

Group to hold bishops responsible to charter

Nancy Frazier O'Brien/CNS

WASHINGTON — A subcommittee of bishops is working to develop a process to "hold ourselves and each other responsible" to the terms of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," the panel's chairman said Oct. 3.

In a telephone interview with Catholic News Service, Bishop Robert H. Brom of San Diego said the seven-member "task group" held its first meeting Sept. 10 in Chicago and hoped to develop "a protocol for exercising mutual episcopal responsibility in reference to ourselves and each other."

The subcommittee of the ongoing Ad Hoc Committee on Bishops' Life and Ministry, which Bishop Brom chairs, was to meet again immediately before the U.S. bishops' fall general meeting Nov. 11-14 in Washington.

Bishop Brom said a report to the bishops on the group's work would be made during the fall meeting, but recommendations for action might not be made until the next meeting of the full U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in June.

The bishop said the panel hoped to develop a process "that will ensure appropriate oversight of the ministry of bishops as an expression of episcopal solidarity." He

said the process would include "fraternal support, fraternal challenge and even fraternal correction."

The subcommittee's initial work focused on questions of theology, ecclesiology and episcopal identity and emphasized the "affective and effective collegiality" that exists among bishops, Bishop Brom said.

"We're not excluding the whole accountability issue," he said. "But there's going to be accountability like crazy to accomplish the exigencies of the charter," through structures like the National Review Board, he added.

Bishop Brom said among the points considered at the Chicago meeting were the need for bishops to commit themselves to implement the charter within their own dioceses; how the "requirements of the charter apply to the laws of the church relating to bishops"; and suggestions on how bishops could "review the episcopal ministry" of others "in accord with the laws of the church and Gospel values."

The task group membership includes Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago; Archbishop William J. Levada of San Francisco; Bishop John F. Kinney of St. Cloud, Minn.; Bishop Donald W. Wuerl of Pittsburgh; Bishop Samuel J. Aquila of Fargo, N.D.; and Auxiliary Bishop Jerome E. ListECKI of Chicago.

Peoria presses sainthood for Sheen

PEORIA, Ill. (CNS) — The Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes has approved a petition from the Diocese of Peoria to open the canonization cause of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

The diocesan chancery received a letter Sept. 23 granting approval from Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins, prefect of the congregation. It came just two weeks after Peoria Bishop Daniel R. Jenky announced the diocese's promotion of the sainthood cause.

The letter was dated Sept. 14, the same week the diocese's petition was presented in Rome by Msgr. Richard Soseman, diocesan judicial vicar and vice postulator of Archbishop Sheen's sainthood cause.

Archbishop Sheen, who gained fame in the 1950s as the host of the popular television program "Life Is Worth Living," died in 1979 in New York.

While a canonization cause usually begins in the diocese where a person dies, Cardinal Edward M.

Egan of New York has given permission for the cause to be formally opened in the Peoria Diocese, where the archbishop was born and ordained a priest.

The Vatican's approval means the Peoria Diocese can go ahead with the first phase of the investigation necessary for a person to be canonized, Msgr. Soseman said.

The diocesan investigation, which must follow norms of procedure laid out by the Congregation for Saints' Causes, will include a detailed study of the archbishop's life and a review of his published works by priests who hold licentiate in theology.

The diocese also must make the sainthood cause public, so all who favor or oppose the archbishop's canonization can express their views, Msgr. Soseman said.

While best known for his television show, Archbishop Sheen was a prolific writer and speaker who was bishop of Rochester, N.Y., and national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.



Debbie Hill/CNS

Children protest Israeli closures

Bethlehem schoolchildren wave Palestinian flags during an Oct. 2 demonstration protesting the closure of Palestinian schools due to Israeli military closures and curfews.

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