

Division of Personnel and Staffing and Development



The Division of Personnel, Staffing and Development provides a comprehensive approach to the recruitment, formation and utilization of personnel at all levels throughout the Diocese of Rochester.

The Rev. Charles Latus, Director of the Division, says, "Because of the challenging times for the women and men who serve the Church as Pastoral Ministers, the diocese has a special obligation today to support them and at the same time to call forth new leaders for the Church of tomorrow."

One of the principle focuses of the division this year has been the creation of a comprehensive personnel office. "This approach was prompted", Father Latus said, "by the emerging needs of the parishes and institutions in the diocese, because of the development of new ministries in the church today and as a result of the fewer number of priests available to serve the Church of Rochester."

The clustering of parishes in two areas of the diocese has been completed and two other areas are presently the focus of similar study.

The creation of the Department of Personnel Services has been a key step this year. Father Latus sees this new department as part of an on-going effort by the diocese to better coordinate services to pastoral staffs.

Another major focus of this division is vocations. Numerous vocation

education/awareness programs are being conducted by the Vocations Office. Becket Hall is one of the programs offered for those discerning God's call in our lives.

The Division of Personnel, Staffing and Development is responsible for the seminary placement and supervision of candidates for the priesthood at seminaries in the United States and abroad.

The division coordinates a special Intern Process designed to introduce newly ordained priests and deacons to parish life. Another two-week program has been developed to assist new pastors in their first pastorate.

Much work is done in areas that provide continuing education opportunities, spiritual direction, counselling and health seminars for the priests and religious serving in the diocese.

A four year formation program for lay men preparing to serve as Permanent Deacons and an annual summer workshop for pastoral assistant candidates are also coordinated by this division.

"Our division," Father Latus says, "is constantly searching out new and more creative ways to serve the personnel needs of the diocese. Comprehensive personnel is our on-going goal."



A Word for Sunday



With Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 7:31-37; (R1) Isaiah 35:4-7; (R2) James 2:1-5.

Today we are witnessing a renaissance of healing in the Church: healing of memories, of relationships, from habits of sin and physical healing.

Father McManus in "The Healing Power of the Sacraments" writes: "People need to know the presence of God; they need to experience His power in their lives and witness His Spirit at work in the Church. Ideas convert nobody... Preaching without healing is powerless; healing without preaching meaningless" (pp. 100-101).

Sunday's gospel is the story of a physical healing. Friends bring a deaf-mute to Jesus. Because the man was mute, his friends spoke for him to Jesus that He might touch him. Because the man was deaf, Jesus resorted to sign language. He took the man away from the crowd, to get his attention, and then proceeded with signs — touching his ear, spitting, and touching his tongue — to convey that He was going to do something about the impaired senses. He looked up to heaven to point out that it was from there that help would come. Then Jesus emitted a groan: man's miseries — be they physical like deafness, or spiritual like deafness to His words — always deeply pained Jesus and moved Him to action. Whenever He was deeply moved, Jesus used his mother tongue. Thus He said: "Be opened!" in the Aramaic tongue "Ephphatha!" And it was done.

Jesus had given the man power to speak, but then He forbade him to speak about the cure. The reason was that the people were still thinking in terms of a political Messiah, a warrior king like David. The word Mark used for a speech impediment is the very same word Isaiah used (R1) — a word used nowhere else in the Bible save in those two passages. The people got the connection, and "their amazement went beyond all bounds." It wouldn't have taken much to ignite rebellion against Rome and inevitable national destruction. Hence the command

of Jesus not to tell anyone.

The deaf-mute had been brought to Jesus that He might touch him.

The touch of a Paderewski or a Paganini could stir up hearts or melt them.

The touch of a Michaelangelo could transform a block of marble into an angel.

The touch of a Da Vinci on canvas could create a Mona Lisa whose enigmatical smile would keep generations wondering.

The skillful hands of the surgeon or the nurse can heal the rooted disease and soothe the fevered brow.

The touch of the hand of a friend, the gentle pressure, can calm a sorrowing heart or infuse confidence into a faint heart.

The touch of Jesus unstopped deaf ears and loosened a tied tongue.

But the question is, has Christ stopped healing today? Does He no longer touch or speak words of healing? How foolish to think so! For Christ has extended Himself down through the ages by fashioning from the womb of humanity another body for Himself — the Church. And He so identifies Himself with this body that when Saul persecuted the Church, Jesus asked him why do you persecute me — me, Jesus of Nazareth!

As the Son of God worked through a human body when He walked this earth and saved and healed by touch and word, so the Son of God now works through a mystical body and still saves and heals through the touch of His hands and the words of His mouth. These touches, these words, we call "sacraments." And the sacraments have the power to save and to heal precisely because they are the touches and words of Jesus Himself done through His body, the Church.

How we should cherish and revere the sacraments! They are truly encounters with Jesus through His Church. They are the touch of His hands — a touch that can still save and heal today all those who use them with faith.

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