

CUF chapter

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council, but rejected the way it had been interpreted by liberal theologians.

CUF's basic work is to help Catholics live their faith in an increasingly secularized society, according to Likoudis. The group, which now claims nearly 20,000 members worldwide, focuses on the areas of doctrine, catechetics, liturgy, spirituality and teachings of social justice.

"We come together simply because we love the Church and we want to support and defend and proclaim Church teaching," Likoudis said. "We are a group of, I would say, very faithful Catholics who are ahead of our time."

That may have been true in the early 1970s, when CUF members first began protesting to Vatican officials about the adult catechism "Christ Among Us."

But when the Vatican ordered the book as well as retired Archbishop Peter Gerety's imprimatur withdrawn in 1984, many CUF members considered the action a harbinger of greater things to come. They haven't been disappointed.

"The Holy See has acted within recent years very dramatically to handle problems that the local bishops don't seem able to deal with," Likoudis said. "The fact that the Holy See has had to intervene in so many of these cases... represents a severe admonition to local ordinaries. To put it in the vernacular, they haven't been doing their jobs."

While their tactics anger more liberal Catholics and prompt accusations that they are vengefully going behind the backs of local Church leaders, Likoudis said CUF's writers are well within their rights as prescribed by canon law.

"The Catholic way has always been to speak the truth in charity," he said. "We're not a fly-by-night, vindictive, reactionary organization. We simply do what we can to express our views on the Church."

CUF has suffered from a negative image in the past, and is still trying to overcome it, he admitted. "Even when it may not be your fault, once you're tarred with that brush, it's not easy to free yourself from it," he said.

"But CUF has had quite an influence on the life of the Church in the U.S. It's an organization whose impact has been much greater than the numbers seem to warrant."

In 1971, A CUF chapter was founded in the Rochester area when Rita Lansing, an Ionia resident, read an advertisement in the Wanderer, a national Catholic weekly newspaper.

She sent for more information and received a list of materials and resource persons in the area. Along with her husband Gerrit, whom she called "her first recruit," Lansing organized the group's initial meeting in the auditorium of what was then Edward's department store at Pittsford Plaza. Notified by word of mouth, close to 40 people attended.

"Everyone was upset and concerned about what was happening in the Church at that time," Lansing recalled, citing the changes in liturgy, a loss of reverence and diminished respect for the Church's teaching authority

as some of the reasons.

Today, the chapter claims nearly 30 active members who attend monthly meetings and another 70 who are on its mailing list. Most live within Monroe County.

Since the group was founded, members have written regularly to Bishop Clark and to Church officials in Rome, focusing primarily on local concerns, such as the use in some parishes of female altar servers. While the organization's international officers plan conventions and other gatherings, they do not wield much control over individual chapters.

Likewise, individual members are not pressured to write on particular issues, according to CUF member Michael Macaluso. "We don't insist that anybody write. We make the suggestion and they do what they want to," he said.

An activist on many other issues, including campaigns against pornography and homosexuality, Macaluso also heads Citizens

for a Decent Community. He joined CUF to learn more about the Church's teachings on various issues.

"It's the kind of a group that studies, prays and works," he said. "We believe in the teaching of the magisterium as the true teaching of the Church and, obviously, when we see something that is not correct, we inquire about it and do our best to make people aware of the error in teaching."

CUF's local membership has fallen off somewhat over the years. "A lot of people stopped coming," said Rita Lansing. "I think they didn't feel like we were accomplishing anything."

While she welcomes the recent flurry of Vatican actions, Lansing believes they are overdue. "It's nice to see that somebody in higher authority has spoken out, but it's been a long time coming," she said.

Catholic foundation offers funding alternative

Even if the annual Thanks Giving Appeal exceeded its goal this year, it would still fall short of meeting all the needs of people throughout the diocese.

This coming February, a five-year financial planning task force established by Bishop Matthew H. Clark is expected to publish a report identifying funding priorities that are either not being met currently or that will most likely emerge within the next several years.

Anticipating that report at a press conference Tuesday, December 16, Bishop Clark and task force member Paul Pagery pointed toward the Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, Inc., as one means of addressing unmet and future needs.

Pagery, who serves as president of the foundation's board, also announced that in January, the foundation will solicit 1,500 potential donors for its Respect Life Fund, which supports programs that promote the sanctity of life among people of all ages.

Following the advice of the same diocesan committees that in 1980 advised him to establish an annual appeal, Bishop Clark created the Catholic foundation in January,

1985. Its aim is to maintain excellence in diocesan educational, social and pastoral programs.

Specifically, the foundation offers individuals, groups or corporations a chance to participate in raising and allocating funds, to designate how their donations will be used by establishing special funds, and to contribute to the foundation's endowment.

"We're telling people 'Look, you can make contributions for special things and your money will be used for those things,'" Pagery said.

During the past two years, the foundation's board has already created three special funds to support education, respect for life, and projects to help the poor.

Working with priorities identified by the financial planning task force, the 18-member board will continue designating funds to

meet extraordinary needs. They might, for example, create a retirement fund to help alleviate the crisis religious orders are encountering in caring for their elderly members.

Organizations, parishes and individuals can request that the foundation board create funds for specific purposes as long as they are "consistent with the principles, philosophy and theology of the Roman Catholic faith."

Board members will then go after the money to make those funds work. Options they are now considering include a capital fund drive, deferred or planned giving programs, and grants.

"The funds will be selected and administered by a lay board, not by the diocese," Pagery said. "It's a brand new thing as far as the diocese is concerned."

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