

Committee takes steps to confront pedophilia

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"By now, I believe our people understand clearly the clay feet of the ministers of the church," he said. "It is not the sexuality at all.

"It is rather the dynamic of the misuse of power, domination and the violation of trust between pastor and parishioner, priest and child, teacher and student, counselor and counselee."

One of the committee's first tasks will be to analyze the recommendations of a two-day "think-tank" session on child sexual abuse convened under NCCB auspices last February in St. Louis.

The recommendations, presented just before the committee was announced, urge the bishops to adopt national guidelines or policies for the care of victims, the prevention of future acts of molestation and a number of other issues connected to the problem.

Although the driving force behind the committee is efforts to deal with sexual abuse of minors, sexual abuse of

adults by priests would also fall within the committee's scope, Bishop Kinney said at a press conference.

He said the mandate is not even limited to sexual abuse within the church but may extend to drawing on the church's experience to "address the problems of sexual abuse in our greater society."

Archbishop William H. Keeler of Baltimore, NCCB president, made the surprise announcement of the committee and Bishop Kinney as its chair on the first day of the bishops' New Orleans meeting in a session billed on the agenda simply as, "Oral report: sexual abuse of minors by priests."

The decision came against a background of dozens of new allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests coming to light just within the past few months and with a group of former victims of priests buttonholing bishops outside their hotel, asking them to sign a pledge not to counterattack when they are sued by alleged victims.

Even as Archbishop Keeler was an-

nouncing the new committee, a letter from Pope John Paul II was being distributed among the bishops.

The letter — dated June 11 — announced the formation of the joint committee to study how to apply universal canonical norms to the particular situation in the United States.

The committee — which submitted a report to the pope in June — also examined some of the restrictions in the code which have made it difficult to apply the church's penal laws to laicize a priest who molests minors.

The church's five-year statute of limitations, for example, would prevent prosecution in a church court of the many U.S. cases in which an adult accuses a priest of abuse that allegedly took place 10 or 15 years ago.

Details of the joint committee's report and recommendations had not been released as of July 16.

Archbishop Keeler said the NCCB does not have the power to legislate for dioceses in the areas of the national conference committee's concern, but

noted that virtually every diocese has developed a policy on abuse (see related story on revised policy in the Rochester diocese).

"This new committee, however, can provide additional organized resources to assist the dioceses," he said.

He cited recent efforts by the bishops nationally to deal with the issue, including a series of public statements and discussions of the issue at national meetings for the last five years.

"If all that we have done has not resolved in a few years a crisis that for some people goes back decades, we can only ask the patience of God's people," Archbishop Keeler said.

"We feel the suffering of the survivors," he added, "and we understand the depth of the sickness of those who commit sexual abuse. We bishops are dedicated to continuing on the path of the restoration of trust where it has been broken and the renewal of faith where it has been weakened or even lost."

Bishop Clark

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legal, psychological and medical professionals.

The policy calls for immediate investigation of any allegations, and offers counseling assistance, as needed, for abused minors and their families; respect for rights of the accused under civil and canon laws; and outreach to affected parishes and communities.

The letter also invited individuals who had concerns about sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric of this diocese to contact either Father Ring or Barbara Pedeville of the diocesan tribunal at 716/328-3210 or 1-800-388-7177.

In a June 30 interview — just prior to departing for his annual month-long

July vacation — Bishop Clark told the *Catholic Courier* that the revised policy was developed by staff members in the diocesan Pastoral Center.

Part of the impetus for revising the policy was growing awareness about the nature of pedophilia — sexual desire for children — and the effects it and sexual abuse of adolescents have on the victims, Bishop Clark observed.

"We continue to learn more over the years about the enormous impact (abuse) has on the abused," the bishop noted, acknowledging, "We underestimated it in the past."

The new policy provides an avenue for people who have been abused to come forward, and for the diocese to provide them with compassion and support — and to assist them with get-

ting any counseling they might need, Bishop Clark observed.

As for the clerics involved, Bishop Clark said, the diocesan response would be handled on a case-by-case basis.

"No sexual abuse is acceptable, particularly by a minister of the church," Bishop Clark said. But, he added, "When the gravity is such, when it is proven that a priest is guilty of (pedophilia), sometimes the best thing is to dismiss the priest from the clerical state."

This response, Bishop Clark noted, may be necessary in light of ongoing psychological studies that show pedophilia is an illness that is difficult to treat. Health-care professionals are currently unable to guarantee that the illness will not recur, the bishop added, noting that without such guarantees, he was unwilling to take the risk that more people might be hurt.

Father Ring explained to the *Courier* that when allegations of sexual abuse are reported, the new policy calls for either himself or Pedeville to conduct an initial interview. The interview's purpose would be to determine the nature of the alleged abuse, when the alleged incidents took place and who was involved.

Following that interview, Father Ring said, he would meet with the accused to obtain his side of the story. If the accusations appear to have validity, the diocese would place the accused cleric on administrative leave.

As part of the investigation, Father Ring explained, the accused might be sent for evaluation at one of the U.S. centers that treat clerics for sexual problems.

Finally, if there is a basis to the accusations, then the advisory committee will meet to discuss appropriate actions to recommend to Bishop Clark, Father Ring continued. In the case of pedophiles — and in light of current understanding of the illness — the clerics would not be returned to ministry, he said.

However, Father Ring said, in the cases of those involved with abusing adolescents, "depending on the nature of the circumstances, it would be possible they could be returned to ministry in a situation where they would have no contact with minors."

When priests and deacons are removed from active ministry, Father Ring said, they will be placed on disability, so that they will be covered as long as necessary under the diocese's health-insurance plan. The diocese

would also provide them with assistance in finding other ways to support themselves.

The most extreme recourse for priests would be to "laicize" them, or return them to the lay state. But under current canon law, the diocese would have a difficult time doing so, noted Father Kevin E. McKenna, diocesan chancellor and director of legal services.

Under the 1983 Code of Canon Law, a priest can only be laicized at his own request or by means of a lengthy judicial process, Father McKenna explained.

Canon law states that a priest cannot be laicized if the actions of which he is accused were committed when he was not in full use of his reason. Since pedophiles, under current psychological understanding, are not in full use of their reason, he noted, they thus cannot be laicized without their consent.

"It's a Catch 22," Father McKenna acknowledged.

Some hope for a more workable solution is offered by a study undertaken by a joint committee of Vatican officials and representatives of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the chancellor noted. This joint committee submitted its report to Pope John Paul II in June, but the contents of the report have not yet been made public, he said.

One change that could result from the study, Father McKenna speculated, would be for the Vatican to provide bishops with an administrative process to laicize priests guilty of sexually abusing minors, and thus avoid the church judicial process.

Following meetings with U.S. bishops this spring, Pope John Paul II has also spoken out about pedophilia.

In a statement issued June 11, the pope spoke about the joint committee and its efforts, and offered support for U.S. bishops in their efforts to deal with the problem. The pope also criticized the sensationalization of the issue by some of the media.

Bishop Clark praised Pope John Paul II for having "raised up public awareness" of sexual abuse. The bishop also acknowledged that some of the media have sensationalized the issue.

But, Bishop Clark added, he has also seen responsible coverage of the issue, and has had no qualms of his own about making the diocese's new policy public.

"I think the faith community is strengthened when we face in a realistic fashion the problem that confronts us," Bishop Clark concluded.

Services set for Frs. Klocek, Hogan

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Rochester diocese lost two priests on July 19, 1993.

Father Chester M. Klocek, who retired last month after 25 years as pastor of Hilton's St. Leo Church, suffered what was believed to be a heart attack while driving his car on Monday afternoon. He was taken to Greece's Park Ridge Hospital, where he was pronounced dead later that day. The official cause of death was not known as the *Catholic Courier* went to press.

Father Daniel V. Hogan, who served as pastor of Scipio's St. Bernard Parish, as well as St. Hilary Parish in Genoa and St. Isaac Jogues Parish in Fleming from 1967-72, died at The Genesee Hospital after a long illness.

Born in Rochester to the late Michael and Bernice (Krajanowski) Klocek on Sept. 20, 1922, Father Klocek attended St. Stanislaus School in Rochester. After studying at St. John Kanty High School in Erie, Pa., he graduated from St. Andrew and St. Bernard seminaries.

Following his ordination on June 13, 1947, Father Klocek served Auburn's Holy Family Parish. He subsequently served at Holy Family, St. Stanislaus and St. Anne parishes, all in Rochester.

Father Klocek was named pastor of St. Leo in Hilton in 1967. He remained in Hilton until he retired last month. He was living in a private residence in Greece at the time of his death.

He is survived by several cousins and the people of St. Leo Parish.

Father Hogan was born in Rochester

to the late T. Joseph and Mary (McCarthy) Hogan on April 2, 1921. He attended Rochester's Corpus Christi School before going on to St. Andrew and St. Bernard seminaries.

Following his ordination Oct. 19, 1946, he served as assistant pastor at St. Mary of the Lake in Watkins Glen. That was followed by assistant pastorates at St. Vincent, Corning; St. Francis of Assisi, Auburn; and St. Thomas the Apostle, Holy Rosary, St. Michael and St. Cecilia parishes, all in Rochester, prior to his appointment as pastor of the three Cayuga County parishes.

After leaving his pastorate, Father Hogan served in a variety of capacities at several diocesan parishes, including: St. Helen, Rochester; Church of the Assumption, Fairport; St. Agnes, Avon; St. Mary Our Lady of the Hills, Honeoye; and St. Stephen, Geneva.

Poor health forced Father Hogan to retire from active ministry on June 26, 1990. He had been living and assisting at Blessed Sacrament Church in Rochester.

Father Hogan is survived by a sister-in-law, Mrs. Bernard (Jane) Hogan; two nieces; one nephew; three grand-nephews; and the people of Blessed Sacrament Parish.

Mass of Christ the High Priest will be celebrated for Father Klocek at 10:30 a.m. on July 22 at St. Leo Church, 167 Lake Ave, Hilton.

Mass of Christ the High Priest in honor of Father Hogan will take place at 10:30 a.m. on June 23 at Blessed Sacrament Church, 534 Oxford St., Rochester.