

DSC Hears Geneva Consolidation Proposals

By John Dash

The question of consolidating the parish elementary schools in Geneva will be raised there this evening, Wednesday, at a large meeting convened for the purpose, Sister Patricia Pullman told the Diocesan Sisters Council last week.

She said that tonight's meeting will consider three proposals: to maintain St. Stephen's School and St. Francis De Sales School as they are; to use only one building, dedicating it under another name; to divide

classes so that both buildings are used, one as a grammar school and the other as a junior high school.

De Sales High School is hot under question.

Sister Pullman is principal of St. Stephen's School and is a member of the DSC.

In a somewhat allied matter, the Sisters Council will request representation on a Priests Council committee looking at possibilities for parish consolidation, Sister Barbara Moore, president of the DSC, announced last Saturday.

RTL March Scheduled Saturday

Rochester Area Right to Life Committee will stage a March for Life to demonstrate against the Supreme Court ruling of Jan. 22, 1973 that legalized abortion on demand.

The march will be held Saturday, Jan. 17. A prayer service will be held at 2 p.m. in Bethel Full Gospel Church, 321 East Ave. The marchers will walk down East Avenue to the Liberty Pole and then back to the church. A wreath in memory of aborted children will be left at the Liberty Pole.

Further information is available by calling Ray or Lynne Buonemani (716) 621-3906.

Originally that committee was to have been made up solely of representatives of the Priests Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

A major portion of the DSC meeting was devoted to a presentation by Father Charles Mulligan, Mary Heidkamp, Sister Clare Roland and Maurice Tierney, on the work of the Office of Social Ministries.

That office is subdivided into Chaplaincy Services, headed by Sister Roland; the Department of Justice and Peace, Mary Heidkamp; Catholic Charities/Individual and Family Development, Maurice Tierney; and the Southern Tier Social Ministry, Father Neil Miller.

Included in the presentation was a request that the

sisters make known in parishes the responsibilities of each of the subdivisions. A major push for the next several years will be the development of Charities work in parishes, Tierney said.

The sisters will draft a letter to Bishop Matthew H. Clark expressing their support for his recent decision to close St. Bernard's Seminary. They will also ask for representation on the planning groups dealing with the continuance of the permanent diaconate program and the diocesan continuing education program.

That same request will also be sent to the rector and board of the institution.

The latest developments in the discussions on establishing a Vicar for Religious was reported by Sister Rita Kaufman, one of the authors of the final proposal submitted several months ago to the Pastoral Office.

She said that canonical and juridical questions were recently addressed in a meeting about the proposal and that word was expected momentarily on whether the proposal had been accepted.

In a matter of "housekeeping," Sister Jane Hasbrouck proposed that the DSC hire an executive secretary. That proposal was accepted with virtually no discussion or debate.



Cardinal Vagnozzi Dies at 74

Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, 74, a former Apostolic Delegate in the United States and a top Vatican official, died at his home in Rome Dec. 27. The prelate was made a cardinal by Pope Paul VI in 1967 and he was appointed president of the Prefecture for Economic Affairs of the Holy See, a key post he held until his death. The curial department coordinates administrative and financial policies, including the Vatican budget. Cardinal Vagnozzi was a career diplomat for the Vatican, serving in Portugal, France and India, and becoming the first apostolic nuncio to the Philippines when diplomatic ties were opened in 1951. With his death, the number of cardinals now stands at 126. Of these, 114 are under the age of 80 and hence eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a new pope.

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Word for Sunday

Welcome Interruption

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 1:29-34. (R1) Is. 49:3, 5-6. (R2) 1 Cor. 1:1-3.

This "Year of Matthew" is interrupted by a passage from St. John's gospel. The choice is a good one, for the gospel joins last Sunday's reading (the Baptism of the Lord) with the Sundays of the Year that now begin. The passage continues to reflect on the role of John the Baptizer.

Such reflection was necessary, for long after the Baptizer was dead, some of his followers continued to see him as the Messiah. After all, a man, descended from the priestly line, garbed like Elijah, confronting an evil king, and thundering out against social ills like the prophets of Israel's past, must have seemed, we must admit, to some Israelites, a much more likely candidate for Messiahship than the meek and humble carpenter from a nondescript village of Nazareth, who had died like a criminal on a cross. So it was necessary to evangelist St. John to outline precisely what the Baptizer's role was in the history of salvation.

No doubt the title

"Baptizer" is itself misleading. Without thinking, one is liable to conclude that baptizing was the role of John. This is not so. The gospel according to St. John calls the Baptizer "a witness": "He was not the light — he came to testify to the light. He came as a witness to the light!" That is why in the Johannine gospel passage the Baptizer's message and his baptisms are passed over. All that is recounted is the Baptizer's witness.

John's first witness to Jesus is as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. "Look! There is the Lamb of God," he said to his followers, pointing out Jesus, "who takes away the sin of the world!" There are three things to note here. First, John was probably referring to Jesus as the conquering Lamb, not as a Lamb to be slaughtered. Twenty-seven times this image occurs in the Book of Revelation — "A Lamb standing, a Lamb that had been slain." (Rv. 5:6) Slain, but standing — risen! A Lamb whose conquest takes away the "sin of the world." And this is the second point John speaks of the sin of the world, not sins. The Lamb breaks the state of sin that had gripped the world and infested it like an epidemic.

And thirdly, the Lamb saves the world, not just Israel. "It is too little . . . to raise up the tribes of Jacob . . . I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." (R1)

The Baptizer's second testimony about Jesus is that He is "a man who ranks ahead of me, because he was before me." Actually, John was older than Jesus — six months older. Yet John says Jesus was before himself. John seems to have had some inkling of Jesus as the Word of God who was in the beginning with God. This insight he gained not through human wisdom, but through the Spirit of God — "the One who sent me told me."

John's final testimony about Jesus was to identify Him with the Servant of the Lord spoken of by Second Isaiah. "This is God's chosen One." Isaiah had written: "Here is my servant, my chosen one, in whom I am well-pleased." (Is. 42:1) The voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism echoed the voice Isaiah had heard. John further testified that the Spirit rested on Jesus (as Isaiah had foretold — 42:2). That was why Jesus could give the Spirit, and did on Easter, and with this giving conferred also the power to forgive sins. Thus He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world — the sins of sinners!

John gave witness to who Jesus is in terms of his own experience; what witness do we give about Jesus to others?

It's time to TELL THE WORLD!

If we did not know that God loves us, we would rebel against the evil around us and would live in fear and confusion.

If we did not know that He sent His only Son to restore us to His friendship, we would despair because of our failings.

If we did not know that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, destined for eternal happiness with God, we would be filled with anger and hate.

Three billion people still don't know these things because there was no one to tell them. Isn't it time we told them?

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