

Planning expert says all are called

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

GENEVA — There are many ways to live out the spirit of the Second Vatican Council — provided such actions are guided by a three-letter word, according to Mary Ann Gubish.

"Vatican II challenged all, A-L-L, the baptized," Gubish emphasized during her keynote address at the third-annual Pastoral Planning Leaders Day March 1 at DeSales High School.

Since 1992 Gubish has served as director of the Office of Pastoral Life and Planning in the Diocese of Greensburg, Pa. In her talk, she stressed two key points in implementing Vatican II initiatives: communion and mission.

Communion, she said, calls for all people to take part in parish life. In addition to the folks who normally participate, she said this also requires an effort to include those who were formulated by a pre-Vatican II attitude of church as "me and God and that was it."

Gubish said this attitude is "why people wanted to come to church and sit by themselves," and backed up her point by citing the Lord's Prayer. "It's 'Our Father,'" she said, "not 'My Father.' It's 'Forgive us our sins.'"

In terms of mission, Gubish said "the church does not have a mission, the mission has a church," explaining that our mission should be thought of as the ideals set forth by Jesus Christ. In order for the mission of today to be carried out successfully, she added, Catholic laity should continue being given greater involvement in decision-making. "What affects all should be decided by all," she said.

Gubish said the Diocese of Greensburg has slightly more than 100 active priests, yet that number is expected to drop by about two-thirds over the next 20 to 30 years. During the last decade, Gubish has led development of an infrastructure of 18 regional councils, with each planning for the possibility of having at least one or two fewer priests per region. This model strongly resembles the Diocese of Rochester's pastoral planning process, in which 35 planning groups are spread over 12 counties.

Gubish emphasized, however, that these practical decisions cannot be made without the deeper senses of communion and mission. "It's not just the priest shortage. It's much, much bigger than that," said Gubish, who co-authored the 2001 book *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council* (Paulist Press) and is vice chair of the national-Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development.

Following Gubish's morning presentation, she joined diocesan representatives on a five-member panel in responding to the question "If we were starting with today's reality, how would we organize the Church of Rochester?" While Gubish reiterated her earlier points about inclusiveness, Father Peter Clifford, pastor of St. Michael's Parish in Newark, envisioned a model of large central churches each with a set of smaller regional chapels. He also emphasized small Christian communities and the need for greater evangelization.

Ruth Zardezed, a member of the Schuyler-Chemung Regional Council, voiced a wish for larger churches as well, with two to three times their current seating capacity in or-



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Next step to priesthood

Above, Mark Alan Brewer, who will be ordained to the diocesan priesthood on June 14, prostrates himself during his March 2 diaconal ordination at St. Ann Church in Hornell. At right, he kneels before Bishop Matthew H. Clark, as master of ceremonies Sister Mary Ann Binsack, RSM (right), and Deacon Robert McCormick look on.



der to compensate for the limited availability of priests. Zardezed also mentioned establishment of Catholic community centers with a special emphasis on youth, especially in urban and rural areas. Meanwhile, Irene Goodwin, pastoral administrator at St. Mary's Parish in Scottsville, advanced the notion of a widespread "twinning" system, in which large parishes share their resources to support small parishes.

And Bishop Matthew H. Clark then said that no matter what the model, he wishes to "never cease striving to live out the fact that the

Eucharistic Liturgy is at the heart of our lives."

Pastoral Planning Leaders Day was attended by approximately 235 diocesan officials, parish administrators, and staff members, and planning-group representatives from throughout the diocese. In addition to Gubish's address, the day featured workshops covering such subjects as consensus decision making; the importance of parish rituals while grappling with major change; multi-parish ministries; the role of parish pastoral councils; and ministry involving young adults.

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