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The Official Journal of the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRIESTS' COUNCILS

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**NFPC FOCUS**

"In the Church, our concern is with persons. They form the community that is the Church. Whether priests, religious or laymen, they are the focal point of our lives. It is they that we serve in our ministry — in a service that reaches out to all men. They, not institutions, are our concern." (John Cardinal Dearden, April 15, 1969)

The concern for persons to which John Cardinal Dearden called the attention of the United States bishops at their April meeting is also an appropriate focus for this issue of Priests' FORUM.

This focus on persons demands that priests and priests' councils be concerned not only about what is happening in their own local Christian community, but also about what is happening in the total human community. During the first year NFPC was necessarily concerned with many details of internal organization. The House of Delegates meeting in March provided the wider focus of the concern of priests for the welfare of the total Church, for the welfare of the total society of man.

The delegates meeting proved the value of people coming together to solve their problems, conversing and opening themselves to one another and to their neighbors. In such an assembly, the Spirit is present — honesty prevails over hypocrisy — people are initiated into new insights and fellowship — collegiality is experienced. Foolish game-playing is put aside; smallness and pettiness stops; the summons to true dialogue is heard; the guiding light of the Spirit points to what is really being felt and suffered, accepted and celebrated in community.

In many ways the New Orleans meeting brought greater maturity, honesty and a widespread sense of strength in our purposes. "Right," "left," "conservative," "liberal," "progressively moderate," "moderately progressive," "middle of the road," "center left," "center right," "in," "far out," "rebel," "dissident," "traditionalist," "institutionalist" — the labels which critics may want to attach seem meaningless to us. We see ourselves as priests seeking opportunities to serve more perfectly the people of God and the human community of persons.

Obviously, the aims and purposes of the NFPC demand that, at every step, we ask ourselves, "What way, the dialogue today?"

Cardinal Shehan in his address to the House of Delegates meeting in New Orleans urged the NFPC and the bishops to exercise mutual understanding and trust in real service to the Church. We believe that the foundation has been established and, with Cardinal Shehan, that "this union between bishops and priests will grow even deeper if there can be achieved a genuine listening and learning from each other."

Our purpose will at times involve us in criticism of existing ecclesiastical structures and procedures, but we wish to avoid in every way idle or destructive criticism. Our criticisms will be responsible and constructive in the spirit of Cardinal Dearden's observations to the bishops concerning the need for some institutional change.

"These institutions and structures must serve the interests of the Church community and our role in it. Apart from those that are basic to the very nature of the Church, there must be an openness to adopt those man-made structures that are less suited to our times. This means that many things need constantly to be re-examined and re-appraised. Some will undoubtedly survive with little or no change; others will call for radical change. But unless there is a readiness to do this, unless we are open to the future, the Church will suffer."

After pointing out that authority in the Church is pastoral and, therefore, must be seen as service, he continued, "Beyond that, it demands the setting up of procedures that will involve many persons in the decision-making process. Surely this concept, so repeatedly affirmed in the Vatican Council, is in full accord with the nature of the Church and our role in it. It entails no dilution of authority, no abandonment of authority. On the contrary, it means a more intelligent exercise of authority through the collaboration of those who with us are the Church...it will lead us to the day when responsible membership in the Church will call for a degree of sharing in responsibility greater than we have known."

John W. Gardner, Chairman of the Urban Coalition, sees a "responsible critic" as one who "comes to understand the complex machinery by which change must be accomplished, who finds the key points of leverage, identifies feasible alternatives, and measures his work by real results." This position we adopt.

The quality of our service then is gauged by our responsible participation, our understanding of the issues, our willingness to shoulder the work of renewal. Priests' FORUM is determined to serve in this effort. The NFPC, the member councils, the 38,000 priests so represented can no longer look back wistfully on the days of complacency, on tired structures, outworn institutions and outdated procedures. Our call to action means pushing the problem solvers to the frontline of leadership in a truthful Church. Without burning the bridges to the past, we must build bridges to the future.
This department will contain letters to the editor from the readership on the issues, problems and policies of NFPC as well as the editorial policies of the journal. Bouquets and brickbats are both welcome. Of course, not every letter to the editor can be published, but your letter will not be lost. Every letter will be given consideration not only by the editorial staff but by the executive board through a screening process to determine the flow and trends of opinion of the readership.

Bouquets and Brickbats

Dear Father O’Malley:

This is simply a brief note to say a word of felicitation upon the first issue of FORUM. I have some little knowledge of the work and energy and time that go into the production of any publication and, for that reason, we should be all the more grateful to you and to the members of your staff.

The format shows the touch of a professional and the contents are uniformly interesting. If the FORUM can serve as a vehicle to inform the clergy of the United States on the six points to which the National Federation is committed, then it certainly will be doing a valuable service. Prospere procede et age viriliter!

Christopher J. O'Toole, C.S.C.
New Orleans, La.

Ed. Thank you, Father O'Toole, and all those who wrote to us about the first issue of FORUM. We cannot repeat all the sentiments expressed about the journal, but some excerpts will give an idea of the wide range of reaction — "What? Another priest magazine?!" — "an unnecessary expense" — "fair" — "high class" — "quite professional" — "excellent" — "well done and informative" — "nothing new" — "a good spirit in it" — "enlightening." We especially appreciate the constructive criticisms, some of which you will find incorporated in this issue. But keep writing, we won't be satisfied until you are.

To Belong or Not to Belong

Dear Fathers,

I've always been wary and suspicious of the NFPC and have opposed the N.Y. Senate affiliating with it: I don't like the idea of nineteen men of the executive committee coming to some agreement and then going before the press or TV cameras to give the laity the impression that 60,000 priests in the United States oppose Bishop X or Bishop Y, or oppose Pope Paul's teaching on this or that. Nor do I like the idea of the union-like pressure which some would like to put on their bishop (or pastor), by force of numbers.

I have just read the first volume of Priests' FORUM. Some articles I agree with, others I disagree with. What is more important is that, even in articles with which I disagreed, I found the tone to be truly respectful, sincere, concerned and kind; they are not written by angry young rebels anxious to tear down everything, the good with the bad. I don't get the impression (unlike NCR) that you are pitting priests vs. bishops, but are sensitive to the problems and concerns of those in authority.

I still oppose the New York Senate being affiliated with NFPC, but now, seeing you are more moderate, middle of the road, and not angry rebels, I view your group with less suspicion and more respect, warmth, and confidence. I hope that some day I'll be able to tell myself that I was wrong.

Sincerely,
Rev. Alfred J. Pucci
Staten Island, N. Y.

Ed. The sooner, the better.

Don't Cry Democracy — Do It

Dear Editor,

This letter deals with the article "The Priest and Church Law" which appeared in the March/April issue of FORUM. First of all, I would question the tone of the article — it represents the defensive attitude of a minority group, who is about to be victimized again without a hearing.

Secondly, it is not completely honest — while decrying secrecy of the Roman commission, it passes over totally in silence reactions to positions presented by Americans in Rome, in particular, to McManus' talk in Rome last year at the Congress of Canon Law, at which his ideas were challenged and also publicized in the press overseas. American lack of representation is at least partially due to the unwillingness of American priests and canon lawyers and bishops to reside in Rome and work in the Roman Curia and perhaps at the same time teach in some pontifical university. There is also the language barrier — most Europeans manage to understand one another and communicate, but neither do most of them have a working knowledge of English nor do most Americans have the ability to communicate in or understand any other language.

However, I do not want to make an issue over the above statements, though they may be justified.

Here in America ecclesiastical authorities ought to begin, in collaboration with every segment of the Church from altar societies to diocesan courts, to put into practice on an experimental basis new laws and procedures according to actual felt needs. This is the experiential basis necessary before laws can be revised or codified. It is hard to be sympathetic with the rather narrow American mentality expressed in the article and elsewhere, that does not accept the principle of experimentation, unless someone up there, be he pastor, bishop, delegate, or Pope with his Curia, gives an explicit order. At the same time, they would like to have the power to impose the American
view on the whole Church, and lament the fact that they do not have a controlling voice on the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of Canon Law.

A more realistic view would seem to be that of the Major Religious Superiors who for over a year presented petitions and passed resolutions to dispense from the code with regard to novitiate and formation programs, then actually introduced modifications to laws passed in General Chapters, as well as carried out such experimental programs to some extent. Finally, in February of this year, Rome issued an instruction which permits many of the experimental programs desired in order that new laws may eventually be formulated on the basis of such experience at the rock-bottom level.

Isn't it reasonable that a new Code of Canon Law cannot possibly be achieved until such time as new laws in religious practice are found valid through adequate experience? Could not the same type of procedure be used in the gradual modification of the diocesan courts, in matrimonial procedures, in review boards for priests and religious seeking laicization? Many decisions have to be made locally, regionally, and nationally before an international code of laws can be promulgated? In the absence of local action, what is left but to leave things to experts to draw up an ideal code?

My whole point is: it is the responsibility of American priests and laity to be concerned about particular laws that serve the needs of the people here in America, having consulted them, before bishops impose new laws or try to revise and codify all law. If enough local people are interested in responsible laws for the regulation of the things that concern them, we will not have to worry about being properly represented on the Pontifical Commission — if enough people have something worthwhile to say and actually carry out a program successfully, their cry will be overwhelming; they will be heard; those in power will take note.

Is this not the principle of American democracy to which so much lip service is paid? Why not practice such democracy honestly and be an example even to the Roman Curia instead of fearing it? It is often more ready to adapt than is generally believed. American know-how in the business is having its day in Europe, why not in the ecclesiastical world? Surely we do not want to re-inforce a possible minority image of American Catholicism?

Respectfully submitted by
Rev. Valerius Messerich, O.F.M., Ph.D.
Chaska, Minn.

Quite Pertinent

Dear Editor,

Because the Vatican Council gave us a Decree on Ecumenism, I feel it is important that we attempt to have a committee on ecumenism in our national federation. One article in the FORUM made references to "expenditures of up to 10% of parish incomes for community and social needs in Rockford, Ill." While it is not your immediate concern that this be done in an ecumenical framework in Rockford, still I feel someone within your committee structure should be confronting us with these possibilities.

May I recommend you consider naming it the "Ecumenical Metropolitan Committee" for the following reasons. I find in my own activities in this city that the ecumenical efforts fall into the general categories of theology and urban affairs. The theological issues are often out of our hands and decided by the bishops and the Unity Commission. The urban affairs aspects are primarily the kind of programming, however, that I find we parish priests become involved in. Therefore, the title "Ecumenical Metropolitan Committee" says more directly what is the committee's work.

The successful approach to many problems of our community is done through some form of ecumenical metropolitan ministry. Some social action programs by our archdiocese have started, but it's also clear to many of us who are assigned in the central area of our city and deal with ghetto problems that much of what we do is not broadly based enough when done by a Catholic social committee alone. We also need an Ecumenical Metropolitan Committee. Here in Seattle we are working toward this approach. The director of civil rights work and myself have felt the need for the different committee. Unfortunately, this concept has not yet reached the level of our senate meetings, but I am hopeful that our efforts will begin to demonstrate to the Senate of Priests that "Ecumenical Metropolitan" relationships are highly important and the accomplishments are significantly different from anything done by a Catholic social committee alone.

With the hope that these comments are pertinent, with all good wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Rev.) John P. Mitchell
Seattle, Washington

Ed. We are hopeful that many senates throughout the country will take note of your efforts.

Ed. Amen.
New Orleans, Louisiana: The Province of New Orleans has a unique arrangement with respect to the various diocesan senates and bishops of the province. Father William Greene, NFPC Provincial Representative, reports that twice a year, the archbishop and bishops of the province meet in dialogue with representatives of each senate and association within the province. There are seven dioceses within the province. Co-chairmen of the group are the Archbishop of New Orleans and a priest who is elected by the group of senate/association members. Each conducts one part of the meeting. All present sit together with equal voice and vote. Three meetings have been held and have been very profitable, and they are at a point where there is mutual understanding and respect. A steering committee was appointed to see that proposals are put into effect. The steering committee prepares the agenda and sends it in advance to participating groups: senates and bishops. There is one bishop and representative of each diocese on the steering committee.

La Crosse, Wisconsin: The Assembly of Priests of the Diocese of La Crosse approved a due process board and on the same day Bishop Freking approved the action. The rights to a hearing, to meet one's accusers, to respond to accusations and other ordinary procedures of due process in civil government are provided for in the new system. In all cases of controversy or complaint the first step, of course, should be for the parties to work through the problem themselves. The second step would be to go to the Appeals Committee. If the results are not satisfactory to either of the parties, the next step would be to obtain assistance from a Due Process Board made up of the following persons: a) someone chosen by the person who has made known his grievance; b) someone chosen by the person whom the grievance is against; and c) someone appointed by the Executive Board of the Assembly of Priests. This Due Process Board would function only in the particular case for which it is constituted. In other words, the Executive Board could choose a different person for the Due Process Board in each case, and of course the other two persons would ordinarily be new choices. The conclusions reached by this Due Process Board would be final. In other words, this Board is actually a board of arbitration, not mediation.

Boston, Massachusetts: A recent school crisis involving the Sisters, the parishioners, an "anonymous" parish council and the pastor of a Wollaston parish point up the fact that due process procedures must be made operative for the legitimate grievances of laity as well as priests. To some observers the school crisis which is now a matter of public record was the culmination of years of dissatisfaction with the administration of the parish. In view of the fact that the Personnel Board has no authority of removal or transfer of pastors in the archdiocese, and that the grievance committee of the Personnel Board has no way to mediate in disputes between pastors and parishioners, the Senate of the Archdiocese is drafting for its next meeting a proposal for two separate systems of due process in the archdiocese — one which would replace the grievance committee of the Personnel Board, thus freeing it of that obligation, and another which would handle grievances for the laity.

Toledo, Ohio: According to the report made to the Priests' Senate of Toledo by Monsignor Jerome Schmit, Personnel Board member, Bishop Donovan is most amenable to using the Personnel Board. Although detailed procedures were not worked out at the time of the April meeting, some of the broad guidelines were clear. The Personnel Board will have the authority to call together priests to work out their grievances. If a priest wishes that some matter brought to the Board not be made known to the bishop, the board will honor his request. Of course, the Personnel Board will be more than a grievance board and is now engaged in assembling a permanent file on all the priests of the diocese.

Michigan: The bishops of Michigan by unanimous vote decided to take the first steps toward setting up boards of mediation and arbitration throughout the state. The boards will deal with disputes in the Church involving laymen, nuns, religious groups, priests or bishops in their relationship with each other.

Superior, Wisconsin: The Priests' Senate of Superior recommended extending to the people of the diocese the privilege of fulfilling the weekly Mass obligation at Saturday evening Masses. The senate approved a motion that the permission be given to every parish in the diocese and that the pastor and parish council should decide whether there was need for exercising the permission in the particular parish.

Grand Island, Nebraska: A discussion at the meeting of priests of the North Platte District of the diocese, at which the Senate President, Father J. Smutny was also present, touched on an extremely important subject — public relations. Father Paul Wachtler asked for suggestions to the Personnel Board. It was generally agreed that the Personnel Board should engage in some public relations work to build confidence in it among the priests of the diocese. From this the discussion turned to the need for establishing a proper image within the diocese of the senate itself. At the April meeting of the senate, it was suggested that press releases be prepared following each senate meeting and Father Cortney agreed to seek information from other dioceses concerning their procedure in this matter.
Priests everywhere have heard the cry: "Back to the Classroom." "Seminar," "Workshop" and "Institute" are now a regular part of our vocabulary and experience. And we think nothing of hopping a jet in order to attend some national meeting with fellow priests engaged in similar work.

There is every indication that at the core of our hopes for the Church of the future is the urgent need for continuing education.

With this issue of *FORUM* a new call is made. It is that "Priests Go International." Or as one member of the Role of the Priest Committee put it: "Priests Go Catholic."

The proposal is that the NFPC inaugurate a seminar-travel program for priests in order to meet and discuss priestly concerns with men who are key figures in forming the Church in Europe.

The Role of the Priest Committee sees this idea as a major breakthrough.

Many organizations — all the way from 4-H to urban task forces — have sensed the need to get international groups together to exchange views, to broaden visions and to unify the thrust of their organization. Most of the people who participate in such programs come back inspired by new ideas and developments. There is every reason to feel that something similar would happen if we could get groups of priests from the United States to participate in a series of seminars set up in the leading
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religious and intellectual centers of Europe. Whole
new dimensions would be added to our efforts.

To study in Europe has always meant something
special for a priest. This is probably truer today than
ever before. While a seminar-travel program cannot be
compared to a university degree, it is certainly a
helpful adjunct to any program of continuing
education. As an added advantage, it opens the door
to meeting the persons who are most influential in
forming the life-style of the Church in Europe and
provides an opportunity to share their thought and
experiences in a rather unique way.

The seminar-travel program is intended not only to
introduce United States priests to the best ideas and
Paris, Rome meeting bishops, priests and such
theologians as Metz, Van Caster, Schillebeeckx, Kung
and many others.

The approximate tuition cost of $675 would
include jet transportation from New York and return,
hotel accommodations, continental breakfast, special
sightseeing tours and some miscellaneous items such
as several scheduled social hours, dinners, etc., as well
as the fees for the seminar workshops. Arrangements
are being made, if needed, for the cost of the seminar
tour to be paid over an extended period.

The Role of the Priest Committee values your
suggestions, reactions and support in order to make
this program successful. Father Murphy needs an

activities in the various European communities
through the formal seminars, but to provide the
opportunity to tour the places and visit informally
with the priests and people and thus experience
personally the culture and conditions in which the
ideas and programs were created.

Perhaps no American priest in Europe is better
qualified to plan such a stimulating seminar-travel
program than Father Francis X. Murphy, C.S.S.R.,
professor of moral theology at the Academia
Alfonsiana in Rome, noted author and lecturer, who
received a doctorate in medieval studies from
Catholic University of America and was a peritus at
Vatican II.

Father Murphy is now laying the plans for tour
schedules and seminar agenda to begin in September.
Of course, tours would vary with regard to place,
length, cost; but typical of the first tours being
planned would be a seventeen day jet round trip to
such places as London, Dublin, Nijmegen, Brussels,
indication of your interest so that details can be
worked out to your satisfaction. Basically, the NFPC
must serve your needs. We are hoping this will be one
of many new and imaginative programs that NFPC
can initiate for our growth as priests.

Please indicate your interest in this program on the
insert card in this page and return it as soon as
possible.

Rev. Harold P. Arbanas
Chairman,
Role of the Priest Committee
Holy Family Church
Great Falls, Montana
The address delivered to the House of Delegates meeting in New Orleans by

Rev. Patrick O'Malley
President
National Federation of Priests' Councils
Words of Hope

In his latest book, *The Revolution of Hope*, Eric Fromm writes: “Hope is paradoxical. It is neither passive waiting nor is it unrealistic forcing of circumstances that cannot occur. It is like a crouched tiger, which will jump only when the time for jumping has come . . . To hope means to be ready at any time for that which is not yet born, and yet not become desperate if there is no birth in our lifetime. There is no sense in hoping for that which already exists nor for that which cannot be. Those whose hope is weak settle down for comfort or for violence; those whose hope is strong see and cherish all signs of new life and are ready every moment to help the birth of that which is ready to be born.”

I like that. I would like to see us deal with the National Federation of Priests’ Councils in the light of those hopeful words. Hope is merely believing something is possible and then doing everything possible to bring it about, while knowing that it may not be fully realized in our lifetime.

A Short History

We began the NFPC some ten months ago with a vision — a vision of what we want the Church in the world to be. Our vision was born of the promise given to the Church in the documents of Vatican II. We were realistic enough to know that much of our energy and time this first year would be necessarily directed inward, setting up our own structures, contacting people, initiating directions — simply laying foundations.

This is what we have done:

1. We have at this moment 130 participating councils representing 114 dioceses. These councils in turn represent over 38,000 priests.

2. We have divided ourselves into twenty-seven provinces. During the past six months, we have sponsored twenty regional or provincial meetings in which over 1,000 priest-senators and board members, elected by their peers, have entered into the policy making of the NFPC. This meeting in New Orleans is the culmination of the provincial assemblies.

3. Our five standing committees are structured so that every member council has a contact man with each committee. That contact man will be a channel of information to each council and from the council to the committee.

4. We have undertaken the printing of our own magazine to act as a real forum for priests and as a means of informing all the priests of the country of our work.

These are factual accomplishments, internal but necessary. Our pace of growth has been criticized as too quick by some and too slow by others. Most of us are too realistic to sit around criticizing. We have seen our own councils go through the same process. Many of our affiliated groups have two and three years of operation behind them and we have all known the criticism — too occupied with our own problems, navel gazing, etc. But the time to move is now. We can’t put it off any longer.
The assembly of the House of Delegates of the National Federation of Priests' Councils — the best method available to glean the thinking of a large number of people.

A LOOK IN

on our House of Delegates Meetings March 24, 25 and 26

Archbishop Philip Hannan, New Orleans, Louisiana; Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore; and Reverend Patrick O'Malley, President, NFPC — Words of welcome, unity and hope.
The convention city atmosphere, the cards marking the dioceses, a state of the federation address, the many individual caucus meetings, spectacular interventions, floor debates, the constant glare of TV, the flow of press releases and press conferences, interviews — all this gave the impression of a Republican or Democratic convention rather than a meeting of priests.

One observer from Canada, Father Gerry Fitzpatrick, who also assisted in the press room, said later, "In reflecting on these phenomena, one soon comes to the conclusion that it is not merely a case of 'My Country right or wrong — my Country.' It is much more. It is an honest attempt to inject into Church decision making a procedural method that has been proven by history, tempered by time, and finely honed by constant debate and revision. It is the best method available today to glean the thinking of a large number of people."

In the course of the House of Delegates meeting in New Orleans — March 24, 25, 26 — three themes seemed to dominate the sessions: unity, hope and action.

Following Archbishop Philip Hannan's words of welcome to the NFPC delegates, Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore, stressed the theme of unity to the assembly. Cardinal Shehan said that he did not come to speak for the American hierarchy, but he came as a fellow priest. He expressed the desire that bishops and priests together be the sign of unity which the world needs today. He elaborated on the mutual understanding and trust required to achieve unity. Of mutual trust between bishops and priests he said, "It can be real and efficacious only if it is rooted in the one thing which is common to both — the dedication to the love and service of Christ."

Father Patrick O'Malley injected the theme of hope in his State of the Federation address. He outlined the accomplishments of the federation in the first ten months of its existence and was able to look at the future with "a sharper consciousness of our shortcomings, yet increasing confidence in our potential." The complete text appears on page 10.

The call to action seemed to arise spontaneously from the enthusiasm and dedication of the delegates and from the urgency of the issues. Frequently, speakers from the floor entreated the assembly to take action on the issues under discussion. In his acceptance speech following his re-election as president of NFPC, Father O'Malley said that the future depended upon the officers' and delegates' putting into action those resolutions upon which they deliberated at the meeting.
Early in the first session Father Joseph O'Donoghue of Washington asked for suspension of the planned agenda and full three-day discussion of social issues. The motion was rejected.

Father Henry Brown, New York, called for more extensive discussion of social issues confronting the Church today by condensing the planned agenda. The motion carried.

During the final session Father Clarence Leopold, San Antonio, spoke in favor of motion of the Michigan and Illinois councils in support of resolving current impasses in Washington, San Antonio and elsewhere.

The first order of business was the adoption of the agenda and the rules of procedure. Father Joseph O'Donoghue of the Washington Association of Priests expressed displeasure with the planned agenda. "In the style of a sedate academic society," he said, "the program calls for a series of speeches in an incredible list of several dozen resolutions, the vast majority of which have very little relevance to the major problems of our society and our Church." Among the several changes which he wanted were: 1) that speeches be mimeographed and made available to delegates, and in their place would be open discussion of the major problems of the American Church; 2) that the open period on Tuesday be the occasion of full debate on the birth control issue; and 3) that the NFPC propose five or six resolutions dealing with problems such as race, poverty and peace to be substituted for the agenda of resolutions proposed by the standing committees. The House of Delegates overwhelmingly rejected this motion.

However, many delegates did want more time for discussion of the social issues confronting the Church today, and, after a floor discussion, a motion was passed to lengthen the Tuesday session, if necessary, in order to conclude the committee reports and resolutions and open the Wednesday session to business not included in the agenda. The assembly further voted to suspend the two-thirds rule required to bring new business to the floor in favor of a simple majority vote to give all issues a better chance of having full discussion.

It was a valuable lesson in the democratic process
both for the delegates and for the officers of NFPC.

The resolutions on the agenda were the result of twenty regional and provincial meetings in which over a thousand priest senators and association representatives expressed the will of their constituents to the Executive Board. In turn, the five standing committees, concerned with every phase of priestly and pastoral life, followed the work directives given them. Their reports and resolutions reflected, as faithfully as was possible, the interests, the concern, and the desired direction of action of the priests' councils affiliated with NFPC. The vast majority of the House of Delegates was not at all inclined to scrap this work.

On the other hand, the NFPC Executive Board accepts the responsibility and, if it is appropriate, the blame, for the decision that prevented the Social Action Committee from presenting detailed social action resolutions in its report.

Not by way of excusing the board for that decision, but by way of explanation, planning an agenda always raises the problem of balance. If committee resolutions are numerous and carefully planned, some delegates feel that the meeting has been “fixed” at the top. If speakers are employed to explain the theory or purpose or background of various resolutions, some delegates feel that they are being forced into the position of a passive audience rather than a body of decision makers. But, if the committees offer only general reports and vague resolutions and the speakers address themselves to irrelevant issues, the delegates feel the committees have not done their work and the board has not planned well.

The board decision with regard to the Social Action Committee report was based on the fact that the field is so vast and the interests and involvement of priests around the country so varied that it seemed impossible for NFPC to adopt resolutions representing all the programs, attitudes and areas of concern. The board felt the best approach was to let the delegates formulate those social action resolutions in the workshops and in open discussion on the floor. In this way those issues of greatest concern to the largest number of delegates would emerge.

Apparently, that decision was misconstrued by some as a lack of concern of NFPC about such social problems as race, poverty, peace. When this allegation was suggested later at a press conference, Lucius Walker, Executive Director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, who had addressed the assembly in plenary session and spent several hours with delegates in workshop discussion and in conference with NFPC officers about social problems, dismissed the allegation as false as far as his experience with NFPC was concerned.
The debate about the agenda, coming in the first session, cleared the air for the rest of the meeting. The will of the majority ruled and everyone settled back to the long, hard work of dealing with issues put before them by their fellow priests.

The results of this first order of business proved two things which were evident repeatedly throughout the meeting: 1) that the majority of delegates realized they were representing all the priests in their local senates and associations and so they would not turn aside the work that they were sent there to do; and 2) that in general the delegates were restless with the speeches and anxious to get about the work of debating and resolving the issues before them.

The Executive Board has noted this desire and will correct it in future meetings.

Unity of dedication and devotion was expressed each day in community concelebration of Mass. The moments of common worship were enhanced by the singing of the seminarians from Notre Dame, the major seminary of the New Orleans Archdiocese. In the picture above, Monsignor Colin MacDonald; Vice-President of NFPC, delivers a homily the first day of the convention.

Workshops were popular and well-attended by the delegates. On Monday the Personnel Committee sponsored the workshop “Personnel Board – Its Function in the Diocese – A Personnel Board in Action.” The Reverends John Fagan, Chairman of Personnel Committee; James Daly, Personnel Officer, Rockville Centre; Charles Swiger, Vincent Powell, Peter Altmann, and John Haggerty, were participants.

The Priests’ Councils and the Laity Committee sponsored a seminar on the evolving role of councils of laity. The participants were Very Reverend William Greene, Chairman, NFPC Committee on Priests’ Councils and the Laity; Reverend David O’Neill, Mr. Dennis Landis, National Association of Laymen President; Mr. Richard Dement, National Council of Catholic Men; Mr. Paul Cresswell, Chairman, Lay Congress; Reverend John Carvill, Lay Congress Moderator.

The Role of Senates sponsored a workshop entitled “The Theory and Pragmatics of Priests’ Senates in the United States,” under the direction of Reverend Raymond Decker.

The Social Action Committee sponsored workshops on promoting social action and effective social change in three different areas: the diocesan structure, under the direction of Very Reverend Monsignor John Egan; in the community, under the direction of Reverend Eugene Boyle; and at the national legislative level, under the direction of Reverend John McCarthy.

The Communications Committee sponsored a workshop on leadership training, public relations, sensitivity training: “The Priest – 1969 – Are You The Problem Or The Solution?” The participants were Dr. R. T. Williams, Federal Executive Institute, Charlottesville, Virginia; Reverend Francis X. Callahan, Chairman, Clergy Education Committee; and Brother John McLaughlin, Research Assistant at the National Training Laboratory.
The Personnel Committee's workshop "Personnel Board — Its Function in the Diocese" (above, left) and the Priests' Councils and Laity Committee sponsored seminar on the role of lay councils (right).

The Role of Senates Committee sponsored the workshop on "The Theory and Pragmatics of Priests' Senates in the United States" (above).

Mr. Lucius Walker, Executive Director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization discussed the role of the Church in community organization at the plenary session on social action.

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Father Alexander Sigur displayed both wit and wisdom in his nomination of Father O'Malley for another term as NFPC President.
Press briefings were held frequently and in certain instances a press conference was held after a plenary session to explain the significance of floor discussions and debates. Above, Father M. Anthony Morris, NFPC Secretary, makes a point at a press conference he attended with Father William Burke, Chairman, Communications Committee.

Some of the delegates were disturbed by the fact that during the course of the meeting they received long distance phone calls from their regions expressing shock and dismay at what the NFPC was doing at the New Orleans meeting. They were told that their papers back home were carrying such headlines as "Cardinal Says Catholic Bishop Is No Longer Ruler Of Diocese" — "Priests Open Debate On Rift In Catholicism" — "Priests Parry The Pill" etc. Reached by phone in New Orleans, Father Altmann told his conferes in Brooklyn that he was of the opinion that "There are two conventions in progress — the one in the Jung Hotel and the one being featured on national TV and in the press. The latter bears only a vague resemblance to the former."

A review of the press clippings from newspapers throughout the nation, however, gives no reason for NFPC to panic. Although the headlines were often misleading and at times the reporting out of context, in general the coverage was good and the stories adequate.

As far as some of the TV news clips are concerned, it must be pointed out that there were some press conferences held at the hotel which were not called by the NFPC, but independently. What was said or done at such sessions was not necessarily representative of the NFPC meeting. From reports this was not made clear on some of the broadcasts.

NFPC is committed to openness, and frank and honest debate; the press is welcome at our deliberations. If at times our intentions are misinterpreted or misrepresented, we feel that we must be vigorous enough to survive this aspect of a free and open existence. At the same time, we recognize our responsibility to keep the press informed, to explain clearly our purposes and our intentions, to clarify patiently any misunderstanding of our positions and to correct as far as possible any misrepresentation. The experience of the New Orleans meeting reminds us to make every effort to communicate with the press and, at the same time, it points up the necessity for our own media of communication.

Because of the decision to complete the committee reports and resolutions on Tuesday in order to keep Wednesday free for new business, the session scheduled for Tuesday afternoon was long, difficult, and became increasingly exhausting as late afternoon
Late Tuesday afternoon — listening, having a voice, deciding, voting — the democratic process can be long, arduous, exhausting, but, to the NFPC delegates, the results were worth the price. "I am full of hope — and I know well what hope means. It means work. We are the men who are capable of doing that work. Let us get on with the job" (Father O'Malley).

passed into early evening without a break for dinner.

The delegates are to be commended, both by the officers and Executive Board of the NFPC and by the local senates and associations. The entire Church has reason to be proud of such dedicated priests who lead by serving.

On Wednesday morning, Father Patrick O'Malley was unanimously elected to his second term as president of the NFPC. Under new business, all the member councils of the states of Michigan and Illinois proposed resolutions to the House of Delegates requiring 1) that the NFPC call upon the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to appoint a fact finding committee to resolve the current impasses in San Antonio, Washington and elsewhere; and 2) that if the National Conference of Bishops does not act, the NFPC will itself appoint a committee to take appropriate action to resolve these impasses and re-establish harmony in the Christian community. The resolution was passed. The action taken as a result of the resolution is reported in "Executive's Desk" beginning on page 22.

The delegates were asked to evaluate the meeting and its resolutions. Seventy-two per cent of the delegates agreed with this statement: "The majority of priests I represent would be in substantial agreement with all or most of the resolutions passed by this convention." Only 12.4 per cent disagreed with it and 15.4 per cent felt they couldn't say.

It was also clear that the most important feature for most delegates was the workshops. 76.2 per cent agreed with this statement: "In future meetings I would be in favor of fewer talks and more workshops and discussions." 20.4 per cent disagreed with the statement and 3.4 per cent expressed no opinion.

Before adjourning Father O'Malley urged the delegates to return to their local councils determined to take action on those resolutions as representing the consensus of priests. He asked that all senates and all associations effectively implement all resolutions passed by the House of Delegates and not just those that they particularly favor. He reminded the delegates that in the democratic process, just as all take part in the deliberations and decisions, so all should take part in the unity of action which this meeting mandated to all affiliated councils. Unity — confidence — action.
Statements such as this are commonplace among those who have been exposed to a new kind of experience-learning. This approach has much to offer Catholic leadership as it wrestles with the various forces of change affecting its membership.

Since the Second Vatican Council renewal, aggiornamento, collegiality, dialogue and other such concepts have become a familiar part of an exciting vocabulary. The Conciliar Documents are being implemented and great change is taking place — much more will occur.

The sum total of these changes appears drastic to some and far too little to others. Resistance develops as reactions become polarized. Bishops, abbots, and superiors wonder how much freedom is too much; while priests, Brothers, nuns, and laymen discuss how certain aspects of Church authority can be updated. In this time of ferment within the Church, the crisis developing over the issues of authority and individual freedom is obvious. To continue on the present collision course will bring many unfortunate consequences. An approach must be developed to meld these values into an appropriate balance. Addressing itself to the solution of this problem is one of the major tasks before the American Catholic community in the seventies.

How can the Catholic Church function most effectively during a time of great change? The behavioral sciences are helping various Catholic groups to answer that question. Insights gained through social psychology, anthropology, sociology, and psychology offer an opportunity to analyze change while it is going on and suggest ways to influence these changes as they occur.

For a number of years, large corporations, educational systems, private organizations and government agencies have reached out to behavioral scientists for help in coping with the great changes affecting their operations. From this experience has emerged a new inter-disciplinary approach called "organization development." It is encouraging to note the use of this body of knowledge by various Catholic organizations, religious communities and institutions.

For example, representatives of a religious community of Brothers were called together recently to prepare recommendations for their General Chapter soon to be held in Rome. The provincial contracted with a team of behavioral scientists from Seton Hall University to conduct a week-end experience to help them be more open in discussion of their expectation for a deeper religious life. Through a series of guided activities, the Brothers looked at the way they communicate, solve problems and make decisions. It was generally felt that this experience encouraged a greater sharing of ideas and honesty which enhanced the recommendations to be submitted in Rome.

For the past several years, the National Liturgical Conference has opened its annual convention with a common experience conducted by a behavioral scientist. Those attending are divided into circles of six or seven. They are asked to pray silently for those in their circle for three or four minutes. Following this, they participate for about forty-five minutes in
some "awareness" games and "trust" exercises which prompt a climate of confidence and sharing. At this point, they are able to discuss what they had prayed about earlier.

Believing that "ministry" is learned best by hearing and doing, seminaries are beginning to use this resource also. Pastoral training programs are being expanded in some religious communities to include supervised field placements and weekly "dialogue" meetings. During these sessions skilled trainers help participants better understand their thoughts and feelings and become more aware of how they are seen. Through face-to-face interaction the seminarians and faculty are provided opportunity to increase their ability to listen, observe, disclose, and feed back.

Experience-Learning

This approach relies heavily upon experience-learning. Participants work together in small groups using brainstorming, case studies, film discussion, role play, problem solving exercises, skill practice sessions, theory lecturets, games, in-basket simulation, and other learning devices. These tools are sometimes complemented by "observers," reaction forms, video tape and recording of actual sessions to help the participants see and hear more clearly the way they behave under varying conditions.

Experience-learning is distinct from other learning because it stresses individual readiness, style and relationships with others through personal interaction. By being open, honest and direct with one another, the participants enter into an authentic relationship which frees them to see more clearly how others perceive them and how they see others and why. As they examine their experiences together, they receive enlightening insights and develop new inter-personal skills. "Feedback" from others (telling it as they see it) is a particularly helpful tool. This setting provides an opportunity to prepare and practice new behaviors applicable to many real-life situations.

More and more religious and laymen are going to various kinds of workshops each year. This past summer one diocese alone sent over twenty of its priests and Sisters to "labs" in various parts of the country to help them better understand themselves and their ministry. A Jesuit provincial who had completed a basic human relations course conducted by the National Training Laboratory Institute for Behavioral Sciences in Bethel, Maine, was asked if he thought the two weeks were well invested. His eyes lit up as he said, "If I had had this experience fifteen years ago, I'd be a much better priest today."

Priests, nuns, Brothers, and laymen working for Catholic organizations who have participated in "labs" are putting it to work on the job. A priest-friend who has taken several of these training courses feels quite strongly that the more Catholics know about themselves, the more fully they will participate in the liturgy. In small informal settings, just before Mass, he often asks the worshippers to "get in touch with themselves" through several activities he suggests. He has found these few moments to be quite beneficial in developing a spirit of community which carries over into the participation, petitions, singing and dialogue homily.

From a pulpit in New Jersey, a visiting priest speaking at a "First Mass" began by saying that he would not preach a homily, but would conduct "a happening." In the course of the "happening" husbands were asked to kiss their wives and all were invited to shake hands with those next to them. One of the participants remarked later with a chuckle: "That's the first time I've kissed my wife in church since we were married in 1935."

"Drop Out and Take a Trip" urges a flyer distributed by the Newman Chapter at American University. The circular goes on to describe a series of experiences included in the week-end get-together. Students are invited to a "live-in," to "watch a sunrise by the Chesapeake Bay, see a flick about a four-year-old who's drafted, sing songs in quest of 'the impossible dream,' and 'learn more about yourself.' "It sounds like a delightful experience and it is consistent with "awareness" theories being developed by behavioral scientists.

Organization Development

Organization Development, however, is more than experience-training. It is based upon the firm conviction that each person, group, organization, and community has deep within itself the urge to extend, develop and mature; to wish to express and activate all of its capacities. Each human entity desires to be more capable, to resolve those aspects of his or her life which cause pain and dissatisfaction. Everyone yearns to be fulfilled, united, in communion and complete. To do this, we must know ourselves and the spectrum of our relationships intimately.

The Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers and the Trappists are but a few of a growing number of religious congregations which have invited organization development consultants into their communities to work with them to devise a plan to guide the changes they are undergoing. These consultants "live" with the thoughts and feelings, the traditions and customs, the concepts, ideas, norms and values of the

continued on page 26

Harold T. Hunton, member of the Board of Directors of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice and National Catholic Social Action Conference, is consultant-trainer to a number of religious organizations.
The new Executive Board met in session after the formal closing of the House of Delegates meeting on March 26, 1969. The Board met from 3 p.m. until midnight. The follow-up work on the House of Delegates meeting and on the resolutions adopted by that body was planned at the Executive Session. The list of resolutions appears in the "Committee Room" reports on page 23 of this issue. The full proceedings of the House of Delegates will be published soon and copies will be sent to all member councils as well as to all the bishops.

Of primary importance, of course, is the acceptance of those resolutions by the local councils. Each delegate returned to his local group with an understanding of the thinking of the House of Delegates. Some of the resolutions, especially those not previously discussed, have to be explained to and adopted and acted upon by the local groups before they are at all valid.

Here we report on what has transpired with regard to the NFPC resolutions at the national level since the March meeting. As might be expected, we have had varying shades of success in our efforts to get them implemented.

Specific Steps

We separated the resolutions which required immediate and specific executive action directed toward the meeting of the bishops in Houston in April from those concerned with the priesthood and with social action. We will separate the report in the same way.

Messages to the Bishops

1. We wrote to John Cardinal Dearden (then Archbishop) as President of the NCCB and to the entire Bishops' Liaison Committee expressing, as we were asked to do by the House of Delegates, the "great disappointment" of the delegates at the failure of the NCCB to hear the voice of the NFPC at the bishops' meeting in Houston. We had hoped to be able to make a presentation of our goals, efforts, achievements, etc., and our future directions through our own officers.

2. We expressed the House of Delegates' disappointment with the failure of the Bishops' Liaison Committee to have an official representative at the New Orleans meeting. Although Cardinal Shehan, who is chairman of that committee, was present and gave an excellent talk, he made it quite clear that he represented only himself as a fellow priest and not the hierarchy.

3. The NFPC office also sent a letter to Cardinal Dearden, with copy to all American bishops, informing them of the NFPC request for a fact-finding board on both the Washington and the San Antonio disputes. In the letter we stressed the importance of resolving these two situations soon. We also stated that the House of Delegates had mandated the board to take further "appropriate action" in case of the bishops' failure to act.

4. We asked Bishop Bernardin to arrange a meeting of the Bishops' Liaison Committee and the NFPC officers. He responded promptly and the meeting was scheduled. We advised Cardinal Dearden that some of our officers would be present in Houston and available for consultation, facts, statistics, etc.

The Meeting with Bishops

Sunday night, April 13, the NFPC officers continued on page 33
The following is the list of resolutions presented to the House of Delegates at the March meeting. Resolutions introduced but sent back to committee or defeated follow the list of those approved by the delegates.

Proceedings of Monday, March 24
Due Process Resolution Approved
1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT
   a. Effective means of prior process and effective recourse be established in each diocese which guarantee a fair and just solution to problems between bishops and priests and laity and religious;
   b. Mediation boards be established in each province which guarantee a fair and impartial hearing to disputes on a higher level;
   c. Each senate and association arrange for a meeting with the ordinary of the diocese to begin to establish means of prior process and effective recourse on the diocesan level;
   d. The bishops of the United States study as a basis for such procedures the recommendations of the Canon Law Committee which is presently studying this program.

Proceedings of Tuesday, March 25
Social Action Committee Resolutions Approved
1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT
   a. The NFPC recommend at least a one-year postponement of the decision to build the ABM system;
   b. The NFPC caution all defense agencies in the U.S. of the traditional distinction between civilian populations and legitimate military targets;
   c. The NFPC re-emphasize the principle of non-combatancy, which principle in effect insists that in all warfare there are those whose innocence cannot be questioned or compromised.
2. BE IT RESOLVED THAT
   a. The punitive and unfair limitations on federal welfare payments enacted in the social security amendment of 1967 be repealed;
   b. Support of Welfare Rights Organizations be offered at the local level by the Social Action Committee of each priests' council;
   c. Education and fact-finding campaigns be conducted to aid the People of God to understand the demands of Christian conscience in the field of welfare and poverty on the legislative and administrative level;
   d. The NFPC demand that Congress immediately pass legislation that would attack the incredible phenomenon of hunger in our land.
3. BE IT RESOLVED THAT
   a. The NFPC through its central leadership and its regional representatives promote the transformation of our religious lobbies in state capitals and in Washington into true forces for the promotion of social justice;
   b. And that this body support and join with the present efforts of the poor people's pressure group known as the National Citizens' Lobby in promoting full funding of the 1968 Housing and Development Act;
   c. And that Social Action committees of senates and associations immediately begin to make the necessary contacts to demand a change in the tone of the Christian voice heard in the halls of our nation's legislatures.
4. BE IT RESOLVED THAT
   a. The Grape Boycott of the United Farm Workers be actively supported by the NFPC and its member councils until such time as the growers are willing to allow and abide by a free and impartial election of the field workers;
   b. In order to avoid such bitter dispute in the future in other crops, the Congress of the United States be urged to extend the National Labor Relations Act, unemployment compensation and the minimum wage to include all farm workers;
   c. Each delegate request his council to take this position on the National Labor Relations Act, unemployment compensation, and minimum wage to his local congressman and his local senator during the spring recess;
   d. Recognize the rights of farmers and other poor in rural areas; support just prices on farm products and support right of small farm workers to organize.
5. BE IT RESOLVED THAT
   a. Each member council initiate a program to train priests, religious and laymen in community organization;
   b. Community Organization be part of every seminary's curriculum;
   c. The NFPC endorse the concept of responsible community control.
6. All member councils should establish social action committees.
7. NFPC and Federation member councils support the Black Clergy Caucus in their demand for a central office for Black Catholicism. This demand was made in a letter to Cardinal Dearden of Detroit, president of the National Catholic Conference of Bishops. This Federation upholds self determination, self direction and self affirmation expressed by their brother priests of the Black continued on page 37
Dial-logue

Dial-logue is the survey corner of Priests’ FORUM. It is an important department for it provides a channel of communications back to NFPC officers and the editors of the official journal. Here is the opportunity for each reader to record his opinion in a very simple way. Just take a moment now to complete the form below. This survey was prepared by Reverend Richard Bell of Chicago. The results will be published in the next issue of Priests’ FORUM.

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<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Effective means of recourse or due process should be established in every diocese which guarantees a fair and just solution to problems between bishops and priests.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Failing effective local solution to disputes, regional arbitration boards available to both parties of the dispute should be established in each province which effectively guarantee a fair and impartial hearing and are empowered to hand down decisions binding the disputing parties.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>As much as we may think them desirable, democratic forms probably won’t work in the Church.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>I feel sufficiently informed about the issues involved in the current ABM defense system to express my opinion as to its desirability and need.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Taking everything into consideration, the NFPC should take a stand against the proposed ABM system.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Taking everything into account the priests in my diocese have a pretty good record for efforts in the field of social action.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The Catholic Church nationally and regionally should actively promote more effective lobbying for issues of Social Justice.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>With both Rome and the bishops strongly supporting celibacy in the priesthood, the NFPC should continue to be actively concerned about optional celibacy.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>The NFPC (in cooperation with other qualified groups) should assemble expertise and initiate serious professional study on the possibility and feasibility of the pastoral witness and service of both celibate and married clergy in the Church.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Member councils should actively seek in their dioceses a frank and honest accounting of the use made of diocesan funds to determine if their present utilization is effectively meeting the needs of society.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Some official representative of the NCCB should attend all future meetings of the House of Delegates of the NFPC.</td>
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<td>The elected head of the American Hierarchy should take over the office and duties of the Apostolic Delegate.</td>
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<td>In the United States renewal in the Church in my opinion is proceeding</td>
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Dial-logue
National Federation of Priests’ Councils
1307 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60605
Pessimism and the Pope

by F. X. Murphy, C.SS.R.

Within the past year the almost querulous tone adopted by Pope Paul in many of his Wednesday audiences, his insistence on his authority as pope, and his hitting out at extremists and dissidents in the Church shocked many of his listeners. The real danger in this apparent papal pessimism is that it amounts to a confirmation among liberal Vatican observers that the pope has effectively repudiated the advances of Vatican Council II.

Some change in the papal approach to current problems, however, was signalled as early as the last weeks of January by four editorial articles in L’Osservatore Romano which took a sympathetic view of the great changes being introduced into the Church in the Netherlands. What is so significant about these articles is not so much the fact that they can serve as necessary insulation against a severe clash between the Vatican and the Church in Holland — and no doubt they have this function — but that they indicate an eye-opening in Vatican thinking to the possibility that fundamental changes in Church structures are coming, are actually on the horizon in some countries.

By raising the college of cardinals to an unprecedented number during the recent consistory (134), Pope Paul himself called attention to the “institutional progress” being experienced in the Church. At the same time he indicated his dedication to the “intrinsic and historical coherence of the Church with its original formation and its seminal development.”

Behind these words is the pontiff’s determination to maintain the authoritative concept of the papacy in the manner and form in which he received it. Thus while he stressed the consultative function of the college of cardinals as the senate of the Roman Church, and described its relation to the new Synod of Bishops, he insisted on his own prerogatives as supreme ruler of the Church whose power was “personal, direct and universal.”

It is within this perspective that the Roman curia’s reaction to the crisis over authority in the Church must be conceived. Together with the pope, most of his older advisers fear that the call for collegial consultation and responsible decision-making could destroy the monarchical concept of papal rule that has prevailed in the western church for the last 1,500 years.

In proposing to reassert the co-responsibility with the pope of the bishops as a body for “teaching the gospel to every nation,” Vatican Council II attempted at least to nuance the concept of the pope as a dictator in matters of faith and morals; as well as in the jurisdictional guidance of the Church, and this, without any desire to deprive the pontiff of the prerogative of infallibility when he decides ex cathedra the meaning of a specific teaching of the Church revealed in the Scripture. But the curial vigilante committee saw in the move an attempt to deprive, or at least to downgrade, the pope’s supreme power in the Church at large. This prompted the famous “four prefatory notes” appended to Chapter Three of the Constitution on the Church.

Apparently in answer to more recent criticism of papal power, Pope Paul spelled out his concept of the function of both the college of cardinals and the synod of bishops. The cardinals are to assist him more particularly in the daily guidance of the Church, while the synod is to reflect more directly the collegial nature of the episcopacy as a consultative body and to provide the pontiff with an exact knowledge of the general questions and interests of the entire Church.

In speaking of the enlarged college of cardinals, Pope Paul said it was not an indication of inflation sparked by triumphalism, but rather a desire to cope with the expanding and truly international character of the Church. He was, at the same time, fending off pressure in favor of having the electors of the pope chosen by the local episcopal conferences. In all this, there is a Roman preoccupation with the source of authority. In no sense does Rome want to admit that power in the Church is lodged in the people of God as the Body of Christ, and entrusted to bishops and pope by divine mandate. Nevertheless, it would seem that this is the direction in which development in ecclesiological thinking is moving.

It is this same concern about authority that surrounds the debate over the nature of the new theological commission’s function. The selection of the thirty-nine members seems to reflect an honest effort to balance out the various tendencies in the Church as well as to give it a wide geographical representation. The one department neglected is that of moral theology where the historian, Philip Delhaye of Louvain, and Stanislas Olejník, a moralist practically unknown outside of Poland, are the only representatives. However, this deficiency will no doubt be remedied.

Where the real difficulty lies is in the desire of the curial members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to dominate the new commission, again honestly prompted by concern about papal authority. In fact, however, no improper interference was suffered by the Papal Commission on Family Life, though it was working under the auspices of the Secretariat of State. The cardinals and bishops who proposed the theological commission at the Bishops’ Synod of 1967 certainly had in mind a group enjoying total academic freedom in thrashing out tough theological questions. What is expected of the commission is a thorough airing of every aspect of the more pressing questions being raised within the framework of the Church’s tradition and in keeping with an orthodox development. Neither a synod nor a final court of appeals, the commission cannot be asked to give absolute rulings on disputed teachings; but it can make sure that all the evidence is evaluated before decisions are made. Given the composition of the present commission, there should be no question but that it will insist upon its prerogative of independent deliberation. Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, J. Ratzinger, Barnabas Ahearn and R. Schnackenberg are not the kind of people who believe in window-dressing.

One thing is certain. The pope is fully aware of what is happening in the Church all over the world. And while at times he gives the impression of being too troubled, he is taking positive steps to catch up with the main problems as he sees them.
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Order. The consultant watches the way decisions are made, problems are solved, communications are transmitted, goals and objectives are defined, crises are resolved. He reviews the rules and the regulations and studies the nature of the Order. A cross-section of religious are interviewed in depth to get a clear idea of their perceptions, resources, anxieties and insights. He observes the community at prayer, work and recreation.

When the consultant believes he has enough information about the purpose, personalities, politics, programs and external pressures present, he meets with the leadership and proposes a variety of ways to build a healthier community spirit, improve team work, evoke more energy from individual religious, stimulate motivation and increase productivity. The decision-makers select the activities which seem most appropriate to them and a plan is devised. The consultant assists in the implementation of the plan and helps train the officials responsible for carrying it out. He attempts to leave behind a competence that can carry on by itself with only the occasional need for outside assistance.

For example, an organization development self-study program was recently initiated by the Trappist Community at Our Lady of the Holy Cross Abbey in Berryville, Virginia. The monks invited a group of behavioral scientists to help them improve the quality of community life and deal with the impact of recent changes in their religious rule.

With the assistance of the consultants the thirty-five members of the community have identified areas of concern and expressed their expectations. They have divided themselves into four task forces — Liturgy, Community Life, Vocations and Communications. Through these groups they are addressing themselves to the issues and hoped for outcomes.

To date, a three man team from Georgetown University has conducted a weekend workshop to increase interpersonal skills; on several occasions a priest-sociologist has discussed various aspects of life within a religious community; an Episcopal priest, who is coordinating the OD plan, has served as an observer-consultant at a number of community meetings to improve the productiveness of these gatherings; the communications task force is working with a specialist to increase their ability to listen, observe, disclose and feedback. While these activities are taking place the Trappists study, discuss, decide and take other steps necessary to live more fully the spirit of the Cistercian Order.

The Helping Relationship

The foundation stone of the organization development approach is the relationship which must evolve between the client and the consultant. It takes courage to invite a comparative stranger to come live within the inner life of an organization. A great deal of trust and confidence must develop between the two parties to permit them to work closely together and to share fully their insights, knowledge and experiences.

To encourage this rapport, the organization development consultant accepts the clients wherever they may be with whatever problems are present and without making moral judgments. He tries to act with sufficient sensitivity in this relationship so that his behavior is not seen as a threat. He respects the confidential nature of the information he receives; he is open and direct in his dealings with the client; he attempts to build within the client the resources needed to deal more competently with its environment.

In one sense, the consultant becomes a companion to the client contributing his impressions as a thoughtful observer, skilled trainer and student of group life.

Sensitivity Training

Because of the growing amount of spectacular publicity and understandably negative reactions it seems important to say a word about "sensitivity training." This type of experience-learning features the T Group (T for Training) as the basic learning situation. It is unstructured in the sense that there is no leader and no agenda other than the things the participants wish to discuss. The trainer guides those he is working with to an appropriate sharing of their concerns, questions and life problems. This frank level of self-disclosure builds a strong bond of trust within the T Group and permits them to discuss more easily the way they behave or don't behave with each other. These exchanges provide much learning for those who seriously apply themselves.

Sensitivity training is not group therapy because it deals with the here and now. It focuses upon behavior experienced in the T Group. Participants are encouraged not to ask, "Why did you do that?" but rather to say "This is what I saw you do."

The intensity of the T Group experience is determined by the time available, skill of the trainer, and resources of the participants. These experiences may range anywhere from a week-end open to all interested, to four-week sessions limited to particular people or groups. Recent magazine articles have tended to feature some of the more bizarre behavior that occasionally occurs in the longer and restricted labs. The important fact to remember is that these things happen in an unusually trustful environment and are later discussed and understood in the context.
in which they take place.
A substantial amount of time in each sensitivity experience is spent on guiding the participants to their back-home environment. "Re-entry" is accented because new behaviors must be integrated into the participants' everyday reality.

Results
The majority of those who have taken part in experience-learning labs and organizational development projects say that they have become more honest and authentic in the way they behave with others. They feel they are better able to cope with life and are more joyful. Changes in personality, attitudes and behavior commonly occur in a relatively short period of time. Participants tend to become more fully integrated within themselves and thereby more effective. They are more aware of themselves and other people; feel freer, more creative, spontaneous and innovative. They perceive themselves differently, are more realistic and, at the same time, act more like they really want to behave. They frequently value themselves more highly, have more self-control and direction; they are more open to new experiences, more accepting of themselves and others; they are less frustrated by stress; they are more fulfilled.

The American Catholic community is facing a particularly strong challenge at this point in its life. Will it have the courage and insight to continue to look at itself; to confront the issues which are dramatically beginning to divide it; to surmount the differences that can prevent it from becoming a truly Christian community?

The growing interest and enthusiastic spirit when one speaks of organization development and experience-training with Catholic leaders is encouraging. More and more priests are becoming involved and, rather than saying, "If I had had this experience fifteen years ago, I'd be a better priest today," they can say, "Because of this experience, I'll be a better priest tomorrow."

Granted a natural hesitancy, fear and curiosity, there is also a desire to hear and experience — an urge to "stick the toe in the water." While this can be a painful process, the search for truth is always an exhausting journey. Those who have profited through personal experience believe that the trip is worth the price for the truth has set them free.

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The Pressure of Modern Times
The world is changing so fast. Young people are taking over. Their values, their pragmatic, existential philosophies are becoming guidelines for government, for education, for business. Our populations are becoming more and more mobile. Our cities are changing — some even say dying — and we witness the explosions of population and of knowledge. Through the communications and transportation media, the world is literally growing smaller. Automation and cybernetics are not in the future; they are taking place now. Man is finding himself more and more able to answer his needs without reference to God, to formal religion, to the Church. All this you already know. But what does it say to you? What does it mean in your future — one year, five, ten from now? How do these facts affect your life as a priest?

Probably most of us here today are parish priests basically. How will mobility and transportation trends and greater education affect the parish of the future? What will the influence of the young mean to organized religion? What about the mentality of the young priests today — is it compatible with our ideas of service? How will the authority of the Church fare in an era of changing ideas and philosophies? We can go on and on posing such questions. It's almost enough to make you wish you were back in the good old days when you thought you knew what the future held.

Some men will panic in the face of these changes — the entrenched will oppose the trends; others will leap into the future without adequate preparation, without a plan just because updating is needed. Both are unrealistic and both the result of panic, not of hope.

Root Problems
But one thing is true: we must quickly get past the mickey mouse problems we have been dealing with and go on to the root problems really troubling us. Time is getting short. We are losing many capable priests and, at the same time, finding that young people are not being attracted to religious life. We can all offer opinions on the causes of this crisis, but we have far too few facts. Without facts, we cannot identify the causes; we cannot move ahead together. We must find out the facts through study and research and then move to effective action.

New Theology of Parish
We must study and publicize the efforts being made
in different dioceses of the country towards developing a new pastoral theology, and towards initiating new ministries. There are vital movements underway in the United States. I’ve seen some of them; I know of others. With these adaptations of ministry, I can see us growing more comfortable with the idea that creativity and responsible innovation will mean some mistakes and error. To err is part of our condition. We don’t glory in it; but neither do we deny it nor do we run from it. We must deal with our condition and try as hard as possible to eliminate what is wrong.

Parish structures will be changing — in many places, such as the large urban areas and the inner city, the change has already taken place. The crisis in Catholic education will change our parishes even more. Technological advancements will rule out the rural concept of parish that we have had for so long. No one can accurately say at this point what the parish or ministry of the future will be. One thing we can say though, the manner of service in the future will be far more adaptable and open than it is at present because it will have to respond to a far more tractable and open people. It is possible to plan for some of these changes. It is necessary to preserve the traditional parish wherever it is serving the people. The question we must work upon is whether we have sufficient facts to know when to change or when to hold on to workable structures and sufficient mobility to do whichever is best.

An Atmosphere of Freedom

Essential to mature planning and leadership in the Church is an atmosphere wherein the capacity of every priest is challenged. Is it possible to form a Church that gives maximum freedom and responsibility to its members? This has to be one of our goals for priests and laity alike. The gospel message must be a freeing message — a freedom to serve without reserve. One of the aspects of the Church that holds us back at present is the lack of effective legislation which takes into account the differences that exist among men. There must be an updating of the Code of Canon Law. We must work towards a reasonable set of general laws with particular application left up to the local Church.

The matter of due process is another case in point. We should be embarrassed in having to point out the lack of due process in the Church structure. According to any understanding of the gospels, should we not be the first and foremost exponents and defenders of people’s rights? But we are not. Every council must take positive steps to set up due process in its diocese. Some councils have already done so in cooperation with the bishops. To protect all the people of the Church, every diocese must follow suit.

Role of Priests

The theology of the priesthood is another area where much development is demanded. In that development I think we must put great emphasis on what priests are actually doing and whatever else true service to the people of God requires priests to do. This would involve our relationship to our bishops and to the people whom we serve.

It is only a matter of time before we shall be choosing our bishops and other leaders. We are taking baby steps in that direction right now. In some dioceses, such as Manchester and Rockford and Albany, the councils of priests have done some preliminary work. Every council will have to do the same. We must also begin to work towards the involvement of the laity in this process of selection.

The Person of the Priest

In all of this we keep coming back to the individual, to the priest himself — in his work, his life style, his outlook, his understanding of the gospel message. This is why enlightened personnel practices are so important. This is why the men engaged in personnel must spend more and more time training themselves in their work. This is why personnel boards need the help of the councils to develop new criteria for the placement of priests, and new criteria for the training of men for the priesthood.

The role of married deacons will profoundly affect the priesthood within a very short time. Much of what the priest is doing now will come under close scrutiny and study. This will open up the field for new types of priesthood. Our personnel boards must be ready, willing and able to handle the new demands that will be made on them.

Retirement of older priests from administrative work should be a freeing experience, not a losing experience. We must train ourselves to look forward to the day when perhaps we can retire into the practice of the priesthood in such a way that the spiritual service far outweighs the social or administrative aspects; to the day when priests can more truly be called friends to others — present in their lives, loving and giving some limited spiritual service. We are not there yet. This is a serious problem — one that industry and business face as well.

The Role of Laymen

The relationship of laity and clergy has never been
clearly worked out. Undoubtedly it will continue to evolve as the Church and its consciousness of its role in the wider community also evolves. We are all quite concerned with the formation of parish and diocesan councils and lay congresses; obviously we are in the opening stages of a real thrust toward the total involvement of the laity in the life of the Church. But we are only beginning and there are many questions still unanswered.

If we are really committed to the idea that the Church is made up of laity as well as priests and clergy, then how shall we prepare priests to train themselves and the laity for this important task? I would ask three things of every priest council of NFPC: 1) to define the role of the laity as they see it; 2) to compare that with the role of the laity as seen by the laymen themselves; and 3) to then talk about the formation of a theology of the laymen in dialogue with the laymen.

Training of Future Priests

Priests’ councils must take very seriously the training and formation of the priests of the future — the seminarians. Once again this will be done together with the young men who are studying for the priesthood. When questions pertaining to their training and formation are considered, they must be invited into dialogue.

It must be most difficult for a young man to choose the priesthood today — and not because things are so unclear. The priesthood is a life of faith — and therefore in its depths it will always be unclear. But I believe that one of the major obstacles facing a young man who would choose the priesthood is the indecision and even the intellectual dishonesty which he sometimes finds in priests and in the leaders of priests.

Optional Celibacy

One of the obvious problems of the Church is the relationship of celibacy and the priesthood. Personally, I feel that celibacy is a great value to me in my exercise of the priesthood. But I also find that the hierarchy and the clergy are so afraid and so secretive about discussing the call for optional celibacy that we, the priests, are at the same time losing sight of the positive value of celibacy. I’m beginning to feel foolish being celibate. And I don’t like it at all. I want to see us address fearlessly and honestly the place of celibacy in the life of the Church.

If celibacy has value, it will remain. If its relationship to the priesthood should be changed, we will only know that if we face the facts. As a federation, we must face the facts, translate them for priests and then do what is right for the Church.

Continuing Education

Through the local councils we must push hard for continuing education. Some effective programs are being conducted in various dioceses around the country, but they are frequently attended by the men who need them least. Many of our priests do not study after ordination. United Air Lines insists that its pilots return to the training center every six months. Because airline pilots are responsible for human lives, their training is precise, complete and ongoing. Is our work of less importance? But how do we make continuing education an integral part of the active ministry? We must not appeal to the authorities to force us — that is an unhealthy continuance of the paternalism that has dogged us for too long.

We priests must impose standards on ourselves. In Trenton, New Jersey, the continuing education committee is seeking to make one of the stipulations for receiving a parish that a man must have on his
record a certain number of credit hours acquired after he is ten years ordained. Perhaps this is the beginning of a system whereby we do impose standards. It is, of course, not always easy to measure depth of spiritual life, devotion and willingness to sacrifice, especially if we try to use intellectual accomplishments as our measuring stick. We can expect to encounter many such problems in setting standards, but we must take the first steps and improve as we go along.

Role of Religious Priests in the Federation

A large segment of the priesthood in the United States is not being heard in many of the councils affiliated with the NFPC. Close to 15,000 religious order priests are not represented in councils. Most of these men may not be directly involved in parochial or diocesan work, but they are in education and other forms of service which are important in forming the Christian community. We cannot possibly address ourselves to the whole Church without including them. How do we do so?

Recently in Detroit the religious order men formed a separate Council for Religious Orders, not in opposition to the senate or association, but directed more to the problems peculiar to religious orders. Is this a pattern to be followed, or are there more satisfactory ways of resolving this serious omission of proper representation?

The Church as Leaven in the World

Even if all the important problems within the priesthood and within the Church were resolved, the Church would still have no importance for the majority of people unless its relationship to the wider community were relevant and meaningful. In light of man’s growing storehouse of knowledge, in light of man’s ability to do more and more by himself without any reference to God, it is clear that the Church must exert more influence in the decision-making processes of the world. The world needs the message of the Gospels. It needs to be urged, prodded, even goaded to greater and more meaningful charity and justice. Sad to say, the humanists have been more active in promoting peace and justice and equality than have we, the Church.

It is good that others are concerned. But should not we be even more concerned? Should not the voice of the local councils be heard speaking out on the decision to go forward with the ABM missile project? In November the bishops deplored the arms race and the buildup of nuclear weaponry. Where is the voice of the Church? I mean the entire Church, not just the bishops, not just the priests, but the people as well. Many of us do not want to get involved — some could care less — and we leave important decisions up to others. Sometimes we do make statements, but that is not enough, that is not really being involved. We must ask member councils, “How are you involving priests in these decisions?”

How are the councils educating the priests, suggesting the priests educate the people? What about the continuance of the war in Vietnam; or the racism that continues to infect our communities? Will we go on living with these evils? As the Church we do have an obligation not only to speak out but to work for peace and for justice. We cannot just passively wish for it.

Precisely in the area of social action does the greatest potential for ecumenical cooperation exist. In fact, there are at this time all over the country hundreds, perhaps thousands, of examples of continuing cooperation between Catholics and other Christian and non-Christian groups. Perhaps Christian unity may not be realized soon on the level of doctrine, but how long can we remain apart in our community concern? There is no reason why we cannot now work together towards a real presence in the community. There are many reasons why we should join other Christians and non-Christians in ongoing social action programs.

Indeed, the problems are complicated. Whenever the question of social action is discussed among a group of priests, someone will allude to the complications and say, “Obviously, we can’t discuss it here till we get more facts.” Then the group disperses and each participant forgets about the “more facts” and the effort it takes to acquire more facts.

The job of a priests’ council should be to get the facts, to inform its members, and through them to promote the involvement of the Church in the serious difficulties of the community. Priests’ councils must be convinced that we do have something to add — a dimension that the community needs and cannot do without. This means initiating an educational process; at times it means giving an example of courage; and it always means a willingness to face criticism. Of course, it is hard. We in the NFPC are just as uncomfortable in the face of adverse criticism when we take a stand on a national issue, but sometimes it is important that the NFPC take a stand. It is just as important that the local councils be determined to provide leadership in their communities.

Communication

Much of our hoped-for success in accomplishing the goals we have set for our Federation will depend on our ability to communicate with one another. Many priests are seriously discouraged during these uncertain times. But a man can only despair by withdrawing within himself. When he joins others who hope, he sees things in a different perspective. I
have found in the priests' councils around the country a great amount of hope. Things are really happening. The senates and associations are accomplishing things that only a few years ago would have seemed impossible. There is a growing healthy spirit of brotherly dialogue and confrontation. We know now that there are many things we can do if only we apply ourselves. This is where the ability to communicate and share is so important.

At this stage of our development as a people, communications is becoming more and more of a science. There are more and more ways to communicate. Much work and research has gone into this area. Councils can learn to communicate among themselves and to pass this ability to others. Many priests would say that they do not need to learn. To hear them tell it, they know how to communicate — it’s just that others aren’t listening to their words of wisdom. We have so long been one-sided — deaf oracles — proclaiming triumph to a people whose desperate cries of need have not been heard. The NFPC must withstand the temptation of falling into the same one-sidedness.

Openness and Honesty

In recent years, our greater openness and honesty in the Church has not been detrimental to the Church or to its image — as some would have us believe. I think it has made us far more respectful of the spoken and the written word; far more respectful for the truth, far more responsible in public utterances.

We must speak, but we must first listen. We must move, but we must first discern the proper direction. The NFPC organizational structure is designed to hear at the local and regional levels before it professes to speak on a national level. As valuable as are the individual councils’ reports, the regional meetings, the national delegates assembly, and the studies of the standing committees, they are not enough to provide the total, frequent and national interchange of information, opinions, recommendations and ideas vital to NFPC and to the priests of the nation.

We have instituted this journal, Priests’ FORUM, precisely to give all priests a forum for their ideas. We hope through these pages to produce an accurate reflection of what priests are thinking and doing, of what is actually happening in the Church in the United States. We want priests’ councils and individual priests to use FORUM as a vehicle of a two-way communication. When we ask you to respond to the opinions, etc., expressed in FORUM articles, we mean it. When we ask you to complete a questionnaire or a survey form, we want to know what you think and we want to share your ideas with others. We will be better equipped to serve the councils, the priests, and the Church with the
information you provide. FORUM should become a real working tool for priests' organizations, for individual priests, and for the national federation of councils.

Reasons for Hope

We must not mistake the evidence. In the last few years priests' councils have exhibited considerable development. We have grown in our respect for democratic procedures. We are gaining an ever more mature attitude towards authority. We are searching far more, with a sharper consciousness of our shortcomings, yet with increasing confidence in our potential. We are asking far more serious questions than ever before — questions that touch the very foundations of our belief.

After only one year the NFPC is showing remarkable vitality, determination and courage in facing up to the challenges of the modern Church. I think this has been possible because we have kept before us these guidelines. We believe in working with the bishops, not against them; we believe in gaining the support and confidence of the laity by working with them; we believe in full cooperation with positive programs of other existing groups and organizations; we believe in full community participation in social action; we believe in upgrading the professional competency among our own members; we believe in democratic process to arrive at a reasonable consensus on issues, problems and programs of the Church; we believe in creating a new image of the priesthood which will be respected for its intelligence, leadership, competency and integrity.

The very existence of the NFPC is an historic accomplishment. Never before have priests formed an organization on a national level based on collegiality. Never before have the majority of priests been so united as to be able to address themselves to their own problems and the problems of the Church as a group. Never before have priests had a representative voice in forming a policy which would be supported by a national priests' organization. Never before have the priests been so organized as to be able to reach the full Conference of Bishops with a representative and documented position of the priests of the nation.

Collegiality

In reviewing the accomplishments of the priests' councils and the national federation, I am struck by a very simple fact: The NFPC is the ordinary development and realistic expression of the Vatican II doctrine of collegiality. Rather than an institution, an organization, an establishment, or federation, NFPC really stands for a priests' movement — a collegial movement of priest brothers. It was not created by edict to enjoin priests to serve it; it was created by brother priests to serve them in a movement which for the good of the Church must succeed.

Issues such as the revision of the Code of Canon Law, due process, democratic procedures in Church law, personnel policies, arbitration boards, possibility of a pluralistic priesthood, resignation and retirement of priests, Church involvement in social action and community concerns — all of these are too important for it not to succeed.

We have a long way to go. It will take some more time than others. We may have to develop thick skins against failure and adverse criticism, but at the same time remain sensitive in listening to what others are telling us. Above all, we have to learn to welcome new life and new ideas and a fresh spirit in the Church. New life is not a threat to the old life. It's the fulfillment of the old life. New life is the only guarantee that the old life and those who worked hard in the old life will persevere and that their spirit will live on after them.

The NFPC is made up of many priests who have contributed remarkable things to the growth of the Church in the United States. These men are now watching new life develop in the Church. They are anxious that the life be a healthy one. But it is up to the young men to make sure that the new life is for real.

I am full of hope — and I know well what hope means. It means work. We are the men who are capable of doing that work. Let us get on with the job.

1969 CLERGY RETREATS

May 5-8 Most Rev. Joseph L. Bernardin, D.D.
June 2-5 Rev. Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A.
June 16-19 Rev. Lawrence J. Gorman
(Pastoral Ministry Dialogue)
Sept. 8-11 Rev. Eugene H. Maly
(Scripture Study Retreat)
Dec. 14-20 Better World Retreat

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(O'Malley, MacDonald, Decker, Morris) together with Clarence Leopold, the Texas provincial representative, met with Cardinal Shehan's Liaison Committee in Houston. The bishop members of that committee present were: Cardinal Shehan, Archbishops Donnellan of Atlanta and Casey of Denver; Bishops Biskup of Indianapolis, Breitenbeck of Detroit, O'Donnell of Madison, McLaughlin of St. Petersburg, Bernardin of the USCC. At this meeting we presented the resolutions of the NFPC New Orleans Convention together with a complete background on the meeting.

We stressed especially the due process resolutions and the need to address effectively the problem of the lack of due process in the by now celebrated cases of San Antonio and Washington, D.C. We also expressed the disappointment of the delegates in New Orleans that there had been no official representative of the Bishops' Liaison Committee present at our convention.

At the meeting we established more precise lines of communication between ourselves and the Liaison Committee, but we also explained that the NFPC would continue to seek the opportunity to speak before the assembled bishops at their next semi-annual meeting. Cardinal Dearden had informed us before the New Orleans meeting that the NCCB was not accustomed to having outsiders speak to its sessions; that the "mode of procedure" did not permit it.

The NCCB, however, has made at least three exceptions which we are aware of: Father Rollins Lambert, Chairman of the Black Clergy Caucus, addressed the Administrative Board on Monday, April 14; two laymen from Catholic University spoke to the total assembly of the bishops on the finances of the university; and Father Thomas Lynch served as a peritus to explain the marriage legislation the bishops were being asked to vote on. These exceptions make sense and so also, the NFPC feels, does its request for an opportunity to address the NCCB directly.

The four NFPC officers met a number of the bishops in Houston and talked to them at some length. While the NFPC is not universally accepted by the bishops, we are receiving a growing acceptance among an increasing number of thinking bishops. One bishop stated before the assembled NCCB that the best priests in his diocese support the NFPC. He said he thought this said something loud and clear to him about the nature of the organization.

The Bishops' Meeting

The NFPC officers who were close by to offer their services to the bishops, were also close enough to feel the pulse of the Bishops' Meeting, and they felt two events were promising: 1) the address of Cardinal Dearden which voiced aloud some important principles, and 2) the announcement of the attempt to reform the procedures for handling marriage cases in the diocesan tribunals.

The effort to express, at least, the broad guidelines for meeting the problems of the Church, the attempt, at least, to begin to build a bridge to the future was evident in the address of Cardinal Dearden.

A Call to Support

The proposed changes in the handling of marriage cases was also a promising sign that where a general consensus of all the people of God of a given nation is clearly demonstrated, there is perhaps some hope of significant change. Actually, the local handling of marriage cases is one of the key areas of the reform of Church law and one about which consensus has long been evident. One of the prime reasons for establishing the NFPC ad hoc committee at our founding meeting "to work in conjunction with the Canon Law Society of America and other organizations interested in the reform and liberalization of Church law" was
the many “souls hampered tremendously by the complexities of Church law particularly in the area of matrimonial procedures.” (Study and Discussion Papers Prepared for NFPC, page 1).

The desire to simplify the matrimonial procedures has long been evident from dissatisfaction among the laity of the existing procedures and the specific changes needed were further defined and expressed by the Canon Law Society of America, and finally the Canon Law Committee of the Bishops.

Far better than complaining that the bishops have been too long in publicly and jointly expressing the need for these changes, we should rather support fully the announcement of the bishops and represent together with them our own deep concern, again through the Canon Law Society of America, lay organizations, the NFPC executive offices, individual senates and councils, and personal endorsement in every parish and pulpit, and we should make that representation known to Rome where the matter will be judged.

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Representation
Still, in many ways the Bishops Meeting of April was disappointing. Of course, the fact that the NFPC was not admitted to a hearing at the meeting has already been mentioned, but again, that should be a reminder to every senate and association around the nation to convey this request to their own ordinary and his auxiliaries and to the NCCB. The sooner the bishops realize that the vast majority of priests really do want representation at the bishops’ national meetings (not necessarily at executive or administrative board meetings), the sooner the bishops will change the mode of procedure which they say makes it impossible to accede to our request at this time.

The bishops’ response to due process was hardly in proportion to the gravity of the problem. They did debate the matter of effective recourse and arbitration machinery, but their resolution did not include any type of compulsory arbitration. They gave a vote of confidence to the work of the Canon Law Society on the subject of due process, but again there was evidence that the bishops are unaware of how important this issue is to most priests.

A sample survey of the priests of one large mid-western diocese conducted to provide a guideline for the delegates to the House of Delegates meeting had these results: one hundred percent of the priests under fifty years of age, while eighty-six percent of the diocesan priests and eighty-two percent of the religious priests over fifty years of age agreed that effective means of due process should be established in every diocese.

This genuine concern of so many priests for due process (including prior process and effective recourse) makes the bishops’ lack of action on the matter almost incredible. Who can believe that a very real problem will disappear simply if it is ignored?

In several instances in the past year priests have claimed they had been deprived of their rights to a fair and impartial hearing. The two most publicized cases were in the Archdioceses of San Antonio, Texas and Washington, D.C.

At the NFPC meeting in March, the 220 assembled priest delegates considered the problems of the men in San Antonio and Washington, D.C. and passed the resolution calling for the bishops to appoint a fact-finding committee to resolve these impasses and “that if the NCCB does not act, the NFPC will itself appoint a committee to take appropriate action...” This resolution was conveyed to the assembled prelates in Houston by Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore, the Chairman of the Bishops’ Liaison Committee for Priests, Religious and Laity. The Liaison Committee officially informed us later that “…no action was taken on the resolution regarding the situation in San Antonio and Washington, D.C.”
On May 2, 1969, the NFPC made known its intention to act upon the House of Delegates resolution to take appropriate action in regard to the priests under punishment in San Antonio and Washington, D.C.

Some bishops have claimed that the Code of Canon Law contains adequate procedures to protect those who feel they have been unjustly treated. Although the NFPC, in consultation with canon lawyers, has reservations about the effectiveness of the procedures in the code, the Executive Board decided to test these procedures. The ecclesiastical courts in the United States have for the most part restricted themselves to the hearing of marriage cases, but there is no canonical reason why these tribunals cannot involve themselves in the adjudication of other matters.

The NFPC is determined to establish whether the ecclesiastical judicial system is willing or able to accept this responsibility. The petitions of those priests who so desire will be submitted to the machinery of the ecclesiastical courts, with an appeal to Rome, if necessary.

A group of canon lawyers met in Chicago on Monday, May 12, at the invitation of NFPC and formed a committee which offers to priests its services in processing such cases through the courts.

Social Action

In the area of social action, NFPC forwarded the delegates' resolutions to the proper offices of USCC in Washington.

THE ABM SYSTEM

The statement on the ABM missile defense system was sent to the Office of Justice and Peace (USCC) in Washington. We asked that office to circularize our petitions to the interested agencies and senators in Washington, D.C. Monsignor Marvin Bordelon of the USCC Division of World Justice and Peace, who was one of the key figures in the drafting of the November 1968 strong statement of the bishops on peace and disarmament, indicated that the predominant feeling in Washington is for support of the ABM missile system.

However, personal letters were written first to sixty U.S. Senators, members of key committees involved in the ABM issue, and later duplicates of the letter were sent to all members of the Senate. Monsignor Bordelon returned to us an outline of possible procedure for contacting state and national representatives with a view towards mounting additional public pressure against the ABM system. Copies of this instruction and background material are available from the USCC.

POVERTY

Resolutions regarding the poor included these: that the punitive and unfair limitations on federal welfare payments enacted in the social security amendment of 1967 be repealed; that we demand that Congress immediately pass legislation that would attack the incredible phenomenon of hunger in our land.

A letter supporting these resolutions was sent to Monsignor Lawrence Corcoran, U.S. Catholic Charities, DuPont Building, Suite 307, DuPont Circle, Washington, D.C.

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Washington, D.C. We asked him to circulate the resolutions to all senators and representatives and to all interested agencies. We ask you to draft a similar letter to Monsignor Corcoran, and to write your own congressmen in Washington, D.C., and the state legislatures as well.

**LOBBYING**

With regard to the resolutions that religious lobbies in the state capitals and in Washington become true forces for promotion of social justice and also those passed on the grape strike and the right of farm workers to organize, NFPC drafted a letter to Reverend John McCarthy, Social Action Department, USCC in Washington, D.C., requesting him to circulate our support for the National Citizens Lobby in its efforts to promote full funding for the 1968 Housing and Development Act and for the Grape Boycott of the UFW.

We ask you to draft a similar letter concerning these resolutions to the same office and also to write to the Catholic Conference in your own state, stressing especially the need to lobby on other bills besides aid to Catholic education and abortion, which are the main concerns of most religious lobbies at this time.

**Role of the Priest**

The resolutions concerning the Role of the Priest, while not sharing the immediacy of some of the social action resolutions, are also quite important. Much of the work on these resolutions will have to be accomplished in local council committees and at regional meetings during the coming year.

The central office is faced with the necessity of instituting, or cooperating with already existing studies on celibacy, the spirituality of the priest, how best the concepts of term of office and retirement age can suit the needs of the Church in the United States, personnel training, assisting in the development of training programs for the permanent diaconate, and other programs of necessary research. We are forming this committee of research and development and should have it off the ground within a very short time.

**Seminar-Travel Program**

An interesting development is a seminar-travel program being sponsored by the Role of the Priest Committee. It provides the average American priest with the opportunity to meet and visit informally with priests of several European countries as well as attend seminars discussing the role of the priest and the Church in the various circumstances of nation and culture.

A special report on the program appears on pages 8 and 9.

**What Next for NFPC?**

Looking ahead, much of our work has to be directed towards our fellow priests, challenging them to responsible leadership, helping them upgrade their priestly service, providing means by which better performance can be achieved. This will be done primarily on the local level with the NFPC.

As far as the NCCB is concerned, we will continue to press for more open lines of communications. We shall work with the Liaison Committee on every level possible. We shall try to help the bishops understand what we are attempting to do.

Specifically, we are committed to pursue "appropriate action" to assure our brother priests in Washington, D.C. and San Antonio some guarantee of fair and impartial hearings.

The charge of injustice is being leveled not only at a few men in authority. It is being said of the entire Church of which we are all a part. If the charge is true, we must move quickly and responsibly to set things right. If the charge is false, then we have nothing to fear by proceeding to seek justice.

To help guide our efforts we want to have direct contact with each of you. We want to know how you feel about all the issues in which we are involved. To simplify this process of communication, we have a department of Priests' FORUM called "Dial-logue," on page 24. We urge you to take a few moments, fill out the questionnaire and return it to us.

Patrick O'Malley
for the Executive Board.
Committee Room continued from page 23

Clergy Catholic Caucus.

8. That $1,000, collected at Mass on Tuesday, be donated to the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO).

9. The expenditures of up to 10% of parish income for community and social needs be permitted with: (1) the approval of the pastor and/or the parish council; (2) the approbation of the appropriate diocesan commission; (3) the permission of the bishop.

10. The member councils of the NFPC work to guarantee that competent counseling be made available in their dioceses to young men who in conscience cannot take part in a war they consider immoral.

That we respect the consciences of those people who are compelled to take symbolic responsible steps to protest United States involvement in any war which they consider in conscience to be unjust.

Social Action Committee Resolutions Defeated

1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT

We support the appointment of an American churchman as Apostolic Delegate to the United States. Thus, we would have a man who would be alert to the urgent need of the Church in the United States to be truly prophetic in speaking to the religious and social problems of our society.

2. NFPC call on its member councils to endorse and support the establishment of Civilian Police Review Boards in the communities throughout our country.

Social Action Committee Resolutions Returned to Committee

1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT

a. The Church find ways to place itself as a servant Church to the Black community in achieving equality in jobs and housing; in changing the welfare system so that recipients are treated with human dignity with the right of every American to privacy; in granting every American a guaranteed minimum income; in wide education programs for Black History and Culture from the schools to the universities;

b. The NFPC support the efforts of the Black Caucus to direct the Church towards problems of the ghetto;

c. The Federal Government be urged to guarantee every American child enough to eat;

d. All the resolutions be understood to include American Indians, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans.

Role of the Priests Committee

Resolutions Approved

1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT

Each member council of the NFPC take practical moves toward the collegial selection of bishops:

a. Each member council formulate together with the bishop, the religious and laity of the diocese a job description of the office of bishop in their diocese;

b. Each member council present to the bishops of the province each year the names of three men who best meet this description, involving in this process of nomination the entire presbyterate, the religious and laity in the diocese.

2. Member councils continue to function upon the vacancy of the See as a true representative of the priests and pursue practical efforts in helping the proper authorities in the collegial selection of a new Ordinary.

3. The NFPC enter into a cooperative study with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to see how the concepts of term of office and retirement age can best suit the needs of the Church in the United States.

4. The NFPC take appropriate means to place the issues before the Role of the Priest Committee on the agenda of the next Synod of Bishops in Rome.

5. Provincial groups of member councils offer to provincial meetings of bishops the possibility of having consultants from member councils to confer on these issues.

6. The NFPC continue to press for a hearing before the Assembly of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

7. The NFPC take appropriate means to acquaint all segments of the Church with their positions on these matters.

8. The resignation of a priest from the ministry be handled on the local level without any necessity of recourse to the Holy See.

9. A time limit be clearly established from the tender of the resignation to its final acceptance.

10. There be no general norm of secrecy with no restrictions on residency and that the marriage of a priest who has been honorably released from
the active ministry be a public fact attesting to his good standing in the Church.

11. The procedure should not only result in a complete release from the obligations of the priestly life and ministry, but also guarantee an honorable integration into the community of the Church.

12. The NFPC initiate studies in cooperation with other qualified groups on the pastoral witness and service of both a celibate and married clergy in the Church.

13. Priests who have conscientiously dissociated themselves from the priesthood have the opportunity to return to the active priesthood in a sacramental function, or be retained by the Church in any specialized ministry for which they are qualified.

14. The NFPC immediately set machinery in motion to determine the attitudes of the total U.S. presbyterate and seminarians on this matter along with a valid sampling of the attitudes of the entire range of members in the Church.

15. The NFPC make every effort to work toward a viable expression of priestly spirituality for the contemporary American ministry by cooperating with all existing efforts and by working toward the formulation of practical guidelines for all types of ministry.

16. In areas where there is need, the NFPC sponsor, promote and implement workshops using the best personnel available on priestly spirituality.

17. Each member council make known to its Ordinary and the commission on the permanent diaconate the places, areas of work and needs of each diocese as to permanent deacons.

18. The NFPC work with the bishops in developing a training program that keeps the prospective deacon in touch with his people and develops his position as one of the community.

19. The preparation for the permanent diaconate be set up on an individual basis in accord with the needs of the applicant and the community he will serve.

20. The NFPC insist that the age requirements for the permanent diaconate be no higher than the canonical age for the priesthood.

21. The permanent diaconate not be restricted by the present stipulation regarding marital status.

22. The NFPC strongly urge the NCCB and the code revision commission to make the work of the profound re-thinking of Church law now going on be a truly collegial effort of episcopal conferences, priests' councils and all representative bodies of religious, lay and priests' groups of the Church, along with experts in canon law and related disciplines.

23. The NFPC further urge that the re-thinking of Church law be put in the form of a constitution for the universal Church rather than a mere revision of the existing code.

24. The NFPC also urge that the specific directives of Church law be left to the determination of the hierarchies of various regions according to the needs of the Christian people in the concrete circumstances of their place and time.

25. Each priests' council promote an educational program to acquaint the people of the diocese with the need for positive and constitutional law in the Church.

26. Canon Law Society literature be sent to the NFPC as well as to bishops, e.g. recommendations on marriage laws.

27. The NFPC urge the NCCB in a spirit of collegiality and subsidiarity to demand representation on the Central Commission of the Revision of Canon Law.

Role of Senates Committee

Resolutions Approved

1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT:
   Every diocese have a senate which is both representative and advisory.

2. All senators be elected.

3. Election procedures safeguard the adequate representation of various age groups and geographical districts of a diocese.

4. Parliamentary rules of order be observed at deliberations of senators.

5. The senate be considered as having a primary function of legislating policy with the bishop exercising a veto power.

6. Priest-senators be formally and specifically allowed time for added work that their senate work demands.

7. Larger dioceses need full time personnel assigned to act as senate executives.

continued on page 40
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8. The expenses of a senate of priests be the responsibility of each parish in the diocese.

9. Adequate representation of religious priests be included in senate membership.

10. Tenures of office be set up so that the senate does not revert to the control of a small oligarchy.

11. The senate should be free to propose its own agenda.

12. The senate of priests assume the present canonical duties of the Board of Consultors and the Board of Consultants be abolished in the United States.

13. Each priests’ council consider as a matter of higher priority the effort to establish in its diocese a representative and effective Pastoral Council to which the priests’ council will be responsible.

Proceedings of Wednesday, March 26
Morning Session

Old Business

1. Headquarters for the National Federation of Priests’ Councils was moved from Chicago to Washington, D.C.

2. The term of president of the NFPC was lengthened from one year to a two year term with the possibility of renewal for another term.

3. Next year (1970), the House of Delegates meeting will be in San Diego; in 1971, in Baltimore.

4. Father O’Malley was unanimously elected president for another term.

5. The financial report for the preceding year was approved. The budget for next year was also approved.

New Business

Resolutions for the House of Delegates presented by delegates representing all the member councils of the states of Michigan and Illinois:

1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT

a. The NFPC call upon the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, through its president, John Cardinal Dearden, to appoint a fact-finding committee to resolve the current impasses in San Antonio, Washington and elsewhere presently overshadowing the genuine concern of charity which is the basis of the Christian community.

b. If the National Conference of Bishops does not act, the NFPC will itself appoint a committee to take appropriate action to resolve these impasses and re-establish harmony in the Christian community.

c. Until due process is a functioning reality in the Church, the NFPC will offer its services, through its executive committee, to appoint fact-finding boards to mediate similar disputes when no reasonable resolution is possible through ordinary channels.

2. BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The procedure of laicization in no way resemble a trial or a judicial investigation, but should be based upon the simple tendering and acceptance of a resignation.

3. The agenda of the October Rome Synod meeting be made available in sufficient time so that individual senates may consult their members prior to the meeting.

4. The NFPC send an invitation to affiliate with the NFPC to our brother priests of the senates and councils who are not presently affiliated with the NFPC and that a copy of the invitation be sent to these respective Ordinaries.

5. Member councils seek to have an open accountability of all assets in a diocese with a view to measuring the extent to which wealth is truly directed to the needs of society.

6. The Executive Board express to Cardinal Dearden its great disappointment at the failure of the bishops to hear the elected representatives of half of the councils of their own priests.

7. The president express the disappointment of the House of Delegates at the failure of the Bishops’ Liaison Committee to attend this general assembly.

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