



Poster Children

Edgar Moscol and Allison Hidalgo, March of Dimes Poster Children for 1981, pose with ABC-TV newsmen Storm Field, chairman of the New York area March of Dimes Teamwalk, part of a nationwide walk-a-thon to raise funds for the prevention of birth defects.

Priests Get Report On Parish Changes

By Michael Groden

The Priests Council unanimously and "with gratitude" accepted a preliminary report dealing with guidelines for future closings or amalgamation of parishes or institutions in the diocese last week.

The report, prepared by a council subcommittee on institutional and ministerial change, gave suggestions and criteria for initiating such processes and how the process should be handled.

Father Joseph Jankowiak, chairperson of the committee, stressed that the findings of the subcommittee were "definitely in the first draft stage," and that study and discussions will continue. Father Jankowiak also said that the subcommittee has no authority to implement any action.

The report states that "The ordinary of the diocese (Bishop Matthew H. Clark) must authorize the formal process, either on his own initiative, or at the request of the parish institution."

The ministerial change report calls for careful consideration of "criteria and indicators" before any action is taken. An important element in all deliberations, the report states, should be the inclusion of local input, both from ministerial staffs and parishioners.

Other elements that are to be considered include the balance of expense and income (whether or not they need extensive repairs), and "what laws of the state or the Church need to be considered in the process."

Father Jankowiak said the closing of a parish is a very difficult problem. He reminded Priests Council members what a "painful process" these decisions can be, both for people directly involved with a parish or institution and for those people who must make the decision.

The report has been sent to all priests in the diocese as well as the DPC and Sisters Council. Council members will give the reactions of their blocs at the next meeting.

At the afternoon session the Priests Council heard the last report final report on diocesan divisions, given by Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, director of the Division of Personnel, Staffing and Development.

Bishop Hickey reported that there are currently 215 parish priests, 52 priests working in "special jobs" (i.e. Pastoral Office, chaplains, etc.), and 64 who are retired or on disability.

The bishop briefly outlined all the agencies included in the personnel division. They include Priests Personnel board, Vocations Team, Permanent Diaconate, Priest and Deacons, Interns, Pastoral Assistants, and the Priests Retirement committee.

In other council action, the members heard reports from the Sisters Council, given by Sister Mary Jean Smith, and a preliminary report on the school subsidy proposal, by Father Gerald Connor.

Father David Gramkee submitted a report which captioned a pastoral letter written by the American bishops on racism. Bishop Clark has asked all three consultative bodies to respond to the letter which calls for the Church to work toward ending racism.

After hearing Father Gramkee's findings, it was agreed that more information on institutional racism was needed and council members have asked Rev. John Walker, executive secretary of the Office of Black Ministries, to come to the next session of the Priests Council, in April.

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Sister Kay Schwenzer, RSM



Viewpoint: Sisters Reflect

Life As a Missionary

After years of turning a deaf ear to the call of Christ through the poor, in 1976 I found myself studying Spanish — what I had thought impossible. This was step one in a long process of insertion into the Chilean culture — totally different to me after having taught for years in a diocesan high school! I began with trepidation, but with the conviction that our mission of carrying the Good News to the poor goes beyond the Diocese of Rochester and the borders of the United States.

For the past three years, two other Sisters of Mercy and I have been living in a poor marginated area of the city of Santiago, Chile. We are among the poor, the voiceless, the weak, jobless, alcoholics, the homeless, and those who lack a political and social consciousness; and I humbly find myself being evangelized by these very same poor.

Business in Diocese

Dr. C.Y. Kung will shortly begin practice in neurosurgery at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira. He has joined Dr. Ferdinand Rossmann in practice in the MCI Building.

Communion. But all children and young people do not arrive at the door of our community center; and so we have tried working with natural groupings of street children.

In this service, I know I cannot solve all economic, social and political problems, but hopefully, by my presence of support and love, I can be a sign of Christian hope.

We create our ministry according to the needs of individuals and the community. We don't have to fit into pre-established patterns and job descriptions. When people started coming to a little shack that we used as a center at first, we took the responsibility for organizing a weekly community prayer or a para-liturgical; and until there are prepared, formed lay leaders, we will continue presiding at this community worship service.

In the course of these four years I have been faced with doubts as to my capability of working in a distinct culture, and trying to express myself in a foreign language. My organized North American mentality tells me I should have positive, concrete actions and results to prove that I am a successful missionary. But I am slowly listening to an inner prodding that says, "Kay, let go of your own desires for successes and numbers of strongly committed Christians, and be at peace with your gospel presence to My people."

Yes, my faith and prayer life, and the meaning of my Christian and religious commitment are being changed and strengthened.

(Sister Kay Schwenzer, RSM, is a missionary in Santiago, Chile.)

The Latin American and Chilean Church give challenge and impetus to our ministry. We are challenged by the Episcopal Conference of Puebla and our own Chilean Church leaders to evangelize from the standpoint of the poor, to work for the liberation of the whole person — not just to give spiritual platitudes — and to strive for the strengthening of the local Church and greater lay participation in Church and society.

Also, the Church has made a preferential option for the youth who form one-half of the population. With the youth, I work in group meetings, retreats, workshops, outings, and individual counseling. I started simply — by helping a few older youths who took the responsibility of preparing small groups of 15- to 18-year-olds for their Christian commitment within their own reality. After two years of such preparation, the youths may or may not receive the sacrament of Confirmation, and may continue to participate in a youth community.

I support groups of older youths. Together we try to see where the needs are in the Christian formation of the whole person.

There are also younger people who wish to participate in the community after receiving the first