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Christian Unity Movement Is Sputtering

By Jay Merwin
RNS Staff Writer

"There is a variety of gifts, but always the same Spirit," says the Bible, though that shared spirit more often becomes a contentious one in the broadening array of intradenominational disputes.

The Bible verse, I Corinthians 12:4, was adopted by a joint working group of the Vatican and the World Council of Churches as the theme for the 1981 "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity."



Analysis

The week's sponsors in this country, the National Council of Churches and the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute, suggested that verse in order to "stress the unity of the Holy Spirit and the church in the world," said Father Charles LaFontaine, co-director of the Catholic Graymoor group. Because of the growing turmoil in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Latin America and Poland, he hoped the Jan. 18-25 observance would illustrate that "diversity or variety need not be divisive."

Unfortunately, new fissures have developed within Christianity as quickly as the old ones have been sealed.

Since the mid-1970s professional ecumenists have warned that after decades of progress, the movement has begun to sputter. In 1976, the National Council of Churches ecumenism director, the Rev. Nathan H. VanderWerf, warned that "the shape of ecumenism in our major metropolitan areas is in disastrous condition compared with a few years ago." And, he added, the church staff who are paid to accomplish ecumenical ends had become "an endangered species."

The focus of the movement had shifted from interdenominational striving to intradenominational in-

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Christmas Appeal Breaks All Records

The Courier-Journal/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal for 1980 broke every record for contributions in the 11-year history of the campaign.

Diocesans gave \$57,015.91 to the appeal, 111.8 percent over the amount raised in the 1979 appeal and 103.7 percent over the objective of this year's campaign.

The distribution breakdown of \$50,000 of that money is as follows: Catholic Family Center, \$35,000; Urban Ministries, \$7,500; Southern

Tier Office of Social Ministry, \$3,750; Shortsville, 3,750.

The remainder of the fund is used to meet short-term financial needs of the poor throughout the year.

To improve service in the program this year there was the development of a master file of prospects and contributors using the diocesan computer. The master list will allow the administrators of the fund to post gifts for five years. Also developed were computerized labels for mailing, receiving and thanking.

Diocese Readies Welfare Strategy

By John Dash

Gov. Hugh Carey's call last week to the State Legislature for a "public-assistance grant increase of 20 percent over the next two years" was hailed as "consistent" and, nevertheless, dismissed as unlikely to have much impact on the political process involved in getting a welfare hike by a diocesan official.

Maurice Tierney, diocesan director of Catholic Charities, a body responsible for developing a diocesan strategy to realize an assistance increase, also said that while a similar statement by Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson was "courageous," it, too, would carry little weight in the Legislature.

Tierney said that the push necessary to get legislation for the welfare increase through Albany will come from such efforts as those the diocese is planning.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has joined in the effort by the state's bishops to get an increase in the public assistance grants which have stayed at the same level since 1974, despite the spiral of inflation.

To that end Bishop Clark will hold hearings in both Rochester and in the Southern Tier in which a panel of ecumenical leaders will listen to the plight of the poor living with 1974 level assistance in a 1981 economy.

According to William Privett, Charities' assistant director and the man in charge of the diocesan strategy, a hearing will be held in Rochester on Feb. 10 at St. Michael's Church.

Armed with information gathered at the hearings, Bishop Clark will address the legislators in March, Privett said.

As it stands, Privett said, the daily welfare budget amounts to \$2.08 per person a day, for a family of four, over and above the food stamp and rental supplements.

This is the latest round in the lobbying effort which began last spring.



Bishop Clark at press conference announcing the closing of St. Bernard's.

Bishop Hogan: Closing Seminary Necessary

History — Page 4.
Editorial — Page 14.

By John Dash

Former Bishop of Rochester Joseph L. Hogan said last week that he supported Bishop Matthew H. Clark's decision to close St. Bernard's Seminary.

He said that he himself had wrestled with the problems facing the school for three years, and when Bishop Clark inherited those problems, "I saw it as the only decision which could possibly be made."

The immediate task before the diocese now is to determine the future of the permanent diaconate program, the continuing education program, and the theological training of future diocesan priests, Auxiliary Bishop

Closing 'will not have negative effect on vocations' to the priesthood in the diocese — Bishop Hickey.

Dennis W. Hickey said last week.

Those problems were the subject of meetings last week, but as of press time, no determinations had been made.

Bishop Hickey did assert that he did not think the school closing would "have a negative effect on vocations in the diocese."

He said that vocations development is "seeking people for priestly ministry, not recruiting for a seminary."

Both he and Bishop Hogan commented that many dioceses do not have seminaries, and that theological training can take place in regional centers for such.

Bishop Hogan said that centers of continuing education and training for the permanent diaconate are not located on seminary campuses in many dioceses.

Bishop Hickey spent six years at St. Bernard's prior to ordination. Bishop Hogan spent "a quarter of my life in the seminaries" as student, teacher and administrator.

Priests Support Move

By Michael Groden

Members of the diocesan Priests Council were among the first to hear of the closing of St. Bernard's Seminary at the January council meeting last Tuesday, Jan. 8. Bishop Matthew H. Clark announced his decision to council members during the afternoon session on the day before the official press conference announcement.

Bishop Clark said the decision "was not an easy one, and I hope it (the decision) is not taken as a negative comment on the staff and programs at St. Bernard's."

The bishop said his reasons for closing the 88-year-old seminary were "practical ones." He cited the shrinking enrollment, rising costs, maintaining old and very large buildings and the fact that tuition at St. Bernard's is among the highest in the

country, as reasons for his decision.

Msgr. Richard Burns summed up the general reaction of the priests in attendance saying, "Thank you for making a decision on a problem that has continued for 15 years." The council then applauded Bishop Clark.

Father Joseph Jankowiak, who taught at the seminary for some 10 years prior to becoming pastor of St. Stanislaus Church, said that he supported the bishop's decision and proposed that a letter be sent from the council to St. Bernard's administrators, faculty and board members, thanking them for the work they have done through the years at the seminary. The resolution was passed unanimously.

In other council action, the Priests Council heard reports from Msgr. George Cocuzzi

on the Permanent Diaconate Program, and Father Charles Mulligan on the Division of Social Ministries.

Msgr. Cocuzzi, Permanent Diaconate director, and Sister Hilaire Gaelens, administrative assistant, briefly outlined progress made in the three-year-old program. Msgr. Cocuzzi said that the first deacon ordination is set for the spring of 1982. There are currently 26 candidates in the first graduating class, five are Spanish speaking.

Msgr. Cocuzzi said that permanent deacons will serve as ordained ministers in a variety of functions for the diocese. A process that will best determine where each deacon will serve is now under way, he said.

Father Mulligan, director of the Division of Social Ministries, described each of

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