

Church judged deficient in countering racism

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lack of success — in becoming more inclusive, according to John Salter. A Native American, Salter directed the diocese's Office of Human Development from 1976 to 1978.

Currently a professor of American Indian studies at the University of North Dakota in Grand Fork, N.D., Salter told the *Catholic Courier* that some Catholics are making grass-roots efforts to promote inclusiveness.

"On the other hand," he said, "there are many people who are simply content to talk rather vaguely about (inclusiveness)."

Because of this tendency to talk rather than act, Salter said, the church in the United States has in fact lost ground on race relations since the 1970s.

That assessment was echoed by Hubbard.

In 1978, he said, the interracial justice council — of which he then was director — convened a conference in Detroit to address issues of racism and the needs of minority Catholics. Some dioceses did attempt to make changes suggested at the conference, "but I'm not sure how much was achieved," Hubbard remarked.

One of the key problems is that minorities remain outside of the church's decision-making process, he observed.

"If you're not there where you can share in the discussion of the problem and how you can alleviate that," Hub-

bard noted, "then you're not really part of making policy."

Pompa also observed that inclusiveness means more than hiring minorities and sharing authority with them. It also calls the church to recognize cultural differences and incorporate them into styles of leadership and worship, she said.

Each year, for example, about 600,000 Hispanics leave the Catholic Church for Pentecostal congregations offering worship styles they find more comfortable, she said.

Similarly, Dobson pointed out, insensitivity to black styles of worship helped propel Archbishop George Stallings toward his 1989 break with the Catholic Church.

Archbishop Stallings — then in good standing as a Catholic priest of the Washington, D.C., archdiocese — accused the Catholic Church of racism for the archdiocese's refusal to incorporate African-American rites into its life and worship. He subsequently established his own church, the African-American Catholic Congregation.

Dobson said many of Archbishop Stallings' criticisms of the church were valid. But, she said, "where I disagree with him is he elected to go outside the structure to effect change."

Meanwhile, Father O'Shea asserted that many people on the streets are angry about the church. The priest said blacks and Hispanics often believe that the church lacks concern about the issues affecting their communities.

"There's a lot of anger about a lack of

church presence about these issues," Father O'Shea reported.

Sister Miller pointed out that many diocesan efforts are aimed at middle-class audiences. Observing that the bulk of black Catholics are poor, she said education workshops and trips to black colleges fail to address more immediate needs for housing and jobs.

The Mercy sister cited as examples the two diocesan churches identified as "black" parishes. She said some poor blacks have a hard time getting to those churches due to lack of transportation.

"Black (Protestant) churches have vans," Sister Miller observed. "They go out and get people. The Catholics don't want to hear that."

Such negative assessments of the Catholic Church's response to racism were echoed again and again by individuals working for greater inclusiveness. But Pompa acknowledged the presence of some hopeful signs.

Among those signs is a study the interracial justice council is currently conducting on minority involvement in the archdioceses of Baltimore, Milwaukee and Seattle, and the Diocese of Cleveland.

The two-year project includes an assessment of hiring practices, suggestions on how to promote recruiting in the minority community, multi-cultural awareness training, and education about purchasing and banking practices.

It builds on work and programs that the organization had already launched in previous years, and which the three archdioceses and the Cleveland diocese had already initiated, Pompa said.

Father Mulligan noted that the Rochester diocese had asked to be a part of the study, but had been turned down for some reason. He said diocesan officials look forward to the study's completion.

"We're hoping that the study will present us with some very specific means (to promote inclusiveness)," he said.

One specific means already adopted by the Rochester diocese is adding a section on minorities to its form for employee performance appraisals, noted Mary Kessler, director of diocesan Human Resources.

Beginning in 1992, Kessler said, each diocesan employee will be judged on how he or she "consistently improves efforts toward effective recruitment of minorities on diocesan boards, committees and in the workplace."

A key to promoting inclusiveness in diocesan offices, parishes and institutions is the active involvement of the bishop and diocesan officials, Salter said.


"The leadership must stand behind it, and must support broad-based efforts to explain (inclusiveness) to the people," he said.

For Sister Miller, one way for the diocese to show such support would be for Bishop Matthew H. Clark and other diocesan officials to make regular visits to the inner city.

"I think each director, each department head, needs to visit these places," Sister Miller said. "They need to see first hand what's going on and not have someone else telling them what's going on."

Salter said the Catholic Church must become more actively involved in countering racism because it is one of the few organizations that can have a major impact.

"I continue to have hope in the church," he said. "I remain convinced, when all is said and done, that the church can offer more than about anything else I can think of when it comes to the business of providing support, of scouting trails into the frontier."



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Conference will put focus on questions about dying

ROCHESTER — A Rochester physician who made national headlines for assisting a terminally ill patient commit suicide will be among the featured speakers at a daylong program on death and dying this weekend.

Entitled "Dying with Dignity," the annual meeting of the Rochester chapter of Choice in Dying will take place on Saturday, Nov. 9, at the University Club of Rochester, 26 Broadway.

Choice in Dying, a not-for-profit educational council created in 1967, describes itself in a press release as "dedicated to improving the care of dying patients" and educating the public about the need for greater patient autonomy and more open discussion of issues surrounding terminal care decision making.

Dr. Timothy E. Quill, a physician at The Genesee Hospital, will speak on "How to Talk to Your Doctor about Death and Dying," at 9:45 a.m.

In the March, 1991, edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Dr. Quill detailed his conversations with a cancer patient before she took her life using a lethal dose of barbiturates he prescribed. A Monroe County grand jury later cleared Quill of any criminal wrongdoing.

Quill's talk will follow the second annual Margaret Hays Baum lecture given by Andrew H. Malcolm, a national correspondent for *The New York Times*. Malcolm wrote the recently published book, *Someday*, which ex-

plores "right-to-die" issues and medical ethics from a personal perspective.

The lecture is named after the late Margaret Hays Baum, founder of Choice in Dying in Rochester.

The conference will also include a talk — scheduled from 2:15-2:45 p.m. — on "Images of Death in American Life," by Dr. Christine M. Bochen, professor of religious studies at Nazareth College. Bochen said her speech will compare and contrast how U.S. citizens previously viewed death with how it is seen today.

Bochen, who is Catholic, noted that she has "serious reservations" about physicians helping terminally ill patients take their lives when asked about the controversy surrounding "aid-in-dying" issues.

"I guess my position is we have to, as a society, and as a church community ... address ourselves to the reasons why persons would want to choose aid-in-dying," she said.

Bochen added that she supports such alternatives to physician-assisted suicide as hospice care for terminally ill patients, and increasing the use of pain-control measures for the dying.

EDITORS' NOTE — Attendance for the annual meeting and lecture is limited to 120 individuals. Advance registration is encouraged. A \$25 fee covers admission to the conference, which runs from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Call 716/385-9846.

— Rob Cullivan

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