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SHARING: Bishop, Legislators Air Mutual Concerns

In an unusual meeting last Friday afternoon, Bishop Matthew H. Clark and several diocesan leaders shared Church concerns on housing, employment and prisons with state legislators.

The meeting took place at the Pastoral Center and was characterized by virtually all the legislators present as an event which should occur more frequently.

The legislators were also able to field their own concerns and seek diocesan support for their efforts.

Among the participants at the meeting were Bill Steinfeldt, Pinny Cooke, David Gant, Louise Slaughter, Gary Proud, Dale Volker and Jim Nagle on the Albany side. Bishop Clark, Father Charles Mulligan, Mary Heidkamp, Sister Clare Roland, James Maloney, Maurice Tierney, Paula Hawk, Allyn Smith and Tom Carey represented diocesan concerns.

The agenda focused on three areas: housing issues and initiatives, unemployment and employment services, and prison overcrowding and criminal justice.

Bishop Clark said later

that a similar meeting will be slated in the Southern Tier in the near future to air these issues with representatives from the region.

In the area of unemployment, the diocese specifically asked legislators to:

- "Support a program for structurally unemployed that provides: training experience on a job with close supervision and measurable skill development opportunities; a built-in training program of basic education/G.E.D.; if needed, skill training; a flexible tenure within the program to assure each participant is placeable at the conclusion of the experience and a private sector work 'try-out' phase.

- "Support a state job training partnership trust fund financed by existing unemployment insurance funds. The program could provide up to \$25 million more for retraining and hiring long-term unemployed, at no additional cost to employers.

- "Support a program of \$5 million more for part-time and summer jobs. Enable summer employers to take

tax deductions for creating summertime work opportunities.

- "Support use of unemployment funds to keep plants operating at relatively full employment and to reduce the amount of benefit days resulting from a major reduction in force."

In addition, the diocese is looking to state agencies to: "Support greater integration and coordination of state agencies involved in employment services; support of Annual Employment Services, state and local governmental agencies providing employment services; support change in work rules for public assistance beneficiaries who are employable; support targeting of employment services to youth (including teen mothers); support Board of Regents in making facilities, talent and services more available for structurally unemployed and dislocated persons; support some redirection of job corps efforts toward urban areas."

The NYSCC public policy committee report on prisons states:

"Rather than a policy of



Photos by Terrance J. Brennan

Legislators and diocesan leaders gather to discuss their concerns.

prison expansion as a remedy to relieve prison overcrowding, we would recommend immediate adoption of the following:

- "Presuming parole of inmates under supervision after they have served their judicially set minimum sentences;

- "Abolition of mandatory minimum state prison sentencing for non-violent felony offenders;

- "Enactment of legislation requiring the escalation of the scheduled release dates of screened and specified inmates whenever the prison system capacity has been exceeded by more than 5 percent for a 90-day period;

- "Legislation to permit the use of 'good time' off the minimum sentence of incarcerated persons.

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Assemblywoman Pinny Cooke talks with Sister Clare Roland, S.S.J., director of diocesan chaplaincy services.

CARING: Thanks Giving Appeal Raises 3-Plus Million

Bishop Matthew H. Clark announced at a press conference last Friday that the Third Annual Thanks Giving Appeal has received total pledges of \$3,100,000 — exceeding its goal of \$2,729,000.

Money donated at this time, the bishop said, amounts to just more than \$2 million.

In explaining the success of the project for the third consecutive year, Bishop Clark said, "I think this shows our people are deeply committed to the work of our Church and are willing to support it."

More than 71,000 pledges

have been received and 143 parishes reached or exceeded their goal, many by a substantial margin, the bishop added.

Twenty-eight parishes did not reach their goals, including some of the parishes in the Seneca County region where turmoil existed most of the summer and fall due to the peace protests at the army depot.

Of this, the bishop said, "The work required to deal with that and keep up with the appeal was really a tremendous ordeal and therefore understandable as to why some of the parishes

in that region fell short of their goal."

"I am, of course, pleased with the financial support reflected in the total," Bishop Clark said, "but I am even more delighted that the appeal enabled us to explain our work to the people of the diocese.

"I find especially heartwarming the genuine community spirit evidenced through such widespread cooperation, especially because of the economic conditions today."

The diocese returns 80 percent of the funds raised by a parish in excess of its goal back to the parish. As a result of the first two appeal drives, more than \$1 million in overage money has been returned to parishes.

Bishop Clark said that the success of this year's appeal enables the diocese to establish and support new programs which will be of direct assistance to people and parishes. Among these are:

- Coordination of planning and service among city parishes through the new Division of Urban Services.



Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Bishop Matthew H. Clark, center, announces the results of the appeal, flanked by John Greisberger, left, campaign chairman, and Father James Marvin, campaign coordinator.

- Expansion of services to separated, divorced, remarried and widowed Catholics and the Human Life Commission.

- Increased staffing for ecumenical and interreligious affairs.

- A full-time staff coordinator to help deal with the increasing problems of teenage sexuality.

- A pilot program in the Finger Lakes Region for the Diocesan Volunteer Corps.

- A Religious Education Office for the Finger Lakes Region.

In addition to the programs above, the gifts and

contributions will maintain and support the following programs:

- Parish Subsidies — funds to assist the campus ministry programs, urban subsidies, parish for the hearing impaired, hospital chaplains, etc. (\$400,000)

- Tuition Subsidies — to allow students from needy families to attend both Catholic elementary and secondary schools. (\$140,000)

- Support for regional offices — to fund programs throughout the 12-county diocese such as the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministries (located in Geneva and serving Seneca, Cayuga,

Yates, Ontario and Wayne counties), the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministries and Religious Education (located in Elmira and serving Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins and Steuben counties), regional coordinators, Diocesan Pastoral Council, etc. (\$250,000)

Also on hand at the press conference, and lauded by the bishop for special service to the appeal, were Father James Marvin, appeal coordinator; Father Peter Bayer, diocesan operations manager; and local attorney John Greisberger, diocesan chairperson of the 1983 appeal.

New Missions Feature

With this edition, the Courier-Journal introduces a new monthly feature, "To Look through Each Other's Eyes," which will focus on the life and work of diocesan missionaries. Father Robert C. Bradler, diocesan director of missions, said, "With this page, we hope to strengthen the bond of communication between our local faith community and the missionaries who are serving the world."

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