourne during an international conference here, Feb. 10-19 of the World Organization of Ovulation Methods Billings. Melbourne is the home of Dr. John Billings, a pioneer researcher and exponent of a natural birth control method that involves determination of changes in vaginal mucus indicating fertility periods.

The message said, in part,

"With regard to the responsible exercise of parenthood, His Holiness has once more made it clear that he wishes to support the activities of those men and women of science who are involved in research programs that promote means of birth regulation which fully respect the rights of conjugal love and make use of what is obtained from biological knowledge of human fertility to enhance birth regulation by natural methods.

"The results of continuing research into the methods of ovulation concern the whole medical profession, while vindicating scientifically the natural methods of birth regulation and promoting their greater application.

"In the last analysis, moreover, this research must be placed directly at the service of individual couples, especially those Christian couples who are striving for the faithful fulfillment of their social duties in the carrying out of their lofty vocation of conjugal love. It is the Holy Father's hope that special attention will be directed toward all those who have not always been successful in living out fully the difficult demands imposed by the Christian teaching on marriage.

"May the exhortation of *Humanae Vitae*, with regard to these couples, encourage them. Let them not be discouraged, but rather have recourse with humble perseverance to the mercy of God."

Priests Council Rejects Further Salary Raise

The Priests Council last week turned its thumb down on a proposal that clerics' salaries be hiked by 17 per cent to reflect the rise in the cost of living. That proposal was actually the second part of a move initiated last year to adjust priests' base salaries upward by 34 per cent.

The council at its September 1977 meeting approved a 17 per cent hike, based on a report by the council's own Priests Personnel Finance Committee. The report said that priests' base salaries, established in 1973 and adjusted in 1975, should be readjusted by 17 per cent as of Oct. 1, 1977. To do that, the committee felt, would help priests recover half of the 34 per cent devaluation in the purchasing power of the dollar since 1975. It was understood at that meeting that the additional 17 per cent raise would become effective, after a vote, on June 1, 1978.

Among the major considerations at last week's meeting was that many of the younger clergy are

struggling to repay education loans and that such an adjustment is necessary if they are to meet their debts.

However, according to Father Louis Hohman, president of the council, that notion was scratched when Father Thomas Valenti, a representative of many of the younger clergymen, said that paying back the loans "wasn't all that tough for them."

In an interview following the meeting, Father Hohman said that priests' salaries "definitely will be reviewed each year." He noted, however, that "We should be asking one another how we are feeling the crunch and then respond to the needs of one another as best we can," rather than devise salary adjustments, "in the abstract terms of cost of living versus inflation rates."

Also at that meeting, delayed a week because of the heavy snow storm on Tuesday, Feb. 7, the priests

called out of committee, and passed unanimously a proposal to establish a team to encourage vocations in the diocese.

The proposal was made by a special task force convened by Bishop Dennis W. Hickey and presented to the priests last October. The proposal states, "We recommend that this team be coordinated by a part time person who would be chosen from suitable applicants. Initially the team should be composed of the following: four religious women, two religious priests, one diocesan priest and one diocesan seminary representative."

In other council action, it was voted that the present diocesan system of Mass stipends be retained. A discussion of the financial situation of St. Bernard's Seminary was tabled pending clarification of certain data regarding the school's finances and also the determination of the bishop's need for consultation on the matter.



Photo by Susan McKinney

Annual Retreat

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan joins other members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council Friday, Feb. 17, at the start of the annual DPC weekend retreat at Becket Hall.

Lenten Thoughts

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