

Seminaries, Fund Development Discussed at Priests Council

By Michael Groden

The Priests Council last week passed a resolution which outlines procedures for diocesan priests to voice "the most pertinent questions in priests minds which seek an answer regarding the future" of Becket Hall and St. Bernard's seminaries.

The three-part resolution, prepared during last Tuesday's meeting by Fathers Richard Tormey and James L. Callan, advises all diocesan priests to study current standards for seminaries, particularly in the U.S. with special emphasis placed on the "Program of Priestly Formation," published by the U.S. bishops.

When study is complete, priests will be asked to respond to their council representative with questions and concerns they may have in regard to the diocesan seminaries. These concerns will be expressed, to seminary officials, at the February Priests Council meeting.

Following the February meeting seminary officials will be asked to conduct a clergy conference (or several regional conferences) to answer questions raised by diocesan priests.

The resolution, which was forwarded to Bishop Clark for approval, came as a result of a study conducted by an ad hoc committee consisting of Fathers James Callan, Douglas Hoffman, Louis Hohman, Msgr. John Maney and Father Donald Schwab. The committee report said, in part, that "the purpose of this committee is to re-ignite support and enthusiasm on the part of many priests for our diocesan seminary system through honest sharing and the answering of questions which underlie unrest."

Priest Council members also heard a report from Father Conrad Sundholm on the department of Fund Development and also voted to support a recommendation that would continue procedural norms for American Tribunals and one calling for the "expeditious processing" of requests from priests who have asked for laicization by Rome.

Father Conrad Sundholm reported that dioceses throughout the country are now involved in "long range endowment plans" designed to offset financial deficits caused by spiraling inflation and lack of new sources of income for parishes.

He said that while last year parish revenue rose on the average of 1 percent, the inflation rate rose 2.5 percent. This coupled with the fact that certain traditional parish revenues, including Bingo, have gone down slightly has put a tight squeeze on parish funds, he said.

As a result, meeting parish costs and paying the diocesan assessment is becoming ever more difficult. Father Sundholm feels that there should be a system which offsets these costs and that one way would be to study the possibilities of investing diocesan funds and seek other forms of endowment.

One suggestion the Development Department is looking into is an annual diocesan appeal, which most

American dioceses, but not Rochester, now utilize, Father Sundholm said.

Father Sundholm added that such a new program should also include a financial report which would explain to people in the diocese where this money is going.

He said that the basic reason this study is being conducted is because the current system used by the diocese cannot continue for long. Father Sundholm ended his report by asking council members and their constituents for ideas or comments they may have in regard to fund development.

In other council action,

Father Douglas Hoffman reported that some \$60,000 has been raised by 57 participating parishes for Cambodian relief. Father Hoffman thanked those who have participated and urged other pastors to do so. He also reported that the 1980 National Catholic Charities convention will be in Rochester in September.

Father Neil Miller reported on the recent meeting of the Justice and Peace Committee of the Priests Council of New York State (PCNY). The committee meeting resulted in nine decisions, including support for a United Farm Workers Union boycott of Red Coach brand lettuce, endorsing an increase in

public assistance in New York State, endorsing a statement on the Iranian situation which commended President Carter for seeking a peaceful solution and which also called for an end to harassment of Iranians now in the U.S.

The next priests council meeting will be Jan. 15.

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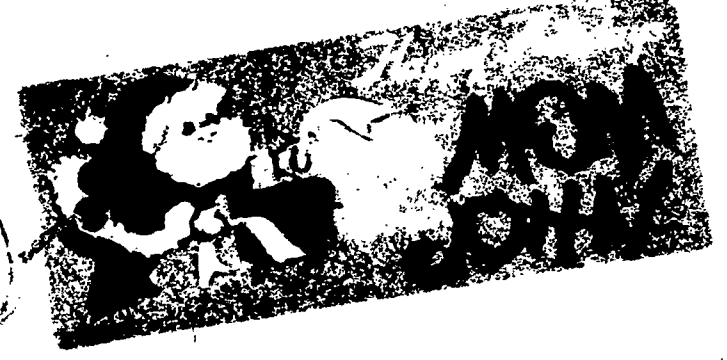
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