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Presidents

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well as such perks as meetings in Florida — "It's a two-way street," Workmaster noted.

"By being part of those organizations at the national level, we bring back a tremendous amount of information," she said. By being in such positions, she said, "You can be ahead of the game."

For instance, part of her work involved reviewing and making suggestions on drafts of "Built of Living Stones," the U.S. bishops' new guidelines for building and renovating churches.

Increasingly, members of her federation are involved in intense discussions about Sunday celebration in absence of a priest, and weekday substitution of Communion services for celebration of the Eucharist.

"We're all in various stages of it," Workmaster said, referring to dioceses' adoption of these measures. "It's really almost dependent on the priest shortage. As (the shortage) spreads across the country, the whole issue of Sunday celebrations gets opened up."

Father DeSocio likewise compares notes with peers across the country.

"We usually go out searching to better ourselves and a lot of times find out we really are ahead of people, in a good sense," he said. "A lot of times they start asking us what we are doing. It makes us feel really good about what is going on here. We are not perfect; we have a lot of areas we have to work on. But it's good to know in some areas we have a head start, or were the first to think of something."

The vocation office's Web site (www.dor.org/vocations) was featured on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* this year and on ABC News, which lists the site as a link on its site, www.ABCnews.com. Among national firsts was the "24 Hours with the Lord" retreat to help men discern whether they are being called to the priesthood. (The *Courier's* "On The Move" page highlights the retreat this week — see page 12).

Father McKenna's organization, the Canon Law Society of America, studies and promotes canonical and pastoral approaches to significant issues within the church. It has more than 1,500 male and female members from 43 countries.

Father McKenna, who holds a doctorate in canon law, said he has "a strong concern for the promotion of a good, pastoral approach to canon law in the contemporary Church and a deep belief in the value and potential of the CLSA."

Under his presidency, the 2002 convention will study collaboration and cooperation of the ordained with the laity, he said.

While serving the society, he has made time to be chief editor of the *Church Finance*

Handbook, which the society published in 1999, and to write journal articles and newspaper opinion pieces. He also authored two books — *The Ministry of Law in the Church Today* and *A Concise Guide to Canon Law: A Practical Handbook for Pastoral Ministers*.

He noted that his impending challenge will be to simultaneously serve the society and St. Cecilia's Parish of Irondequoit, where he is pastor. As CLSA president, he will attend conventions and meetings throughout the United States and in Canada, Scotland, Australia and Rome. He will visit universities in Ottawa, Canada and Washington; the apostolic nuncio in Washington; and various church offices.

The leadership of national organizations must be visible and active, he and others noted.

"What I am is the public face" of the conference, Mancini said, crediting her colleagues as the ones "doing the work." Upon assuming the presidency, she quickly appointed task forces on multicultural issues and on recruiting and retaining catechetical leaders.

The work under her watch has the prospect of affecting a multitude of Catholics. The conference is the only independent national body dedicated solely to serving the church's catechetical mission in this country.

"It's probably philosophical as much as anything," Mancini said. "It has to do with my sense that catechesis is integral to the mission of the church."

The church's biggest challenge in catechesis, Mancini said, is "supporting adults on their journey of faith. It's an adult world with adult issues, and our faith can inform our life."

Meanwhile, she is involved in rewriting her organization's structure, from which new bylaws will be written. Because she serves on many committees, she typically spends two to three hours a week on conference calls. They save on travel, but present a challenge to stay focused, she said.

Franz, president of the Catholic Press Association, has found another way to deal with travel requirements. The mother of a 2-1/2-year-old son, she delegated some of the travel to other CPA officers. That meant forfeiting two trips to Europe last year to represent the CPA at the International Catholic Union of the Press, for example. But, as is the case with the other leaders, she still gets around. She attends several other CPA meetings a year and also attends meetings in Washington, D.C., of the Communications Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, on which she serves as an ex-officio member.

"If nothing else, my presidency will show whether a woman with young children can do it," she said at the time of her installation in May 2000, noting that no previous



CPA president had concurrent child-rearing responsibilities. Her organization strives to foster fellowship and professional excellence among ministers of the written word.

Father Kennedy noted that he was relieved to pass the torch to his successor with the North American Forum, which he led for two years longer than usual because the board was being restructured, he said.

"You are glad to give the work, to be part of the organization," he said. "But because it's an extra commitment, you are glad to say it's time for somebody else to take over."

At the time, Father Kennedy was a full-time associate professor liturgical studies at St. Bernard's Institute. He is currently adjunct professor at SBI while serving as pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Rochester. The forum is committed to helping dioceses implement the RCIA — the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Lopata, active in ministry with gay and lesbian Catholics, noted that everyone benefits anytime people can network and share their own stories and resources. What she enjoys most, she said, is "meeting and working with Catholics from all across the country who really do see — as the bishops said in 'Always Our Children' — 'God's love revealed' in the lesbian and gay members of the Body of Christ."

The down side, she said, "is the sadness and pain that comes with realizing how many Christian people do not see that."

Lopata holds a master's degree in liberal studies with a focus on the family and homosexuality. She has been a codirector of the Catholic Gay and Lesbian Family Ministry in the diocese since helping found it in 1992. She also is a charter member of the national association and has been on its board for six years.

Lopata added, "I am the mother of a gay son, who knows from personal experience the deep and critical need for this ministry."

At this point, the association has 240 individuals, nine dioceses and 15 parish-

es as members, from ministries in more than 58 dioceses.

"My role with NACDLGM underscores the commitment the Diocese of Rochester has to this ministry," she said. "This diocese stands as a prophetic model of pastoral care."

One more name should be on the list of national leaders from the Rochester Diocese — that of Bishop Clark, who serves as the U.S. bishops' episcopal liaison to the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry Inc. The federation represents youth ministry leaders from more than 180 dioceses.

Its board recently asked him to extend his term for another three years, making him its liaison for six years in all.

Bishop Clark figured he was asked to be liaison because of the reputation and input of Michael Theisen, who has been the diocese's youth ministry director since 1992.

But Theisen said it was the bishop's own reputation that landed him the liaison post, and that Father Gary Bagley, youth director for the Buffalo Diocese, had recommended the bishop from his seat on the board.

"He tries to get to every diocesan youth function," Theisen said. "I don't know how many bishops you can say that about."

Theisen said other dioceses noticed the bishop's style at World Youth Day in Denver in August 1993. Bishop Clark committed to the entire event, and stayed in the same hotel as diocesan youths, rather than the one designated for bishops. And for an overnight vigil, while buses were taking other bishops back to their hotel, Bishop Clark was unrolling a sleeping bag he borrowed from Father John Mulligan, a diocesan vicar general.

"I'll remember that as long as I live," Theisen said, adding that the bishop couldn't have gotten much sleep. "Everyone was coming by saying 'Look there's the bishop,' and taking pictures."

But more, he said, Bishop Clark is honest with young people, respectful and unassuming about each one.

Invariably diocesan leaders attributed their willingness and the opportunity to take on more outside the diocese, to the bishop's own leadership.

"I do not believe that the number of people who have been elected to national organizations from this diocese is an accident, but rather a reflection of the esteem and respect that Bishop Clark holds nationally," Father McKenna said, echoing the sentiments of other diocesan leaders. "In some ways, it is the hope perhaps of the membership of the societies that we represent that his style of participative engagement and consultation will be brought to whatever group we work with."

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