

Task force

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not tested yet, and I think there's a lot of testing that's going to go on ... Exactly what the timeline's going to be, or exactly how we're going to do all this, I don't think we know yet."

Specifically, the diocesan development office will need to test the desire of the diocesan community to support such programs, Father Mulligan explained. "We've got to turn at some point to somebody like (newly named development director Mark Seeberg) and say, 'You've got to tell us ... what do the donors think? What does the diocesan community want? What are they willing to do?'" he said.

"We've basically said, 'How much will this house cost to build? Whether we can afford to build it is, I think, what has to be tested,'" Seeberg added.

The consensus among members of the Five Year Financial Planning Process Task Force, which preceded the Oversight Task Force, was that the diocesan community does offer the potential to support such initiatives, according to Father Bayer, who served on both groups.

"The diocese has not done any substantial fund raising other than the (Thanks Giving Appeal) for the past 25 years," Father Bayer noted. "There was a feeling that, 'Yes, the money could be raised; but that there would first of all have to be an opportunity for education about the needs ... and secondly, that market research (would be needed) to identify the donors who could support those needs.'"

Father Bayer's assessment is reflected in the timeline established by the Oversight Task Force's report, which singled out realignment of the diocesan development office and improved Pastoral Center administration as the two most pressing diocesan priorities.

Bishop Clark has already taken preliminary steps toward those aims by appointing Father Mulligan as vicar general and moderator of the Pastoral Center, and by hiring Seeberg as director of development.

"The second highest priority by the Stotz committee was to realign (the development) office ... because obviously it's going to take funding to do many of the things in that report," Seeberg explained.

As the task force report also recommends, Father Mulligan plans to revise the current process for reviewing diocesan budgets and ministry programs. He anticipates that the Diocesan Finance Council — a group that includes many of the people who worked on the Oversight Task Force — may assume responsibility for reviewing the diocesan budget.

The Ministerial Review Committee (MRC), which has previously done both program and budget reviews, might then focus on program reviews — including more input from a broader range of sources — and would report directly

to Bishop Clark.

Father Mulligan also plans to review the current structure of the diocesan administration — possibly with assistance from outside consultants. "We've been in this divisional structure now for a number of years. I think we'd like to take a look at whether the way we're presently configured with six divisions is the best way to provide the services that the diocese needs," he said. "I think what we're looking for is an organization with greater flexibility and adaptability."

The Oversight Task Force has also called on Bishop Clark to name a Commission on Catholic School Reorganization. The commission, which would be directly accountable to the bishop, would be "empowered to develop and facilitate" a comprehensive consolidation plan for diocesan and elementary high schools.

The five-year report, which offers an extremely condensed version of subcommittee recommendations, does not indicate how the commission would interact with such existing groups as the quadrant planning boards recently formed in Monroe County. Father Mulligan described the spirit of the recommendation as calling for an action-oriented, ad hoc group "capable of shaping up a structure in two years."

"We're going to have to have it clearly indicated how it relates to other groups, the quadrants, the Implementation Committee, the diocesan (Board of Education)," Father Mulligan explained. "It's got to be lodged in all of that and explained exactly what the responsibilities will be."

Education was likewise the focus of the subcommittee studying the current and future demands of diocesan ministry. Even as a pastor who faces the challenge of a Thanks Giving Appeal parish goal each year, Father Joseph Jankowiak, the subcommittee chairman, regarded his group's recommendation of \$3.5 million for the training, formation and support of lay ministers over the next five years as a moderate assessment of the need the subcommittee observed. "There's nothing in there, for instance, about retirement benefits for lay people ... which is a great need," he explained. "The needs are going to shock people. I know the dollars shocked me early on in the process."

Subcommittee members developed the overall figure of \$3.5 million based on estimates of the cost of salaries, benefits, training and ongoing formation for 20 new lay ministers who, over the next five years, would serve in rural and urban parishes otherwise unable to afford such personnel. Specifically, the subcommittee established the initial cost of an average minister's salary and benefits, then computed the five-year total — including salary and benefits' increases of 7 percent annually — for 20 such ministers.

"Given the future number of priests and the future number of women religious in ministry, we thought that was relatively modest," said subcommittee member Sister Ann Miller, man suggested.

"It takes six months to a year to build the program," she explained. "When you have a program that works, it's not in anyone's interest to dismantle it and to have to start again from scratch."

Dodson said that during the last month of the program, counselors will be attempting to place the remaining youths and that the CYO staff will continue to monitor their progress for as long as possible. "We're doing everything we can to close out existing clients with positive results," she said.

The director said she felt terrible about the way the program is ending. "I have dedicated staff people who have put a lot of energy into this that I have to let go," she noted.

"Ultimately, the youths are going to suffer the most," Dodson added. "These (staff) people are skilled individuals, and they'll find other jobs. These kids may not find anything," she concluded.

RSM.

"I feel particularly strongly about the section dealing with formation of personnel, rather than just on compensation," Sister Miller added. "You have to have competent ministers, and they have to be compensated fairly. That's what we have to have for the future of the diocese."

To fairly compensate for the past contributions of retired women religious, the subcommittee studying that issue calls upon the diocese to try to raise half of the \$37 million which according to the update of a 1986 actuarial study, is needed to fully fund the care of retired and infirm sisters.

During the next five years, as the diocese attempts to raise its portion of the pension funding, local congregations agreed they would "not do any diocesan fundraising for the same purpose," according to Sister Kearse. "The intention was obviously to focus the effort so that we're not at cross purposes with each other," she explained.

The subcommittee on pension funding also recommended that the diocese not participate

in an upcoming national fund drive for the needs of retired religious, but focus on local efforts. "Two congregations represent by far the largest number of religious women in the diocese," Sister Kearse noted. "Most of our service has been within the boundaries of the diocese, and we felt the response of the people in the diocese would be more favorable to women with whom they had dealt directly."

With the completion of the report, the Oversight Task Force and its subcommittees have disbanded. Although Father Mulligan emphasized that "a lot of work remains to be done," he does not plan to convene a formal committee or task force to carry out the report's overall recommendations. "I think that the whole focus now is implementation," he said. "The studies and things like that are pretty much behind us."

"I think we did our best to look at the entire diocesan picture," Sister Kearse concluded. "I believe the recommendations are realistic in accurately assessing the needs ... Those are big numbers, but the question is, 'Are they big enough?'"

Task force favors residence for retired priests

By calling for the building of a residence for well-retired priests, the Oversight Task Force report took its only step outside the parameters of the Five-Year Financial Planning Process report, which made no mention of such a home.

Proposals for the project originally came from the Finance Council, which has debated the issue for years. Two years ago, a subcommittee recommended to Bishop Clark that the diocese consider such a residence and that the diocese should use the money to build a residence for well-retired priests.

The diocese are underused, one priest remarked that "putting up another building right now for a few priests, when the (religious) sisters really need someone help and the school question needs to be resolved just doesn't seem like a priority."

Proponents of the project argue that while older priests have been generally supportive of the diocese, they have younger priests, many of whom are such a residence will be a positive step in the diocese's development.

Father Clark said that while the diocese has many priests who are well-retired, they are not being used and are a burden on the diocese. He said that the diocese has a surplus of priests and that a residence for well-retired priests would be a positive step in the diocese's development.

The diocese has 14 parishes and 14 parishes. The diocese has 14 parishes and 14 parishes.

It is a positive step in the diocese's development. It is a positive step in the diocese's development.

Budget cuts

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others are still in the program preparing for placement.

These figures indicated an impressive success rate, Hoffman said. "The CYO has made an enormous commitment," she said. "They are committed to what they do, and they do a terrific job of it."

Hoffman also expressed concern that the state's budgetary and contract policies might in the future prevent agencies from taking programming risks for fear of being caught in the type of financial situation the CYO faces. "Unless the state's policies change, we're going to eliminate a lot of creative programs," she noted.

And even if the program is saved by a legislative reprieve, damage has been done, Hoff-

Accessibility

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unaware of people leaving because the disabled and elderly may not let anyone know that they have left and why. "If they aren't heard from, then they aren't counted," he remarked.

In an effort to help the disabled find Catholic churches to worship in, the survey panel designed a chart (modified version printed above) detailing the features of various churches.

Although such a graphic presentation clearly points out problem areas, the overall purpose of the survey is not to point fingers, but to raise the consciousness of parish staffs, the three

panel members said.

"The chart is to provide information so that people can find a church that is accessible to their needs even if their local church isn't," Belanger noted. As a result of the first survey, several parishes had contacted the ministry office to find out what they could do to make their church more accessible, Dechaine said.

"We really want to emphasize the work parishes have done to make their churches more accessible and to accept people with disabilities," Dechaine said. "We're trying to emphasize the positives, not the negatives."

"In the long run, I have another goal," Belanger countered, "to change society's views of the disabled, and to get people to accept the disabled person as a person, and not focus on the disability."

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