

Bishops Issue Pastoral On Racism

Washington — (RNS) The U.S. bishops adopted a pastoral letter on racism that urges dioceses and church institutions to take specific steps to counter racism's "dehumanizing impact."

Saying that racism and economic oppression are "interrelated forces," the bishops pledged commitment to affirmative action programs, disinvestment in portfolios that support racist institutions or policies, and support for Catholic schools in minority neighborhoods.

The letter, drafted by Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Francis of Newark, N.J., a black bishop who has been in the forefront of racial justice causes, apologizes for Catholics sharing in the "sin of racism."

The bishops recommend:

- Rejection of racial stereotypes, slurs, jokes and remarks;
- Commitment to political efforts for justice;
- Encouragement of a spirit of ecumenism to achieve justice and peace;
- The fostering of vocations among minority groups and

racial diversity in the hierarchy;

• Attention to the plight of undocumented aliens, refugee victims and native Americans.

"No sacrifice can be so great," the letter states, "no price can be so high, no short-range goals can be so important as to warrant the lessening of our commitment to Catholic education in minority neighborhoods."

Additionally, the letter calls for justice in the form of full employment, decent working conditions, adequate income, housing and health care for all, and accountability of government at all levels for citizens to receive essential services.

In other matters, the bishops failed to reach a two-thirds majority on two proposals which would have removed from the language of the liturgy phrases and words, which to some seem "sexist."

The proposals were put before the body by Archbishop Robert Weakland, OSB. He said of the failure to reach the necessary majorities, "Some did not see it as a sensitive issue for women."

DPC

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its favor, as "I think a study would show us much more than we already know."

The DPC then approved the motion, 27 voting in favor, 9 opposed and 5 abstaining.

Several items were raised during an open forum with Bishop Matthew H. Clark. Bishop Clark described the recently-completed national bishops meetings, and also listed many groups he has met with during the past few weeks.

Asked about sacramental practices, Bishop Clark noted that some parishes are not taking full advantage of the sacraments, and he hopes to develop a plan for the diocese to use the sacraments more effectively. He noted that the issue is how best to live out the sacraments, not whether or not to follow official rites. He added that he has seen practices in some parishes that are "not acceptable," but he wants the diocese to work to "develop positively and together" the sacramental life of the Church.

Questioned about the decisions that soon will be facing him, Bishop Clark responded that he knows they are coming, and he expects to be able to make them when they do.

And responding to a question from Angel Rivera, an appointed member from the Hispanic community, Bishop Clark said that he is investigating the possibility of a Hispanic priest from a religious community to serve in the diocese, as the diocese has no Hispanic priests.

Asked by John Schmidt what his delights and disappointments have been since he became bishop, Bishop Clark listed them.

Three delights, he said, are the "faith of the people," the

good people working around the diocese, and that the diocese has a good sense of mission "for others," and a "real sensitivity to the poor."

As for disappointments, he said he has observed that in some, their dedication to a particular cause has led them to have a "narrow vision," and "no longer see the broader perspective."

Sister Ann Habershaw noted that a policy recommended to Bishop Hogan by the DPC that parishes must support students attending schools in neighboring parishes had been implemented, and she asked what recourse schools not receiving such support had. Bishop Clark responded that "I have reaffirmed that policy," and he added that a parish does not have the right to exempt itself from diocesan policy.

In other action, the DPC approved three proposals by wide margins and heard several presentations.

The proposal asking the bishop to call a Youth Convocation was approved without discussion, having been discussed at previous meetings. A proposal asking the division directors to examine the results of a survey on the participation of women in parishes was approved, as was a plan for continued efforts concerning evangelization.

Among the presentations was one given by Thomas Dermody, a parishioner of St. Vincent DePaul, Churchville, who farms land in Bergen owned by his family for 120 years. He traced the connections between religion and agriculture, and emphasized agriculture's importance not only in providing food, but also in the state and national economy.

Bishops Reject 'Single-Issue' Vote

Washington (RNS) — Rejecting single-issue politics, the leadership of the U.S. Catholic Bishops called on citizens to judge candidates on a full range of issues as well as on "integrity, philosophy and performance."

The administrative board of the U.S. Catholic Conference expressed concern at the dwindling numbers of citizens participating in elections and said the process must be revitalized.

The bishops, in their statement, "Political Responsibility: Choices for the 1980s," said they were not seeking formation of a "religious voting bloc." But, they said, the Church has a responsibility to speak out on "the affirmation and promotion of human rights, and the denunciation and condemnation of violations of these those rights."

The bishops acknowledged that "our efforts in this area are sometimes misunderstood," but insisted that there is "the

right of all, including the Church itself, to be heard in the formulation of public policy."

The statement, the USCC said, is an updated version of a declaration on political responsibility which the administrative board of bishops issued in 1976 in connection with that presidential election year.

"We now iterate that call with a greater sense of urgency and we ask all citizens to help restore our elections as the vital and popular forum they can and must be if our nation is to address democratically the crucial issues of the coming decade," the bishops declared.

Issues cited included abortion, arms control and disarmament, capital punishment, the economy, education, family life, food and agricultural policy, health care, housing, human rights and mass media.

"In order to be credible and faithful to the Gospel

and to our tradition, the Church's concern for human rights and social justice should be comprehensive and consistent," the bishops said. "It must be formulated with competence and an awareness of the complexity of issues. It should also be developed in dialogue with other concerned persons and respectful of the rights of all."

The statement also cited U.S. policy on South Africa, the Middle East and Central America, "three situations of regional conflict which are of significance for the whole international system."

In citing issues important for 1980, the bishops noted they did so without reference to political candidates, parties or platforms.

Pharmacology Program Praised

An unusual pharmacology program for the nursing staff at St. Mary's Hospital has increased the amount of time and money available for patient care, while significantly decreasing the incidence of error in drug preparation and administration.

educational needs in relation to pharmacology; practice in a simulated laboratory setting and receive actual clinical experience in the safe and correct administration of drugs.

Instructional methods focus on the needs of individual learners and provide for continual assessment of performance to insure that competency has been achieved.

In an award-winning article in the September issue of The Journal of Nursing Administration, Sister Nancy Vendura, author and former coordinator of Nursing In-service at St. Mary's, outlined the program and its success.

In compiling the results of the program, Sister Nancy cites evidence of increased staff motivation and enthusiasm and greater competency in drug administration. Statistics reveal a significant drop in medication errors as reflected by the decreased number of medication incident reports.

The competency-based program, required for all Licensed Practical Nurses, graduate nurses and registered nurses licensed for less than one year, replaces a traditional classroom/lecture approach which removed nurses from patient care and often gave little attention to students' individual learning needs, according to Sister Nancy.

In a series of three steps, participating nurses under the direction of a nursing in-service instructor assess their

AOH Supper

The John F. Kennedy Division #1 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Auburn has scheduled its annual Communion Supper on Saturday, Nov. 24 beginning with Mass at St. Aloysius Church at 5 p.m. The Mass will be celebrated by Father Edward Shamon, AOH chaplain.

Dinner will follow the Mass at the Starlite Restaurant on Clark Street Rd. Guest speaker will be Assemblyman Sean Walsh from the Bronx, N.Y.



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Hospital

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accommodate 121 medical-surgical beds and the ancillary services. The cost would be about \$8.5 million.

Option 5 uses the same alignment as option 4, adding 60 skilled nursing facility beds at St. James, which would be available within the building under that plan. Weil noted that common rooms and a dining hall for the nursing facility would cost about a half million dollars. He called the nursing beds "extremely crucial" to the Hornell area, and noted that some have said they would not support a plan that did not include skilled nursing care.

Renovation within St. James would be less expensive than new construction of a 60-bed unit. Weil noted, which he estimated would cost \$2.1 million.

The sixth option, the one which, Weil said referring to himself, is the "one the coordinator as a professional likes the best," would place the skilled nursing facility and the alcoholism unit at Bethesda, and all other services at St. James.

That alignment would go against assurances made during merger discussions that both buildings would continue to be used for acute care. Weil noted that for that reason, the joint boards have asked him to pursue options 3, 4 and 5.

While admitting possible local opposition to option 6, Weil said that it is the one that would eliminate the problems of having medical-surgical beds in two locations.

The proposal to the state most likely will be one of those calling for capital expenditures, Weil noted, and also will include other items, such as money for salary adjustments. Sister Rene McNiff, St. James administrator, explained that the administrations would like to bring their pay scales into line with those of other Southern Tier hospitals.

The day before the news conference, Weil met with the

interim advisory committee, the committee of six doctors from the local medical association, and the joint boards to review the options. He reported that he encouraged his audiences to consider what will be best for the community, rather than what's best for a particular site.

He also offered the suggestion that the new corporation, which had been tentatively named "Bethesda Mercy Health Center," instead be called the "Canistota Valley Regional Medical Center." That name "reflects what we're talking about," a health care system, he explained.

As for why the hospitals need to make capital improvements, Weil explained that both hospitals completed their last construction project in 1968, and that hospitals should do a major project every five to seven years to keep up. Merger discussions, which began six years ago, and the declining Hornell population were two reasons such upgrading didn't occur. Now, it will be necessary regardless of whether or not the hospitals decide to merge, Weil emphasized.

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