

Diocese issues revised personnel policies manual

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

In a move to standardize personnel policies and procedures, the diocesan Personnel Division has issued a policies manual to all pastors, principals, and supervisors and administrators in diocesan operations.

The provisions contained in the manual — entitled *Personnel Policies for Church Ministry* — took effect Jan. 1, 1990, and mark the first complete update of diocesan personnel policies since 1981.

The policies, which are mandated for Pastoral Center employees, are "strongly recommended for use in the individual parishes and schools of the diocese," said Father John Mulligan, moderator of the Pastoral Center.

Robert Mason, director of the personnel division, noted that except for state, federal, and applicable county regulations, the diocese cannot force parishes and parish schools to comply.

"Each individual parish is an individual corporation," Mason explained. Parishes,

he added, may choose to use the manual's guidelines as they are written, or as a guide, toward developing their own policies.

Individual parishes that develop their own policies must submit them to the diocesan personnel office for input and to ensure that they conform with governmental regulations, Mason said.

Initially, parish schools will be treated as part of the parishes with which they are associated, so the manual will not be mandatory for them, Mason said. As the creation of a Catholic school system continues, however, schools will become subject to the diocesan regulations. Mason said the role of the quadrant and cluster governance boards will have to be resolved before this can take place.

Two workshops explaining the manual were offered at the Pastoral Center in December. Workshops for parish and school administrators were scheduled for Jan. 8, 10, 22, 23 and 24 in various locations in the diocese.

The new manual was written by members of the Comprehensive Policies Committee, one of three working committees of the Diocesan Personnel Commission. The manual culminates three years of work by the committee.

Diocesan officials offered the policy manual to parishes in part because pastors — faced with larger staffs and more management duties — asked for some form of written guide, according to Mary Kessler, diocesan director of personnel services and a member of the policies committee. Some pastors already use the 1981 manual and current Pastoral Center practices to guide their own personnel policies.

The new manual clarifies policies so that parishes can implement them with greater consistency, Kessler noted.

For example, she explained, parishes

and the Pastoral Center have handled holidays and holy days differently. Frequently, the Pastoral Center has been closed on holy days — when parish staff members had to work and, in some cases, needed to contact diocesan personnel.

Under the new guidelines, diocesan and parish employees are each granted 12 holidays. A list of 18 possible holiday dates are contained in the manual, and administrators may choose any 12 of the 18. Kessler observed that the system should create more consistency, while allowing options to fit each parish's individual needs and practices.

"That's a good example of the way we are able to create flexibility in (the manual)," Kessler said.

The manual also includes policies developed by the diocese since the 1981 revision. Among them are policies covering smoking (in light of new Monroe County and state laws) and sexual harassment.

The committee that revised the manual comprises representatives from various employment groups in the diocese — such as parish secretaries, deacons, parish priests, pastoral assistants. Committee members thus were able to determine the practical implications of policies and to suggest personnel issues that need to be addressed.

Kessler noted that "it was imperative" to get such a broad representation on the committee. "They were the voices that we hadn't heard in the past," she said.

The new manual will not only provide parish administrators with a guide for parish policies, but it will also better inform employees of their benefits and rights. A companion manual summarizing the personnel policies for employees is nearing completion and should be ready for distribution within a month, Mason estimated.

Some portions of the manual — including an appendix, glossary and sample job descriptions — are still being developed. According to Kessler, portions of these sections will be added to the manual within the next few months, and should be finished by June.

Among personnel policies being considered for future inclusion is employee assistance — a program to provide diocesan personnel with confidential counseling services. Also being studied are long-term disability and leaves of absence to allow employees to care for elderly relatives.

Mason noted that although all sections of the manual will be ready by June, the document will never be complete.

"This document is what we would call a living document," Mason said. "Policies can be added, changed to meet changes in laws. Practices can be changed. Fringe benefits can be changed."

Personnel commission members are pleased with the manual, Kessler said, and have already received positive reactions to it.

"We feel the process was really worth the time that it took," she concluded.



Christopher Millette

Priest picketed

Pro-choice activists, led by Dr. Eric Schaff, picketed Sunday, Jan. 7, at St. Theodore's Church, Gates, to protest Father Anthony Mugavero's involvement in a Dec. 28 anti-abortion protest at the offices of Dr. David Gandell. After a heated debate, Schaff and Father Mugavero shook hands.

Bishop appoints new pastor for church in Elmira

ELMIRA — Parishioners at Ss. Peter and Paul Church began the new decade with a new pastor.

Father David N. Gramkee, who has been pastor of St. John the Baptist and St. Cecilia churches since 1982, has assumed the additional responsibility of serving as pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul Church.

Father Gramkee's appointment was announced at the three parishes during Masses the weekend of December 23-24 through a letter from Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

Although such a move seemed extremely unlikely, many parishioners were concerned that the diocese would eventually decide to close the parish, according to parish secretary Mildred Ziminski.

In addition to Father Gramkee's appointment as pastor of Elmira's oldest church — Ss. Peter and Paul is more than 140 years old — Father Richard T. Farrell has been enlisted to provide weekend assistance to the three parishes. Father Farrell is chaplain of St. Joseph's Hospital, which

is located across Market Street from Ss. Peter and Paul.

Priests and brothers of the Discalced Carmelite Order have administered the parish for the past eight years.

According to Father George R. Norton, diocesan spokesman, the religious order announced earlier in 1989 that — due to shortages of priests — it could not continue to staff the Elmira parish.

Father Francis Xavier, OCD, assistant pastor, and Father Fidelis Fosselman, OCD, pastor, have been transferred to the religious order's facilities in New Hampshire and Wisconsin, respectively.

Bishop Clark wrote that in appointing Fathers Gramkee and Farrell, he concurred with the recommendations of the Parish Reflection Teams of Chemung County, which have been reviewing staffing patterns for parishes in the county as part of the diocese's Commitment to Ministry process.

"The constructive participation of the Parish Reflection Teams and parish coun-

cils in this discernment process, and Father Gramkee's leadership are most encouraging," Bishop Clark said.

Another possibility for the parish would have been to name a temporary pastor until new priests are ordained in May.

Diocesan officials said Father Gramkee's appointment will not affect the staff of Ss. Peter and Paul Church.

Bishop Clark expressed his gratitude for parishioners' patience and for the cooperation of the many people involved in the decision-making process.

"I would like to thank Sister Marie Castagnaro, hospital administrator, and St. Joseph's Hospital for approving Father Farrell's active participation in this reconfiguration," he wrote.

Ss. Peter and Paul Church was among the first buildings bombarded by the murky, brown waters of the Chemung River in 1972, when Tropical Storm Agnes roared through communities in the Southern Tier.

— Richard A. Kiley

Northeast tabs principal to run junior high

ROCHESTER — Sister Kathryn Wahl, RSM, has been named principal of Northeastern Catholic Junior High, which is scheduled to open in September.

Sister Wahl is currently transition coordinator for the northeast quadrant, one of four quadrants undergoing reorganization of its Catholic schools. Prior to being named transition coordinator last summer, Sister Wahl had been vice principal of Cardinal Mooney High School. She also taught theology and served as director of personnel, admissions and student activities at Mooney.

In addition, Sister Wahl has served as principal of St. Salome's School and has taught at Good Shepherd and Annunciation schools in Rochester. She obtained a master's degree in education and administration from the State University of New

York College at Brockport.

Sister Wahl was chosen from a field of seven applicants, said Sister Mary Smith, SSND, chairwoman of the subcommittee on principal selection for the Northeast Quadrant Planning Board. The four-member subcommittee was made up of parish representatives, and chose Sister Wahl by a vote, Sister Smith said.

Northeastern Catholic Junior High will be operated by the Rochester diocese on the grounds of Bishop Kearney High School. The junior high will serve seventh- and eighth-grade Catholic-school students from northeastern Monroe County. In September, the remaining Catholic elementary schools in the area will house grades kindergarten to six.

— Rob Cullivan

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