

# Diocese Assumes Role in Metro Police Debate

The diocesan Department of Justice and Peace will present a "theological rationale" for its support of the consolidated police force proposal, popularly known as the metro police proposal, to area parishes this summer. The proposal, which also has the support of the Office of Social Ministry and Father Charles Mulligan as division

director, is up for a November referendum. According to Dominic Aquila of the diocesan department, the "rationale" and an ancillary "bible study" program used to present the issue, was developed by Genesee Ecumenical Ministries and approved by its board. The theology is based on

consideration of the themes of justice, equity and community, Aquila said.

The metro police proposal, he said, is the best available avenue for realizing that theology in the Rochester area at the present time.

In one form or another, the metro police question has been around Monroe County for a long time.

This most recent effort, however, marks the first time that a diocesan agency has entered the debate.

"Examine our community: we see signs of injustice," the GEM rationale states. "The inequitable distribution of resources as basic as food, adequate housing, and jobs is clearly evident. The disparity of income between city and suburbs continues to increase. One in every six households in the city lives on an income below the poverty level, compared to one in 20 households in the suburbs. These inequities exist because of broken relationships and oppressive systems. Zoning laws that exclude low and moderate income housing; an oppressive welfare system; racial prejudice and discrimination; strategies based on political power all create and continue these injustices."

The GEM rationale further states, "As the body of Christ, we claim our interdependence as well as our dependence on God. . . Part of our struggle as Christians, then, is to understand more fully what it means to live in community with diverse people."

The rationale says "Our Biblical tradition calls us to look for our neighbors and to; find the specific, active ways we can be loving them."

Related to that call, the rationale says, "is our responsibility as stewards of God's gifts to us."

"This has implications not

only for how we manage our personal resources, or those of our churches, but also how we care for the resources of our community. How we allocate tax revenues, how we pay for public education, who will pay for necessary services are all questions of stewardship."

Towards the close of the rationale, GEM says, "Somehow, our welfare depends on our seeking the well-being or peace of the place where we are. This means that whether we live in the city or suburbs, we must be active in mending broken relationships, pointing to inequities, calling for systemic reform where needed."

In short, the metro police proposal calls for, among its items:

- The transfer of the Rochester Police Department to Monroe County, to combine with the sheriff's road patrol;
- The 10 towns and villages operating their own police forces given the opportunity to voluntarily join the county department;
- The appointment of the chief of police by the county manager and confirmed by the county legislature;
- Transfer of central police services such as training, records and firearms training to the new department from the county Department of Public Safety and Judicial Services;
- Maintenance of the elected sheriff with responsibilities for corrections and civil duties;
- Appointment by the president of the county

legislature of a 25-member citizens committee to advise the chief of police.

The setup would be financed in part by a hike in the county sales tax rate, from seven to eight percent.

In addition, the proposal calls for transfer of the funding of police services from property taxes, which is how the city and the towns and villages with their own forces pay for them now, to sales tax revenues; transfer to the county of the cost of police services for the city and those communities choosing to join.

However, county property taxes currently used to pay for the sheriff's road patrol will remain in place as part of the total budget for police services.

A strategy worked out by the Department of Justice and Peace, called for a letter

The diocesan Department of Justice and Peace, and the Office of Social Ministry are funded by:



to be sent to suburban priests last week, bearing the signatures of their urban confreres on the issue.

In addition, a series of lunches for priests were called for, their objective "to provide information and to move the priests to talk about the issue from the pulpit," a department paper stated.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

## July 4 Meditation

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 10/1-12, 17-20. (R1) Is. 66/10-14. (R2) Gal. 6/14-18.

July 4th is Independence Day: The day we celebrate our first fight for freedom, our Declaration of Independence.

Naturally, this day brings to mind our bishops' wonderful pastoral on war and peace.

Echoing our Holy Father, the bishops declared that nuclear deterrence is morally acceptable as a stopgap, provided in the meanwhile an earnest search is made for broad disarmament and political agreements.

It did not conclude that all wars, all battles, all military service persons are taking a morally wrong stance when serving in the common defense of freedom at the risk of their own freedom and life.

It did not adopt an attitude that all employment of force among nations is immoral, or that non-violence even in the face of evil is a greater virtue than resistance of evil by force.

Such misconstructions do not square with the laws of nature or of nature's God.

Can resistance to evil by force not be an act of heroic love? Would not a man fighting to death for the defence of his wife and children against rape and murder fulfill Christ's words: "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn. 15/13)?

Does not the Old Testament image God as a "warrior" God? For the independence of His people, did He not wipe out the armies of Egypt? Did He not fight Joshua's battles? Raise up Judges, like Joans of Arc, to overthrow by arms the enslavers of His people? Make David's wars His own? Bless the arms of the Maccabees?

Never did the Son of God ask soldiers to lay down their arms. On the contrary Jesus' highest praise went to a centurion. At every Holy Communion the centurion's words "I am not worthy" are on our lips. A centurion on Calvary confessed Jesus to be the Son of God. A centurion in Acts was the first gentile to be received into the Church by St. Peter. In a word,

among the great heroes of Scriptures, soldiers rank among the greatest.

Never did Jesus teach surrender to evil. His turn the other cheek, His go the extra mile, His put up the sword, as St. Thomas taught, were counsels to personal perfection, not admonitions to governments (II-II, q.40). No one would dream of imposing the counsel of clerical celibacy on a State. His words were a warning that His Kingdom was to come on earth, not like Mohammedanism, by fire and sword, but by the cross and love. The Jews wanted a military Messiah, like David. Jesus would have none of this — "those who use the sword are sooner or later destroyed by it" (Mt. 26/52), like Theudas and the Galileans (Acts 5/36 ff).

Nobody wants an arms race. Nobody wants war. But should anybody want an evil peace, like that of Vietnam? Should anyone want our nation to be left defenseless in the face of an irresponsible enemy vowed to communicate the world, pledged to destroy human freedom, religion, and human dignity?

Our bishops have spoken out to correct the conscience of the nation. Well and good! "But," as Cardinal Casaroli, the Secretary of the Vatican State, counseled, "we must not create greater difficulties for governments in an area already so difficult and so full of responsibility." The pastoral, therefore, should not be read as endorsing anti-nuke protests, creating greater difficulties for our governments.

As for us, the people of God, we ought to pray daily for peace, as our bishops requested in their pastoral.

But let us also pray that the universal yearning for peace will not lead us to accept peace at any price.

Pray that the desire for peace drive us not away from the eternal vigilance that is the price of any peace.

Pray that our reluctance to using force freeze not our feelings for those who have lost their freedom.

Pray for a peace the world cannot give. Pray for the peace of Christ — a peace based on justice: the justice of each of us returning to God and giving Him His due.

For the tragedy of Sodom and Gomorrah was not the nuclear holocaust, but the godless immorality that spawned it.

## Detroit Assembly To Meet Biennially

Detroit (NC) — The Detroit archdiocesan Pastoral Council has voted 33-14 for the archdiocesan Pastoral Assembly to meet every two years instead of annually.

The Pastoral Assembly meets to recommend goals for the archdiocese. The Pastoral Council, a smaller body, meets quarterly to follow up on the recommendations of the Pastoral Assembly.

This change was introduced because it was felt by more than 80 percent of current and past members of the council that the assembly generates more recommendations than the council can handle within 12 months. This was after the council had reviewed results from a local survey of some past members of both bodies and a survey of 12 dioceses in the country which do not have councils.

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