



Sister Clare Roland, SSJ, leads the meeting last week on the state bishops' pastoral on criminal justice.

Pastoral on Criminal Justice Topic of Discussion, Action

By Terrance J. Brennan
Bishop Matthew H. Clark met with a committee of 16 diocesans to discuss implementing the state bishops' "Pastoral Statement on

Criminal Justice" last Wednesday, Dec. 14, at the Pastoral Office.

The statement was issued in January this year, under the eegis of the New York State Catholic Conference, the bishops' official state lobby.

The diocesan group was chaired by Sister Clare Roland, SSJ, diocesan director of chaplaincy services under the Division of Social Ministries.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways of increasing the Church's influence in the arena of criminal justice, and also how to challenge individuals to become more involved in the issue at the parish, community and diocesan levels.

The pastoral statement discusses the state correctional system, pointing out what it calls "substantial overcrowding."

"We find a prison population," the bishops added, "that is generally undereducated and negatively impacted by the socio-economic conditions that prevail in today's society. This group inordinately consists of members of the minority population and a significant number are first-time convictions for non-violent crimes."

"For the system to be fully responsive to the needs of society and to those of the inmate population, changes are necessary."

The statement also cites "ineffective approaches" to curb these problems, that currently exist by suggesting alternatives before trial, after conviction and within the corrections system itself.

The statement offers suggestions to aid the victims of crime, and closes with a citation of the need for response from the Christian community.

In his remarks at the meeting, Bishop Clark said, "It often happens that (prisoners) are in surroundings not very reconstructive. Our call is to be Christ to those who call out for freedom."

He added, "We must find a way to protect society, keeping in mind what is kind and human."

Permanent Deacon Stanley Zawacki stressed that there is very little currently being done in the diocese for the imprisoned. "On this committee," Zawacki said, "we've got people who are involved directly with those in prisons and those who are interested in helping. We must get these two groups of people to collaborate on what we are to do as a diocese."

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

One Person Can Save Christmas

St. Albert's, (R3) 9/13, 5-6 (R3) 11/21-14.

Next Sunday is Christmas.

Christmas celebrates a time when a light shone on earth to a people seated in darkness.

Christmas celebrates a time when the grace of God appeared. His grace shined to us sinners.

Christmas celebrates a time when glory was given to God the Father by Mary, Joseph, and a babe, and peace and heavenly joy came to earth.

As we celebrate Christmas whenever we light a candle of love in a darkness whenever and wherever the grace erupts into our lives toward all of us whenever and wherever bringing peace to the world.

I think the following story is an American one who had to travel to Paris for Christmas Eve.

The young sailor finished his meal and got up to leave. Putting on his coat he walked over to the flower woman's table. "Happy Christmas," he said, smiling and picking up two corsages. "How much are they?" "Two francs, monsieur. Pressing one of the small corsages that he put it into the letter he had written. She looked at the young man and said, "I do not know what you are saying, but I will be glad to help you. The young man smiled and said, "Thank you very much. I will be back to see you. The young man walked away with a heavy heart. He had just learned that his father had died. He had to travel to Paris for Christmas Eve. He had to travel to Paris for Christmas Eve. He had to travel to Paris for Christmas Eve.

Well, a merry and blessed Christmas to you all!

DEATHS

George Montgomery, Former CFC Director

Mass of Christian Burial was concelebrated Dec. 13 for George Montgomery who died Dec. 10, 1983.

Mr. Montgomery served from 1952-1968 as director of the diocesan Catholic Family Center.

Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, and Fathers Charles Mulligan and Robert Smith concelebrated the rites at St. Margaret Mary Church.

Mr. Montgomery, a native of Oswego, began work with diocesan Catholic Charities as a caseworker in 1936.

During World War II he served in France, and on his return to Catholic Charities, was named casework supervisor.

"He was a leader in his field," Catherine Wobus said last week. Miss Wobus is casework director at CFC.

"He worked closely with

the Community Chest in their research department, developing a functional budget process for non profit agencies," she said.

That process was adopted throughout the country, she added.

She also noted that because of his work in refugee resettlement, he was one of ten Americans selected to go to Germany in the late 1940s to inspect and visit refugee camps.

Mr. Montgomery is survived by his wife, Beatrice; son, David; daughter, Janet and three grandchildren.

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