

Communicating . . . The Good News

"The ultimate goal, of course, is to develop the communications abilities in the diocese so that we can more effectively proclaim the Church's message." So spoke Sister Roberta Tierney, co-chairperson of the diocesan Communications Committee, in recently describing the group's work. "The Church's message," referred to by the sister is, of course, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The committee has been concentrating on planning and is near completion of a diocesan process which it expects to present to Bishop Matthew H. Clark before July 1.

The committee is working on developing an information policy and manual to provide guidance for diocesan personnel in dealing with the news media, the production of a communications seminar for diocesan and parish personnel charged with working with the news media or other public relations activities, a survey of the communications policies and systems in operation in neighboring dioceses, and the compilation of existing diocesan newsletters and other publications, as well as audiovisual and broadcast equipment.

Father Louis A. Vasile, the bishop's secretary and co-chairperson of the committee, points out that the committee already has some concrete accomplishments. He referred to the extensive coverage in the media of the bishops' pastoral, the challenge of peace, including Bishop Clark's public hearing on the subject and his news conference at the Rochester-Monroe County Airport upon his return from the Chicago meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"That coverage" Father Vasile said, "was the result of the joint effort of the International Justice and Peace Commission and the Communications Committee."

But while the committee has already made contributions to diocesan life, Sister Roberta, who also is Director of the Diocesan Division of Education, is looking ahead. "We need to determine what we have and what we need in order to intelligently plan for the future," she said.

Some primary objectives have been set up -- establishment of a formalized public information program to reach all people of the diocese, improvement of internal communications and maximizing use of such internal resources as printing, audiovisual production and computer capabilities.

A high priority, according to Sister Roberta, is streamlining the mailing system to cut down on the volume of mail from the Pastoral Center.

As for the future, the committee is considering the feasibility of an eventual linkup with the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America. Also being considered is the establishment of a communications office in the Pastoral Center, decisions on which, Sister Roberta pointed out, must await completion of the planning process and evaluation of present resources.

Other members of the team are Father Louis J. Hohman, pastor of St. Vincent's in Churchville; Sister Mary Ann Binsack, Director of the Department of Religious Education, and Francine Patella, Campaign for Human Development coordinator.

Communication Campaign

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