

Short of quorum, DPC unable to address Curran controversy

By Teresa A. Parsons

Upcoming elections, a Thanks Giving Appeal update and discussion on the role of laity in ministry were among the issues included on the Diocesan Pastoral Council's (DPC) agenda last Saturday.

But the primary issue addressed by the gathering at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield was a continuing problem rather than an agenda item. Once again, the DPC was paralyzed because not enough members were present to conduct official business during the afternoon session.

In his regularly scheduled open forum during the meeting's morning session, Bishop Matthew H. Clark spoke about the history of the controversy surrounding Father Charles Curran, the diocesan priest whose theological views have prompted censure from the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Northwest representative Karl Denninger then proposed a resolution "applauding" the statement on Father Curran released by Bishop Clark earlier this month.

Denninger asked that the DPC support Bishop Clark's action without endorsing Father Curran's specific views. "It is a statement of support to Bishop Clark for showing the courage to make any statement at all," Denninger said.

Although reaction to Denninger's motion appeared to be mixed, DPC representatives were unable to vote on the proposal after lunch because a majority of the seated members was no longer present.

The council's constitution states that no official action may be taken without a quorum — a majority of seated members — present.

"We have tripped over our own feet before trying to be supportive," said Pat Defendorf, DPC chairwoman. "It's a problem that we have to address ... The way things are, we can never predict beforehand whether a resolution can be passed."

Action to remedy the situation could be taken during an upcoming review of the DPC's constitution, Defendorf said.

Ken Scarcotta, representative of the permanent diaconate, also suggested that the scheduling of meetings be re-evaluated to determine if that is the reason for low attendance.

In an earlier presentation on the Thanks Giving Appeal, Father James Moynihan, coordinator of the appeal, said that in-hall solicitation will most likely be restored next year.

"That's certainly the overwhelming message we received," he said. "All of a sudden, in-hall solicitation became very popular."

"We need to get back the feeling of personal ownership by everybody concerned," he added.

Since the results of this year's appeal were announced, diocesan division directors and department heads have also volunteered to become more involved in the campaign, according to Father Moynihan. Next year, they may visit parishes in the weeks preceding the appeal to describe how funds donated affect ministry in the diocese.

As of March 14, Father Moynihan said the appeal had raised a total of \$3,084,000, which is still nearly \$500,000 short of its

stated goal.

During the afternoon session, DPC representatives heard a presentation on the role of laity in ministry by Deirdre Hetzler, a member of the DPC's Task Force on the Laity.

Election of a new executive committee is slated for the next DPC meeting, Saturday May 3. The annual dinner meeting usually scheduled for June has been canceled due to diocesan budget cuts.

Salvadoran archbishop accused of 'bias'

By Greg Erlandson

Washington (NC) — Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas, who has pressed for talks between the government of El Salvador and the guerrillas opposed to it, is at least unintentionally favoring the rebels, said a former guerrilla leader.

"Rivera Damas tries to maintain a position of equilibrium," said Napoleon Romero Garcia. "But sometimes he is more inclined to favor the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front), for example, in the case of dialogue."

Archbishop Rivera Damas was influential in arranging two peace meetings between the rebels and the government late in 1984, but no further talks have taken place, despite church efforts. The archbishop has been criticized as biased by both the FMLN and rightist elements in El Salvador.

Romero also criticized liberation theology and elements of the church that he said have sided with the guerrillas.

"In the FMLN there are many priests who have dropped their collars and picked up a gun," Romero said.

Romero, whose guerrilla name was Commander Miguel Castellanos, was involved with the rebel movement from 1975 until April 9, 1985, when he turned himself over to the government under an amnesty program initiated by President Jose Napoleon Duarte. Romero is one of the highest-ranking rebel officials to have taken advantage of Duarte's program.

Romero, who said he is under a sentence of death from the guerrillas he left behind, is

currently living in San Salvador under the protection of government security forces.

His trip to the United States was financed in part by two private organizations, the Gulf and Caribbean Foundation and the American Security Council.

In a March 20 talk at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a conservative center concerned with religious and ethical issues, Romero detailed his involvement in the Popular Liberation Forces, one of a coalition of forces in the FMLN.

Originally attracted to the rebel movement because of a romantic idealism and because of the country's severe inequities, Romero said he was recruited by the Popular Liberation Forces in 1975 while attending the National University.

He served in a variety of positions and received training in Cuba in 1980 and in Vietnam in 1983. He was the political-military head of the Metropolitan Front when he defected. Romero criticized Cuban and Nicaraguan involvement in El Salvador's civil war, saying that a 1979 FMLN agreement with Cuba for weapons meant the loss of political autonomy.

Because of that agreement, Romero said, the rebels "must give priority to the geopolitical concerns" of Nicaragua and Cuba.

But Romero gave only qualified support to Reagan administration efforts to provide military aid to the contras, rebel forces fighting the Marxist government of Nicaragua.

While such aid was positive if it kept Nicaragua from "consolidating its gains,"

Romero said, the United States should not emphasize only military aid.

"The aid should have come under another cover, less warlike," he said. He criticized the lack of a united opposition to the Sandinistas and the inability of the U.S. government to garner the support of other Western countries.

The Salvadoran guerrilla movement is weakening, Romero said, estimating no more than 5,000 rebel troops left in the field, down from 10,000 two years ago.

Romero said he decided to leave the rebels when he saw the "democratic opening," particularly the elections of 1982 and 1984.

He also grew disillusioned with the guerrillas' reliance on violence to achieve social change, he said.

Cenacle Retreat for Singles

"How Happy the Christian" will be the title of a retreat for Christian singles the weekend of April 11-13 at the Cenacle Center for Spiritual Renewal, 693 East Ave., Rochester. The retreat will be directed by the Cenacle Sisters and Father Francis Blighton. For more information and/or reservations, call (716)271-8755.

Red Cross Health Course

"Better Eating for Better Health" will be the theme of a 12-hour nutrition course offered at the Red Cross, 50 Prince St. on Thursdays, April 10 through May 15, from 10 a.m. to noon. To register, call (716)461-9800, ext. 222 or 326. The fee is \$30.

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