

Training program

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program in the diocese in 1969, the newly ordained learned "mostly from the school of hard knocks," according to Father Eisemann. "They're still learning in the school of hard knocks today," he added, "but they're getting guidance and supervision to avoid some of the pitfalls."

One need Bishop Hogan didn't foresee was that older priests would have to learn supervisory skills. That quickly became clear to Father Edward E. Steinkirchner when he was appointed director of the internship program in 1971.

"It was an area that was entirely new and different for clergy types, to be talking about supervision and mutual responsibility," Father Steinkirchner said.

He began searching for a church-oriented management-training program, and SALT was the only one he found. Developed for the Episcopal church in Kent, Washington, it had been adopted by the U.S. Navy's Chaplain Corps.

With help from several Episcopal priests and Father Patrick J. Grace, a diocesan priest and Navy chaplain, Father Steinkirchner organized the diocese's first training workshop in June, 1972.

A three-tiered process, SALT begins with a one-year contract for mutual growth drawn up by the supervisor and intern, complete with

goals and standards. The intern might, for example, set out to establish a youth ministry program. He and the supervisor then meet weekly to pray, to work out problems and to offer encouragement.

Meanwhile, the supervisor meets monthly with a fellow supervisor or consultant, who provides an impartial viewpoint and a sounding board.

From supervisors, SALT requires a two-year commitment. Because the program tries to combine practical experience with theoretical learning, supervisors usually begin working with an intern even before they complete their own training — a series of four workshops spread over two years. Ordained interns usually participate in SALT for four years — one as a deacon, and three as a priest.

"When an intern first comes on board, he's an individual that is very dependent," Father Eisemann explained. "Then, a little later on, the pastor finds himself asking, 'What is this guy doing?' That's independence. Finally, they reach the ideal, which is interdependence."

Since the program relies entirely on volunteer effort and carries no administrative costs, its funding needs are not great. Approximately 60 percent of SALT's budget comes from tuition charges and 40 percent from the Thanks Giving Appeal. The money is used to purchase books and other materials and to pay for workshops.

From the beginning, SALT carried with it a powerful incentive. Only those pastors who

were trained as supervisors would be assigned deacons and newly ordained priests as interns.

"The first guys who came in came because they wanted (to be assigned) a young priest . . . Some of them were very frank about that," Father Eisemann recalled. But gradually, he believes, priests began to come out of respect for the program.

SALT also helped to bridge the gap between priests of different generations. Before the Second Vatican Council, seminary training tended to be rigid, almost monastic, Father Conboy explained. Many of those priests, unprepared for the council's reforms, reacted with anger, suspicion and insecurity. "Because they didn't know where others stood in regard to the council, I think many priests became hesitant to mix with other priests," he said.

"Without a tool such as SALT, I think the going would have been much harder . . . In retrospect, I think it was a godsend!"

For each of the past 12 years, Father Eisemann has been a SALT supervisor. To him, the mutual growth SALT proposes has been more than an ideal.

"I have found it a very good way to learn to relate to the modern Church," he said. "Tasks are easy. It's relational skills that are difficult . . . It has been a good opportunity to develop the skills to reach out and work with other people."

After overseeing the program for 13 years, Father Steinkirchner evaluated SALT's results more succinctly. "If the intern and the supervisor follow the process, it works," he said.

Women religious

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caused her some momentary apprehensions, Sister Kathleen said that she is not fearful about the trip.

"If my going can make even the smallest difference for the better, then I can't imagine anything that could keep me from doing that," she said.

In addition to their own transportation costs, December Delegation members are

asked to raise at least \$300 to help purchase building materials, household items, tools and food to last until farmers can plant crops.

On November 15 at 8 p.m., Corpus Christi Parish will host a benefit concert by the Blue Suspenders to raise money for the repopulation effort in El Salvador. Sister Kathleen will take whatever money is raised with her on November 29.

Meanwhile, in Rochester, the Nazareth College campus ministry community plans a prayer and sending service for Sister Kathleen on November 20 at 9 p.m. in the college chapel.

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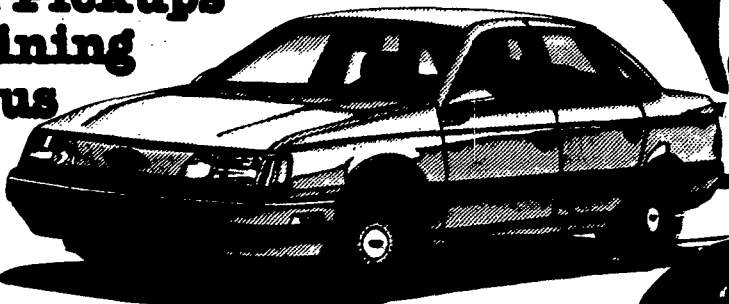
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