

## BISHOP ANNOUNCES PASTORAL APPOINTMENTS

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following pastoral leadership appointments which were effective June 24.

- **Father Mark Brewer** to priest intern, St. Mary, Canandaigua.

- **Sister Marie Suzanne Hoffman, SSJ**, to pastoral administrator, Church of the Annunciation, Rochester, from pastoral administrator, St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin.

- **Father Stephen Karani** to parochial vicar, Holy Family Catholic Community, Cohocton, from sacramental minister, St. Mary, Elmira.

- **Father William McGrath** to parochial vicar, Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Community, Finger Lakes, from priest intern, St. Charles Borromeo, Greece.

- **Father Edwin Metzger** to sacramental minister, Holy Name of Jesus, Greece, from sacramental minister, Rochester Institute of Technology, Henrietta.

- **Father Symon Peter Ntaiyia** to parochial vicar, Tioga Catholic Community, from sacramental minister, St. Helen, Gates.

- **Father Emmanuel Nyong** to sacramental minister, Church of the Annunciation, Rochester, from assisting priest there.

- **Father Pius Pathmarajah** to sacramental minister, St. Mary, Bath, and St. Gabriel, Hammondsport, and part-time chaplain, Bath VA Facility, with concurrent duties at the diocesan Tribunal. Father Pius currently serves at the Tribunal and at St. Joseph, Penfield.

Bishop Clark also announced the following reappointments to six-year terms:

- **Father William Donnelly**, St. Mary, Rochester.

- **Father Richard Farrell**, St. Mary, Elmira.

## AMA CRITICIZED

CHICAGO (CNS) — The American Medical Association has drawn criticism from Catholic and pro-life groups for the June 17 vote at its annual meeting declaring that "cloning for biomedical research is consistent with medical ethics."

The AMA agreed that physicians should be free to decide whether to participate in such research and called for appropriate oversight of the research and safeguards for subjects.

# Bishops set priority issues

Jerry Filteau/CNS

ST. LOUIS — During their June 19-21 spring meeting, the U.S. Catholic bishops discussed serious problems facing the U.S. church and voted on new directories for catechetics and deacon formation.

Three of their five half-day sessions were closed to the media, but reporters were briefed on their general nature and content.

The first afternoon the bishops held a closed meeting with researchers and lay leaders appointed to oversee their ongoing efforts to combat clergy sexual abuse of minors. The researchers answered questions about the aims and methodology of the current study they are conducting in all U.S. dioceses to determine the nature and scope of such abuse over the past half-century.

The bishops spent the whole day behind closed doors June 20 in structured discussions to reflect on what they regard as three of the highest-priority issues in the U.S. church: the identity and spirituality of bishops and priests, the decline in sacramental practice and lack of adequate faith formation among U.S. Catholics, and challenges facing Catholic laity in today's culture.

Rochester Bishop Matthew H. Clark said there's always internal disagreement among the bishops over whether sessions should be open or closed. One concern about open meetings is that "tentative statements and exploratory statements" get into the press before any final decisions are made, Bishop Clark said, adding that some bishops also are concerned about speaking publicly "on their feet" about various issues.

The day of reflection was the first major step in an 18-month process initiated last November to determine whether the bishops should convene the first plenary council of the U.S. church since 1884 and, if they do, what themes and issues it should address.

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, who led the session on Catholic laity, told reporters that before deciding on whether to convene a plenary council, the bishops said they needed more information on the nature and history of church councils and on possible alternative methods, such as a national synod.

In a report to the bishops June 21 Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of St. Paul-Minneapolis, chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse, said the bishops' work to



Reuters/CNS

Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony addresses the U.S. bishops as they wrap up their final day of meetings in St. Louis June 21.

combat clergy sexual abuse of minors since last June has been going "at full throttle."

"There is still a long road ahead of us," he said, but "our commitment has not wavered. We have made a pledge to our people and to the people of this nation and especially the vulnerable ones, and we will keep that pledge."

Bishop Clark agreed.

"I'm extremely grateful for the work that's been done since our meeting in Dallas," the bishop said. "There's a long way to go, and we need continually to renew our commitment to bring about healing where that's possible and, secondly, to do all that we can to protect children and young people and vulnerable adults from abuse."

At the start of the opening session, the bishops took a first look at two major action items facing them during the meeting.

They heard an opening presentation on a 357-page "National Directory for Catechesis." It is intended to replace the 1979 directory, "Sharing the Light of Faith," taking into account many intervening developments, including the issuance of a new general directory on catechesis by the Holy See.

They also heard an opening presentation on a 217-page "National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States." Originally approved in 2000, the directives did not receive the required Vatican confirmation and have been revised to take into account more than 200 Vatican observations on the earlier text.

They voted on both directories June 21, but a number of bishops had left the meeting early, so not enough votes were cast to reach a conclusive decision. Both directories require approval by two-thirds of all active USCCB members plus subsequent confirmation by the Holy See before they can take effect. As a standard procedure when the vote during a meeting is inconclusive, bishops who did not cast a vote will be polled by mail to complete the balloting.

On June 19 the bishops decided to undertake the development of four new documents within the next few years. These were:

- A pastoral letter on the theology of mission, intended to promote mission awareness as an integral part of religious education in U.S. Catholic schools and parishes.

- A statement applying Catholic social teaching to agricultural issues in the face of emerging challenges of biotechnology, global trade and the increasing concentration of agriculture in the hands of large corporations.

- A statement offering practical ways of improving collaboration between women and clergy in the church.

- A "foundational document" on the formation and preparation of ecclesial lay ministers, setting out the goals and criteria for the personal, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation of lay people who seek to engage in lay ministries in the name of the church.

Contains reporting by Rob Cullivan in Rochester.