

'Call to Priesthood' yields good results

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark
Labor Day — 1990

On this brilliant, breezy holiday morning, I am sitting on a bench on the pier at Charlotte, that place where the Genesee River flows into Lake Ontario. Tom Powers, an old friend from Albany who is spending the holiday with me, just set out on the pier for his daily walk. I'll run later, and will spend these quiet moments updating you on our efforts to foster vocations to the diocesan priesthood. You may recall that I promised to do so two weeks ago in this column.

Before August 12, 1989, when you so generously responded to our request to participate in our Call to Priesthood program, we were working in a systematic, programmed way with 31 men who were interested in a vocation to the priesthood. As we begin this new school year, I am happy to report that we are now working with 52 men. Your kind efforts helped us add 21 men to our programs, a 66 percent increase over the number we had prior to that initiative.

I am very pleased with that number and pray with you that a strong percentage of those 52 young men will continue on to ordination and to long years of faithful priestly service in our community.

Also, I am pleased with two other good fruits of the Call to Priesthood program: an increased level of vocations awareness in our community and a greater realization that responsibility for vocations of all kinds rests with the entire community and not with just a few among us.

Let me give you a sense of the various levels and stages at which these young men currently find themselves. I will do that by offering a thumb-nail sketch of those stages:

Pre-Theologate and Discernment Groups

1. High School Program — eight participants
2. College Program — This group is comprised of out-of-town college and university students who meet during vacation periods.
3. Affiliate Program — These are students in area colleges and ministries who meet regularly throughout the year.
4. Southern Tier Program — The formation of this new group is a direct result of the Call to Priesthood program held in Horseheads on August 12, 1990.
5. Becket Hall Program — As of this writing, we have four participants in this residential program and two more who are going through our admissions process.
6. Over-Thirty Program — This group currently numbers 10 participants.

Seminary — Theologate Program

We have nine men at this level. One of them is in the first year of theological studies; two are in the second year; there is one student in the third year and one in the

fourth. In addition, we have one student in a special program, and three who are doing their required year of pastoral service in parishes of our diocese.

Let me conclude with a few brief observations on the Call to Priesthood and the figures I have just shared with you.

1. We will ordain no more than nine priests in the next five years. In the same time period, we will experience the loss of many more than that number through death, retirement and resignation. Because of that factor, all of us will be called to continuing adjustments.
2. The men who responded to Call to Priesthood are much encouraged by the interest the Catholic community has shown in priesthood and by the opportunity they have experienced to come together with other like-minded young men.
3. Call to Priesthood has produced some visible, hopeful results. But we know that most of the men it attracted are at the early stages of a long journey. We need to walk with them in prayer and offer them whatever encouragement we can.
4. Call to Priesthood cannot be a one-



time effort. We will be wise if we apply what we learned in this initial effort to other consistent, community-wide efforts in the future.

My sincere thanks to all of our priests, our parish communities, Father Tom Valenti and all of his associates in this endeavor for a job very well begun.

Peace to all.

Marketing consultant named for schools

The Diocese of Rochester has announced the appointment of Richard Della Costa as school marketing consultant.

In his new post, Della Costa "will design and implement a public relations and marketing program for Catholic schools in Monroe County," said Elizabeth Brown, diocesan director of communications. Brown said he will also coordinate the diocesan financial-aid program.

"This appointment will help us implement the diocese's commitment to an

expanded school marketing effort as part of school reorganization taking place throughout the diocese," said Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, superintendent of schools.

A graduate of Niagara University, Della Costa was a consultant in public affairs, recruitment and marketing at the Peace Corps' Washington, D.C., headquarters. Previously, he served as a volunteer with the corps in India, Guatemala and Costa Rica from 1968-75.

Della Costa lives in Kendall, with his wife and two children.

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DIOCESAN APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following appointments:
Father Francis R. Davis to spiritual director of the Southern Tier Curia of the Legion of Mary, effective Sept. 1.
Father John O'Hare, OFM Cap., from SFO at St. Michael Church in Brooklyn to pastor of St. Francis Solanus Church in Interlaken and part-time chaplain at Willard Psychiatric Center, effective Sept. 6.
Father Nelson J. Ruppert, OFM Cap., from pastor of St. Francis Solanus Church in Interlaken and administrator of Holy Cross Church in Ovid and temporary part-time chaplain at Willard Psychiatric Center to pastor of Holy Cross Church in Ovid with continuing responsibilities as part-time chaplain at the Seneca Army Depot in Romulus, effective Sept. 6.

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