COURIER-JOURNAL

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DPC Told: Priest Shortage Hitting Home

Delegates to the Diocesan Pastoral Council were repeatedly warned last Saturday of the dwindling number of priests, and the consequences of that phenomenon on the diocesan budget.

The warning came during the semiannual report of the Ministerial Review Committee (MRC), and was given by Ron Keller, its chairman and former chairman of the DPC.

The review committee investigates the functioning and budgeting of the Pastoral Office and presents its findings to the DPC.

During his report, he emphasized several times the necessity for diocesans to be conscious of the dwindling number of priests and the consequent budget impact as priests are replaced in various ministries.

He said that justice will demand professionals be properly compensated, and that this will have a budget impact on parishes as well as the diocese.

The major portion of the DPC's agenda was given over to the presentation and discussion of the report.

The MRC listed four major concerns:

"1. The Ministerial Review Committee has a concern about the general lack of coordination and consolidation of personnel functions. These are spread throughout all divisions and in virtually every department. At the request of Bishop Clark, Father Charles J. Latus is chairing a committee of division directors (Father Charles Mulligan, Father Peter Bayer, and Sister Roberta Tierney) to study this question. To date the committee has done an initial survey of departments and has begun to focus on the needs and advantages of a comprehensive approach to personnel. In early February a consultant from the United States bishops' conference will meet with a committee to help focus this project. We look forward to a report from this committee by early spring.

"2. The Ministerial Review Committee believes that opportunities for continuing education programs and professional development should be available for all people serving in Church ministry. Presently a committee of diocesan personnel is studying the question of professional development and the possibility of providing some financial assistance to all professionals serving in Church ministry. The work of this committee will be incorporated in the semiannual reports to the MRC and communication about the progress of recommendations and proposals will be forthcoming.

"3. The MRC is seriously concerned about the lack of a formal needs assessment process to establish diocesan priorities. It is only when priorities are established that programs may be adequately evaluated. We understand that the needs assessment process that will be implemented by Deacon Claude Lester under the direction of Sister Mary Hilaire Gaelens will achieve this end. It is important to the MRC that this task proceed on schedule.

"4. The MRC is seriously concerned about the decrease in the number of priests and women religious ministering in our diocese. This will not only have a serious effect on our diocesan ministries, but a serious impact on diocesan and parish budgets as well. This concern must continue to be communicated to the diocese with the impending budget impact. It is only with planning and projections that a crisis situation can be avoided."

Keller also commended the diocesan staff for the quantity and quality of its work, and commented that the concerns raised by the MRC are also shared by diocesan personnel.

He further complimented diocesan staff on its sense of collaboration and on the inter-divisional collaboration discovered in the course of the MRC's investigations.

The DPC accepted the

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[illegible] civil rights leader and [illegible] and Pope John Paul II [illegible] violence. (NC Photo)

Pope and Jesse Held Hands and Prayed Together

New York (NC) -- To Auxiliary Bishop Emerson Moore of New York, the most memorable part of the Jan. 3 visit of Jesse Jackson to Pope John Paul II was not [illegible] from conversation. Mr. Jackson told [illegible]

"[illegible] the pope came forward the end of the visit [illegible] Holy Father, 'Can we pray?'" Bishop [illegible] Jackson to Rome, said in an [illegible] Jan. 14.

[illegible] also asked if [illegible] and through the pope [illegible]

Cardinal Bernardin:

'Clinic Attacks Wrong -- But Symptomatic of Abortion Violence'

Washington (NC) -- In a statement marking the 12th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's abortion decisions, Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago called recent abortion clinic bombings "wrong in themselves" but also a symptom of the violence he said is unleashed by abortion.

Cardinal Bernardin, speaking as chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, also said most abortions today "lack even the grounds of medical necessity sometimes alleged in support of this practice."

He said a "clear majority of Americans" finds abortions performed for non-medical reasons "intolerable."

The cardinal's statement said Americans are "rightly troubled" by recent abortion clinic bombings. The statement condemned the bombings and pledged the U.S. bishops' commitment "to seeking a peaceful, non-violent solution to the abortion issue."

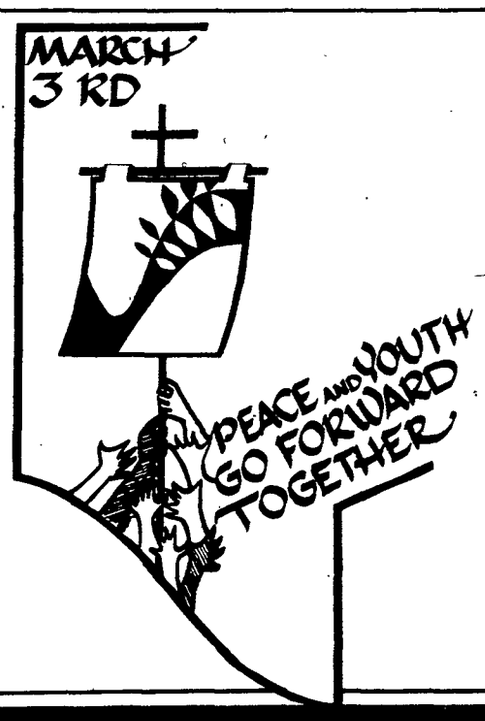
"These dangerous, ill-considered and deplorable incidents demonstrate once again the fact that violence begets violence," Cardinal Bernardin said. "Wrong in themselves, they are also symptomatic of the violence unleashed into society by the legalized violence of abortion."

He said the Supreme Court's abortion decisions "lie at the heart of a divisive national crisis which has grown increasingly urgent and requires a prompt solution."

"As a society, we nee to confront the situation which they (the decisions) created and to restore legal protection to the unborn," he said.

"While there are no acceptable moral grounds for any direct abortion," Cardinal Bernardin said, "most of the abortions now taking place lack even the grounds of medical necessity sometimes alleged in support of this practice. A clear majority of Americans, holding a wide variety of religious and moral views, finds this intolerable."

He urged public officials, "especially members of the new Congress," to join in the search for legislative and constitutional solutions to "resolve this national crisis."



Plans Proceeding For Youth Day

The second annual Bishop's Day with Youth will take place Sunday, March 3, at Bishop Kearney High School with the theme "Peace and Youth Growing Together."

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will include the day as part of his Lenten Crossroads program. The keynote address will be presented by Maggie Wilson Brown, executive director of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministers.

The entire program will run from 12:30 to 7:15 p.m. and information regarding registration wil be available to parishes soon, according to Patrick B. Fox, diocesan director of Youth Ministry.

"An added idea this year is that parishes that come as groups design a banner reflecting the theme and their own group identity and being it along," Fox said.

The program will consist of 33 workshops, time for questions with the bishop, Liturgy and dinner.

Further information is available from the Office of Youth Ministry, (716) 328-3210.