



Bishop Clark gave the address of welcome to some 300 taking part in the workshop last Tuesday at the St. Thomas More parish school gymnasium.

Canon Law

Continued from Page 1

He provided Scriptural support for Church law, quoting from Matthew 18:15-17, when Jesus told his apostles that two people must work to solve differences between themselves at first. If that doesn't work, then they should bring in one or two arbiters as witnesses to the testimony. If that doesn't suffice then the grieving party should take the matter to "the Church." If the party will not listen to the Church, "treat him as though he were a pagan or a tax collector."

"Excommunicate him," is Father Cunningham's translation.

Likewise, St. Paul told the Corinthians to settle their differences in the Church.

By the first and second centuries, "little rule books" began to appear, Father Cunningham said, setting down rules for Christians -- "Must say 'The Lord's Prayer' daily, must abstain on Wednesday and Friday, if you are going to sue someone it must be done on Monday morning."

But such laws were scattered around the world, among the various communities. It remained until Dionysius Exiguus in the fifth century put them all together to give the Church its first semblance of canon law. It held things together until 1200 when Gratian put together everything since Dionysius, added footnotes and created a scientific body of Church law which was in effect until 1917 when the present canon law was codified, mostly through the work of a "genius," Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, who headed the commission codifying the law. Cardinal Gasparri was given the assignment in 1904 and it was to take 25 years. Instead, he completed the work in 12 years and it has served until now.

Thus, in Father Cunningham's words, "we are living in a moment of great

history" for on Nov. 27 we will have an official document of Church law for only the fourth time in history.

The canon law scholar then described the 1917 code and the revised law going into effect a week from Sunday.

The 1919 code was one of coordination. It had a solid foundation -- Vatican Council I. It stressed pontifical supremacy, the infallibility of the pope, a monarchical model of Church, a highly centralized authority. "The Church was set aside from the world, to which the world must answer."

The revised code also has a solid foundation -- Vatican Council II. It is a code of renewal and revival. It reflects Vatican II's concern with self-analysis. Instead of setting the Church aside from the world it puts the Church in the midst of the world.

Father Cunningham said that in 1917, although Cardinal Gasparri consulted many people along the way, the code was "essentially his. It reflects his philosophy." In the 1983 code, the work was done by committee. Each new draft was sent to thousands around the world for reaction and suggestions.

"It is a work of accommodation. A work of compromise, and that is not a dirty word. Our Declaration of Independence and Constitution are both products of the same procedure as the 1983 code," he said.

"We cannot overemphasize the effect of Vatican II on the code," he added.

He said the code has strong ecumenical thrust, recognizing the juridical reality of other churches for the first time. It has strong pastoral thrust, establishing the pope and bishops in leadership; the priest "as the person who stands in the person of Christ," celebrates the Eucharist, reconciliation; the deacon called by the bishop to a specific ministry; sisters and brothers who have individual calling to give

Judas the First Canon Lawyer?

In order to keep his audience of some 300 people involved during his necessarily long dissertation, Father Cunningham often subjected his most and potestato serving with a spice of humor.

• "There is no truth to the rumor that the first canon lawyer was appointed at the last Supper when Jesus said, 'One of you will betray me.'"

• "What is law? A simple word with three letters -- obviously not an obscene word. Although I've been told I pronounce it with four letters (lawr, in his Boston dialect)."

• He quoted others, including "his neighbor" John Adams who said the reasons for canon law are "tyranny, cruelty and lust ... and I wonder which brings you here today."

• Talking about the huge numbers of Catholics in the world, he said "in the hundreds of millions," he quoted St. Ignace Loyola: "Here come the Catholics, here comes everybody!"



Father Cunningham

witness to the Gospel, and laypersons who are called by baptism to proclaim the Gospel, to bring its message to those who no one else can reach.

The American translation of the code is due by the end of the month, Father Cunningham said.

Will it work?

"The lesson of the law is learned from the experience of the law," Father Cunningham said. "We cannot look at the law in the abstract and predict if it is good or bad. All we (as ministers) can do is encourage people to respect the law -- we can't force them to live the law."

Father Cunningham had a word of caution. Everyone should remember that the code "is Roman law. Not English Common Law or American law.

Where our law comes from the grass roots and goes up, Roman law comes from the top down." Where in our country judges interpret the law, in Rome, the legislators interpret the law, and in the Church that is the Pope.

The code "is not the American way and it is not intended to be."

Toward his general overview of the code, Father Cunningham mentioned Code 222 in the revised version as "very beautiful." It reads:

"Christ's faithful have the obligation to provide for the needs of the Church, so that the Church has available to it those things which are necessary for divine worship, for apostolic and charitable work and for the worthy support of its ministers." At this point, John Paul II personally added, "They are also obliged to promote social justice and, mindful of the Lord's precept, to help the poor from their own resources."



Part of the audience which consisted of priests, Religious, principals and others involved in ministry in the diocese.



Father Cunningham's talk was signed by Margot Van Etten.

Vat

Vatican (Vatican p guidelines s tion and on be a Catholi "Educati Human L Religious D cation in School" a ments bei Catholic e Vatican's Catholic Cardinal prefect of t in a repo Synod of E he deliver October, th made avail

Ge M Of

Vatic II told genetic able on is respe The Oct. 29 meeting Associa The manipu can b extrao kind o desirab In j genetic able, t tions i premis "In tion m the u that o spiritu united "Cc must r human Gen

The I



W THA

CHO

25 F 454