

Bishops hold fall meeting

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops opened their fall general meeting in Washington Nov. 10 by hearing a challenge from their president to direct “the energy of the whole church” to the eradication of sexual abuse and the healing of its victims.

Shortly after Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., made that call, the bishops approved the addition of one full-time and two part-time staff members in their Office for Child and Youth Protection at a cost of more than \$265,000 through 2005.

The bishops also had more than a dozen other topics to deal with during their Nov. 10-13 meeting, held at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill.

Documents on agriculture, popular devotions, socially responsible investment, stewardship, conflict-of-interest policy and several liturgical matters received preliminary discussion Nov. 10 but were to be voted on later in the meeting.

Bishop Ronald M. Gilmore of Dodge City, Kan., chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee on Agriculture Issues, introduced the agriculture document by saying that “men and women are impaled on the jagged edges of this (farming) system.”

The bishops were to vote on “For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me

Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers and Farmworkers” Nov. 12.

On another issue, Bishop Donald W. Trautman of Erie, Pa., called a proposed document on popular devotions a pastoral statement that is intended to take a “supportive and encouraging approach” to such devotions in the lives of Catholics.

But the statement stresses that the practices “do not replace the liturgical life of the church; rather they extend it into daily life.”

The stewardship document, introduced by Bishop Sylvester D. Ryan of Monterey, Calif., is aimed at young adults, asking them to change the world by using their gifts and skills to embrace the church’s social teachings. A vote on whether to accept the document was set for Nov. 12.

Archbishop James P. Keleher of Kansas City, Kan., asked the bishops to adopt a policy to prevent conflicts of interest in conducting business and to update their guidelines for socially responsible investing.

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago introduced two liturgy documents — one on concelebrated Masses and one on the rites for Sunday worship when no priest is present — that were to come up for a vote Nov. 12.

The bishops also heard a report Nov. 10 on plans for their 2004 special assembly in Denver, which will

involve discussions of a possible plenary council of the U.S. church.

Bishop John H. Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla., made a follow-up report on the “Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Public Life” issued in January by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Added to the agenda at the last minute was consideration of a document on same-sex marriages prepared by the Committee on Marriage and Family. The document, called “Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions,” had not been made public as of Nov. 10.



Paul Haring/CNS

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, speaks Nov. 10 during the opening of the bishops’ general meeting in Washington.

Legislators to conduct meetings at churches

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

ROCHESTER — In an initiative arranged by the Greater Rochester Community of Churches, the public will have a chance to dialogue with Monroe County legislators on Tuesday, Nov. 18.

At 7 p.m. legislators will simultaneously headline open-forum meetings in their respective districts. According to GRCC, 25 of the 29 county legislators will take part in the one-hour meetings, known as “Focus on Democracy: Meet Your County Legislator.” Through a moderator, attendees will have the opportunity to state their priorities for county government.

All meetings will take place at area worship sites, including the following Catholic churches and facilities: St. Leo’s Church in Hilton (District 1); the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Pittsford (District 10); St. Thomas More Church in Brighton (District 15); Church of Christ the King in Irondequoit (District 17); Holy Rosary Church in Rochester (District 28); and St. Andrew’s Church in Rochester (District 29).

“Our purpose is simply to bring citizens together with their legislators without a particular agenda,” said Sister of St. Joseph Beth LeValley, president of GRCC.

“We see this as an opportunity to understand more about county government and to be more responsible and informed citizens while at the same time having an open, public forum to represent citizen concerns,”

Sister LeValley added.

GRCC, a coalition of Catholic and Protestant congregations, has been planning the meetings for several months. Sister LeValley and Marvin Mich, a GRCC board member, said the meetings are an outgrowth of GRCC’s involvement in county budget concerns a year ago. Mich said potential areas of discussion on Nov. 18 include the proposed 2004 county budget — which calls for the elimination of several social-service programs — as well as employment and taxation issues.

Despite these often controversial topics, Mich said the evening’s chief purpose is to bring about “relationship” rather than acrimony between legislators and their constituents. He also said that it’s important for local churches to help facilitate public discussion even when the topics aren’t specifically religious in nature.

“All of our Scriptures talk about care of one another. And to do that, you have to be involved in the (political) process. We should be supportive of democracy and democratic forums,” commented Mich, who serves as Catholic Family Center’s director of social policy and research.

Yet Mich also cited the need for a renewed sense of involvement from the citizenship. “To be honest, a lot of people don’t even know who their legislators are,” he remarked.

EDITOR’S NOTE: To find out about the Nov. 18 meeting in your district, call 585/254-2570.

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Rob Cullivan/C

About 160 people gathered Oct. 5 for the anniversary of the Prayer Center at Sisters of Mount Brighton.

The prayer center at the Sisters of Mount Brighton is “a quiet place of existence served thousands of non-Catholics in the voice of God in a often turbulent world,” Sister Jody Keeler’s director.

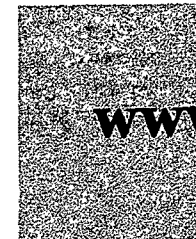
“I think people place where they about the impossible lives,” Sister normal circles allow people to

The Oct. 5 liturgy’s four founders Maureen Floore Mattle, Virginia Mercy Basler, highlighted the center well as its program “19th Anniversary” based on the Ignatian exercises. The facilitated by Soci St. Ignatius Loyola thematic approach their spiritualization has been ongoing for several years. The people who help discern how God in their lives.

William Pickens of pastoral planning the 19th Anniversary September 2003 praised it in the newsletter.

“Aided by this small group of wonderful prayer people who emerged with whom I developed a relationship,” (Ignatian) Exerme to open to the in my life and to er he might be

The prayer ce



The Solemnity of

CHRIST THE KING

Saturday, 22 November 2003
at 5:15 PM

SOLEMN EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

WITH

CHORAL VESPERS

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