

Delegates to presynod gathering express hope, frustration

By Teresa A. Parsons

At the fourth and final pre-synod consultation in the United States earlier this month, delegates from Maine to Miami, Florida, portrayed the experience of lay people in the Church as a hodgepodge of hope and frustration.

Although more than 20 years have passed since the Second Vatican Council called upon lay Catholics to share in the "priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ," many enthusiastic people still feel stymied by a clerical hierarchy that they believe is reluctant to collaborate — or at least that was the impression a number of delegates to the national consultation related to Joan P. Limpert, one of two representatives from the Diocese of Rochester.

"People seemed to be looking for more spiritual direction, and they're not getting it. They're looking for more leadership from the clergy, and they're not getting that, either," Limpert said. "The laity were frequently stepping in and helping themselves. But then the clergy would get a little excited about having their territory infringed upon."

Despite the negative tone of delegates' reports, Limpert observed that many were nonetheless excited about the Church's future and their roles in it.

"It was as if they could see something in the distance ... that we're coming to something big and beautiful and wonderful, and that eventually we're going to get there," she said.

Limpert and Deacon Claude Lester, diocesan director of the Office of Parish Services, were among nearly 100 people from 31 dioceses who gathered at Mont Marie Conference Center in Holyoke, Mass., May 1-3. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops' (NCCB) Committee on the Laity sponsored the event to identify the common joys and concerns of American lay people, in preparation for the World Synod of Bishops on the laity this October.

Also present was Bishop Stanley Ott of Baton Rouge, La., one of four bishops who will represent the United States in Rome this fall.

The messages delivered by delegates at Holyoke were strikingly similar to those

offered at the three previous consultations in Illinois, California and Texas, according to Bishop Ott. During lengthy small-group discussions, participants focused on the role of women in the Church, relations between laity and clergy, ministry to youth, support for spirituality and evangelization.

Limpert estimated that the largest number of delegates were between 38 and 60 years old. Their occupations, although mostly professional, were equally diverse. Limpert met a bank president, several teachers, a publisher, a self-described "compulsive volunteer" and a young couple who brought their toddler along.

A parishioner at St. Mary's Church in downtown Rochester for the past 19 years, Limpert was nominated as a delegate by her pastor, Father James Lawlor. She described herself as one of those Catholics who at first accepted reforms of the Second Vatican Council somewhat reluctantly, but later came to regard them as necessary.

Participating in the synod consultation has offered her "a whole new insight into the Church. I never realized there were so many problems," she said.

In her conversations with delegates from throughout the eastern United States, Limpert noted that a majority said that they did not find support and sensitivity in their parishes. Volunteers were not recognized, they told her, and professionals were not justly paid. But above all, the vocations of lay people, whether professional or volunteer, were apparently not supported by clergy or by their peers, she said.

Some delegates described the resistance they faced from clergymen who balked at accepting collaboration, lay leadership or almost any other change in the established order.

Limpert spoke to a Eucharistic minister who was recruited and trained by his diocese, but who waited for two years before his pastor would permit him to serve at a Mass.

Another delegate told her that his parish had three priests in residence, all of whom avoided any involvement with the parish other than their sacramental obligations.

"Several delegates said they realized the clergy were in need," Limpert said. "They said they would like to reach out to them and help, if

'It was as if they could see something in the distance ... that we're coming to something big and beautiful and wonderful, and that eventually we're going to get there.'

Joan Limpert
diocesan representative

they felt that was invited.

"I felt as though I was absolutely spoiled," she added. "I told somebody I wished we could clone my bishop (Matthew H. Clark) and my pastor."

The results gleaned from local consultations indicate however, that the Diocese of Rochester has yet to overcome all inter-parish struggles.

Approximately 75 people attended three listening sessions scheduled throughout the diocese during Lent. A dozen parishes also submitted a total of 600 pre-synod surveys.

"Most people did not see the parish as an affirming place" said Claude Lester, who coordinated the consultation. "There were a number who did, but it was certainly not the majority."

Lester was not surprised that more women responded to the survey than men. What did surprise him was the lack of consensus among the responses. Only one statement, which asserted that through baptism, Catholics are called to share in the mission of the Church to bring Christ to the world, drew a strongly

positive response from 95 percent or more of the respondents. "There was no other significant point of agreement," he said.

Members of the NCCB's Committee on the Laity are now searching for areas of nationwide consensus as they collate and summarize responses from diocesan and regional consultations. In June, they will brief the four synod delegates from the United States on the overall results.

Participants at the diocesan level are anxiously awaiting their chance to study the Instrumentum Laboris or final working document of the synod, which was issued to the press April 28 in Rome.

In the meantime, copies of Joan Limpert's consultation report to Bishop Clark are available to interested parishes and organizations. Also available are videotapes of sessions from the Massachusetts and Texas gatherings.

For more information, contact Claude Lester at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, (716)328-3210.

Courier-Journal wins four awards at annual Catholic press convention

The Courier-Journal was recognized four times during the presentation of the 1987 Catholic Press Association Newspaper Awards on Friday, May 23, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Antonio, Texas.

The newspaper's Christmas, 1986, edition — "The Makings of Christmas" — was honored twice for its "striking" color cover. The newspaper and photographer Jeff Goulding won two third-place awards for this issue — for best color photo and best use of color on a front page. Judges termed the abstract photo "fantasy-filled" and "fantastical."

Goulding also received a third-place award in the best-photo-story category, for the April 3, 1986, photo layout on the living stations of the cross enacted by members of Mt. Carmel Parish. Second-place honors were given to Goulding's front-page news

photo (April 24, 1986) of University of Rochester demonstrators protesting Vice President George Bush's visit to campus shortly after the U.S. bombing raid on Libya.

The CPA awards are presented each year at the association's annual convention. They honor exemplary Catholic publications ranging from diocesan newspapers to nationwide magazines and devotional publications.

Winners of the overall "general excellence" newspaper category this year were National Catholic Reporter, national newspapers; Today's Catholic, diocesan newspapers circulation 1-17,000; The Florida Catholic, diocesan newspapers 17,001-40,000; and Catholic New York, diocesan newspapers 40,001 and over.

RCIL designs new program for seniors with poor vision

Rochester Center for Independent Living has designed a new program to meet the needs of senior citizens who are losing their independence because of deteriorating vision.

Open to people age 55 or older, the program employs peer counselors to teach visually impaired senior citizens how to help themselves achieve personal goals. The program makes available services of RCIL and other area agencies.

S/D/W support group scheduled to hold meetings in Hornell

A support group for separated, divorced and widowed residents of the Hornell area will be getting together on the fourth Saturday of every month in the meeting room of St. Ann's School, 29 Eric St., Hornell at 7 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 30.

Similar groups have formed throughout the Rochester diocese to offer emotional support to the separated, divorced and widowed. People of all faiths are welcome.

Call Nancy Kirk-Barkman at (607)324-2489 or Trudy Rice at 324-0428 nights or weekends for information.


The center's senior services program also offers help to visually impaired seniors who might not qualify for other programs. Call (716) 546-6990 for information.

Anti-hunger advocacy group forms Southern Tier chapter

Citizens from Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler counties recently co-founded a chapter of Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' movement opposed to hunger at home and abroad. Bread for the World members will work in local meal ministries, contribute to church hunger appeals, and write regularly to Congressman Amory Houghton to express their views on hunger issues. Members will also attempt to educate the local community about the extent of world hunger and offer viable solutions.

Bread for the World members across the nation are currently advocating an expansion of the WIC (Women's, Infant's, Children's Supplemental Nutrition) Program, in order to serve all eligible women and children. BFW members from across the country recently sent Mother's Day cards to their congressmen urging support for WIC-related legislation.

Why the Robinsons' home is 15 times less likely to be robbed than yours.



It's protected by ADT.® And with this special offer, you can purchase ADT's Safewatch® Home Security System for only \$995, or \$29.95 per month*, installed.

Fact: The majority of homes burglarized each year do not have a security system. Fact: With an ADT Security System, the chances of your home being robbed drops dramatically from 1 in 3 to 1 in 50. That's why families like the Robinsons are turning to ADT for reliable, affordable, effective security.

ADT — trusted for over 100 years. Nationwide, ADT has helped protect everything from *Fortune* 500 companies to thousands of American households. And with a network of local offices, our security specialists can install and service an ADT Security System in your neighborhood.

Simple to operate. Your basic ADT Safewatch System includes magnetic contacts to help protect doors, a dual motion detector that can pick up the movement of a potential intruder, and a smoke detection system that can warn of smoke or fire. All are simply operated from a control panel with built-in siren and emergency call buttons. All can be linked to a nearby ADT Central Monitoring Station, manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. (There's a small monthly charge for this service.) ADT Safewatch can even help you qualify for lower rates on your homeowners insurance.

Easy to afford. Now for only \$995, or \$29.95 per month*, installed, with our low-cost monthly purchase plan, it has never been so affordable to protect your family. ADT Safewatch.

*NO DOWN PAYMENT. Based on 47 equal monthly payments at 18% annual percentage rate.

protected by ADT
ADT SECURITY SYSTEMS
16 Capron St. • 546-6120
Security is ADT.

SPECIAL OFFER

Own an ADT Security System for \$995 or \$29.95 per month*, installed, with our low-cost monthly purchase plan.

Mail this coupon, or call (716) 546-6120 for a free home demonstration.

Name _____
(Please Print)

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Home phone () _____ Business phone () _____

I'd like more information on home security. Please send me ADT's free booklet, "Safe at Home."

ADT Security Systems
18 Capron Street
Rochester, New York 14607