

National/International Report

'Miracle' needed to get women's pastoral to bishops in '87

By Liz Schevtchuk

Washington (NC) — If a "miracle" occurred, a refined and updated first draft of a planned pastoral letter on women's concerns could be ready by next November, but miracles are rare, said Bishop Joseph L. Imesch of Joliet, Ill., chairman of the panel drafting the letter.

The bishop, who chairs both the U.S. bishops' Committee on Women in Society and in the Church and a separate but affiliated writing committee for the pastoral letter, said Dec. 2 that four of six chapters of the pastoral had been written and two more were under way.

Meanwhile, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops announced Dec. 2 that the Committee on Women in Society and in the Church had been changed from "ad hoc" to a standing committee of the bishops. The announcement included a statement from Bishop Imesch that the newly upgraded committee intends "to take positive steps to advocate the equality of women."

"We've done an awful lot of writing," Bishop Imesch said in the interview about progress on the pastoral letter. He added that by late February, when the committee meets, "we will have written a rough draft of the entire letter."

But the committee will need several months after that to make refinements in the draft before it is presented to the NCCB Administrative Committee for its reaction, he said.

This means that it is likely to be early 1988 before a honed, updated first draft is released to the public, he added.

"I suppose if a miracle happened we would be ready in 1987," he said. "A miracle is a possibility. They happen sometimes. (But) I haven't had any yet," he said.

In a separate interview in November with The Michigan Catholic, newspaper of the Detroit Archdiocese, Bishop Imesch said the letter will focus on concerns raised by women during various local hearings. These include, he said, "women's desire to participate in the church decision making that affects them, sexist language, and the fact women want to be appreciated for the gifts they have."

On the subject of women's ordination he noted that women "who were angry before are now angrier."

"Women who have expectations of ordi-

nation are now having to face it that these expectations are not going to be met," the bishop said. "The issues dealt with in the letter will not be the answer to everything...."

Bishop Imesch's Dec. 2 statement on the work of the Committee on Women in Society and in the Church said the committee has directed the bishops' conference staff to review and take appropriate action on legislation affecting women.

"We are committed to the teachings of

Jesus Christ and of the Roman Catholic Church," the statement said. "Within the parameters of these teachings, and with respect for the viewpoints of all women, we will give positive support to all legislation or initiatives that promote the dignity and the personhood of women and that promote equal opportunity and rights for women."

The statement said that "many women have clearly articulated the pain they have experienced from inequalities and injustice" and "have expressed their desire for recogni-

tion of their dignity as persons, for equal opportunity and rights, for partnership, allowing all women and men to achieve their full potential."

"In addition to supporting, affirming and advocating legislation to foster women's equality, we ask that attitudes toward women in the church and church practices regarding equity for women employees be studied and that women be involved in all discussions of issues affecting their lives," the statement concluded.

Wall Street Jesuits term Boesky scandal a symptom

By Tracy Early

New York (NC) — The Wall Street insider trading scandal centering on Ivan F. Boesky proves the relevance of themes emphasized in the U.S. bishops' new pastoral letter on the American economy, according to two Jesuits who minister to the Wall Street community.

"I think the whole thing illustrates the broader problem in this country of an erosion of the sense of the public good or the common good," said Jesuit Father Neil F. Doherty, who has served at the Jesuit office in the Wall Street area since 1983.

"It is to the credit of the bishops that in the pastoral they recognize this deterioration and raise the question of the common good when that comes in conflict with the greed and avarice of some individuals."

Jesuit Father Joseph S. Dirr, who became director of the office in September, said he would not put the focus on Boesky as an "evil person" but sees his case as a stimulus for going beyond questions of legality and ethics to the spiritual question of "how much money" a person wants or needs to make.

"The whole affair does expose a specific culture with a set of values distinct from the values we profess as Christians and as Catholics," he said. He added that while much of the public focus on the bishops' pastoral letter has centered on its specific policy recommendations, the bishops also offer "a way to go about thinking and praying about these issues."

The two Jesuits were interviewed Dec. 1 at the small office suite they occupy a few doors from the entrance to the New York Stock Exchange. Their program originated in 1980 when Wall Street workers making retreats

under Jesuit auspices asked for a program to help them follow up on a regular basis. Activities include small group discussions drawing workers of all levels and sponsorship of lectures by people such as Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, who chaired the drafting committee for the pastoral, which was approved by the bishops Nov. 13.

Boesky in mid-November was charged with illegally obtaining \$50 million in profits from trading based on inside information. He agreed to pay more than \$100 million in penalties and was barred from the investment business in the United States for life.

Father Dirr and Father Doherty emphasized their limitations in strictly economic questions, and noted that professional debate whether the wave of corporation takeovers that brings quick riches to a few individuals ultimately will make the American economy more efficient or not.

They also called for Catholic laity to take the initiative in responding to moral questions raised by the Boesky affair. Though church bodies with stockholdings may need to broaden their activity in the corporate responsibility movement in the light of the

takeover climate, they said, clergy such as themselves can best serve by helping lay people raise the right questions.

When "corporate raiders are making really big bucks," Father Doherty said, questions arise about the "fallout" that often follows for ordinary workers losing their jobs and communities suffering damage through the restructuring and dismantling of corporations.

Father Dirr said people in Wall Street could be helped to examine whether they are "constructively engaged" in work that benefits the nation and the world, or whether they are accumulating large amounts of capital under the philosophy of "the more bucks the better."

"I get the feeling some of them look at the world as a Monopoly board," he said.

Father Doherty warned against either a tendency to "smear everybody with the Boesky brush" or any attempt to divide the Wall Street community into separate groups of "good guys and bad guys." He said not everybody was guilty of the illegal acts of Boesky, but many firms at times engaged in activities that were ethically, if not legally questionable.

Sharing supper, program set for D/S/W in Finger Lakes

Persons who are separated, divorced or widowed are cordially invited by the Finger Lakes Separated, Divorced and Bereaved group to its monthly sharing supper and program on Friday, December 12, at 6:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of St. Stephen's school, 17 Elmwood Ave., Geneva. Bring a dish to share and your own place setting.

The program will be presented by Dr.

Edward Kennedy, a professor of psychology at the Community College of the Finger Lakes. The topic of his presentation will be "Joy in the Holidays: For Those Alone."

For information contact: Jackie (315)789-1933; Nancy (716)526-5629; Patti (716)526-5625; Kay (607)582-6705; Art (315)789-6367; Ann (607)243-7985; or Carl at the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry at (315)789-2686.



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Theology of Church (Hart)	Mon. 7-9:45 p.m.	Syracuse
	Tues. 7-9:45 p.m.	Rochester
Moralists on Cutting Edge (Mich)	Tues. 7-9:45 p.m.	Rochester
Justice in the Church (Mich)	Thurs. 2:15-5 p.m.	Rochester
Death and Resurrection (Hart)	Wed. 2:15-5 p.m.	Rochester
Ministry as Leadership & Community Building (Mich)	Mon. 7-9:45 p.m.	Rochester
Canon Law (McKenna)	Wed. 2:15-5 p.m.	Rochester
Spiritualities of Aging (Kollar)	Mon. 7-9:45 p.m.	Rochester
Ministry of the Laity (Engels)	Wed. 7-9:45 p.m.	Rochester
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