



DIRECTIONS

A Quarterly Report for Catholic Grantmakers

Fewer Priests Trend Taxing Church Resources

Newly published proceedings of a conference of church experts on the priesthood shows that a shrinking and older priest corps is taking its toll on clergy across the nation.

“Much turmoil and exhaustion result from efforts to sustain the same level of service with fewer and fewer and aging priests,” declared Archbishop George H. Nierderauer of San Francisco. The archbishop, a keynote presenter at a FADICA conference earlier in 2006 entitled: *The Priesthood in a Time of Change and Challenge*, said that the median age of the present 43,000 priests in the U.S. is moving up rapidly with over half above the age of sixty.



Bishop Blase J. Cupich

The archbishop and fifteen other speakers and panelists share views in a newly released edited conference transcript on the state of the priesthood in the United States, as well as on recruitment efforts and the changed environment of today’s seminaries.

“Each year the church in the U.S. ordains only one third of the total number of priests needed to replace those who are retiring,” the archbishop told FADICA. The aging of U.S. clergy loomed large as other participants spoke before a conference of nearly one hundred foundation trustees.

“I think the time for small thinking is over,” responded Father Nicholas Rice, a pastor from Louisville, Kentucky, and an expert on the priesthood in America, one of several panel members reacting to the archbishop’s talk. Father Rice called for a nationwide consultation to capture the views of U.S. priests more directly so as to air their views on how the church might proceed in light of acute shortages.

Priesthood shortages have reached dramatic levels in some parts of the nation according to speaker, Sr. Katarina Schuth, OSF, the author of *Priests Serving Multiple Parishes* (Liturgical Press, 2006) another FADICA conference speaker. “In the Midwest, almost half of all priests serve more than one parish,” she reported.

The conference, held in late January, provided a straightforward discussion on the church’s present work to stimulate growth in the population of future priests. The candid conversation among some of the most informed seminary and vocations experts was both direct and urgent in its call for broader church discussion of the mounting crisis.

Bishop Blase Cupich of Rapid City, South Dakota and chairman of the U.S. bishops’ national committee on vocations, encouraged the foundations and the entire faith community to take more responsibility for the worrisome priest

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CALENDAR

FADICA 30th Anniversary Pilgrimage
October 7-16, 2006
St. Paul and the Church of Antioch

FADICA Annual Meeting
January 25-27, 2007
Hyatt Regency
Bonita Springs, FL

FADICA Board of Directors Meeting
June 8, 2007
Washington, DC

Fewer Priests Trend Taxing Church Resources *continued*

shortages. “My concern is that if we don’t deal with the reality now, people in ten to fifteen years will be asking us, the church’s leaders, the kind of question posted with the blow up of the sexual abuse crisis: Who let this happen?” Bishop Cupich said.

“Sadly there is a culture of illusion that seems to steer us away from taking a hard look at the very sobering numbers and statistics,” he added. The bishop reported that seminary rates of perseverance for seminarians are worsening. In 1999, for example, 681 seminarians began studies at the theologate level for the priesthood in the U.S. That class dropped by 100 as the four years progressed. However, two years later, as a similar group entered theology their attrition rate doubled, according to the bishop.

The publication of the edited fifty-two paged proceedings of the *Priesthood in a Time of Change and Challenge* is available for order through FADICA’s website www.fadica.org. FADICA is an international association of private foundations and donors educating grant makers on important trends while enabling them to interact with one another.

Boston College Professor Tells FADICA Primary Ministry of the Church is the Ministry of All the Baptized

In a recently released FADICA publication on an exchange with Boston College scholar, Father Michael Himes, the organization’s board was told that “Everybody is called to ministry within the life of the church.”



Father Himes led the FADICA board of directors in a day of reflection and prayer last fall on the theme *Church Leadership: A Challenge, An Opportunity, A Gift*. The proceedings of that day have now been edited and published.

The noted scholar and preacher told FADICA that one of the most significant positive developments in the contemporary church has been what he called the renewed “appreciation of the fact that the primary sacrament of ministry in the church is not holy orders.”

“The church is not made up of a small number of people who are ministers and a great many people who are the recipients of ministry,” he stated. “There is no one in the church who is *not* called to ministry,” he added.

The author of several popular books including *Ongoing Incarnation* and *Doing the Truth in Love* told foundation representatives that he sees “extraordinary leaders in the church at the present time. They are not bishops. They are not ordained ... one of the most striking examples of leadership in our time was Mother Teresa,” he said.

“God continues to raise leaders within His community. What I suggest we need to do is to recognize them, to back them, to support them, to encourage them, and to give them opportunities to exercise that leadership more widely even without the title, even without the official designation,” he said.

The full transcript of Father Himes’ remarks entitled: Church Leadership: A Challenge, An Opportunity, A Gift is available through FADICA’s website www.fadica.org.

President George W. Bush Urges Faith-Based Groups to Compete for Federal Funding

In a March 9 speech at a daylong National Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, President Bush said progress has been made but much more needs to be done to give faith-based social service programs equal footing with secular nonprofits in federal, state and corporate grant making.

Figures released by the White House in conjunction with the conference indicated that last fiscal year 10.9% of the federal funding for social services from government departments went to faith-based organizations, amounting to more than \$2.1 billion out of nearly \$20 billion in total grants. That represented an increase of 21% since 2003 in federal funding that was channeled to services provided by faith-based organizations, according to the data.

The president also addressed corporate philanthropy. “When we studied 50 large foundations, we found that one in five prohibited faith groups from applying,” the president said. “I would hope they’d take a look at achieving social objectives-- make the priority the achievement of certain social objectives before they would make the decision to exclude some who are achieving incredible progress on behalf of our country.”

“A recent survey by our Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives of 20 large corporate foundations, found that only about 6 percent of their grants went to faith-based groups,” he said.

The national conference, held at the Washington Hilton Hotel, brought together about 1,000 leaders of faith-based service organizations, government representatives and leaders of corporate foundations. Among those attending the conference were Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore, FADICA board member B.J. Cassin, and FADICA president Francis J. Butler.



President Bush welcomes FADICA President to the White House Conference on Philanthropy

Boston Archdiocese Discloses Deficit of \$46 Million Report Exceeds National Reporting Standards

In an impressive break with years of providing limited public financial disclosure, the Archdiocese of Boston has set new and impressive precedents when it published its first comprehensive report on its financial position. The archdiocese opened its books April 19 showing that more than \$150 million had been paid out in legal settlements related to accusations of sexual abuse by priests.

The report also showed that the church in Boston has a \$46 million deficit which it will help meet by cutting 50 administrative positions, programs, and by selling more property. Its biggest liability is a \$135 million unfunded pension for its priests.

In recent years the majority of archdioceses and dioceses have moved away from publishing combined financial information showing the complete picture of their assets and liabilities.

FOUNDATION NEWS

Hilton Foundation Makes \$2 Million Grant to Jesuit High School

Xavier College Preparatory High School in Thousand Palms, California, has announced a \$2 million grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.

The funds will be used to help complete the first phase of construction, including a 45,000-square-foot classroom building and a large gymnasium, of the Jesuit school. Approximately 1,200 students are expected to be enrolled at the four-year co-ed school by 2009. Construction of the only Catholic high school within 90 miles of Thousand Palms is expected to cost more than \$55 million, with several multi-million-dollar gifts already pledged and scholarships currently being endowed.

Bishops' Conference Receives \$500,000 Grant to Aid Trafficking Victims

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced April 18 that it awarded a \$500,000 contract to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to aid victims of human trafficking. The Catholic Church has been a leader in efforts in recent years to draw attention to and provide services for the large number of people who are brought into the country each year by force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation, slave labor, or domestic servitude.

PUBLICATION RESOURCES

Church Leadership: A Challenge, An Opportunity, A Gift. Printed edited proceedings of a day of spiritual reflection and prayer discussing a broadened understanding of church leadership which encompasses all of the baptized. An excellent resource for group discussion on what constitutes a mature understanding of faith and its responsibilities. \$10.95. Available through FADICA. April 2006.

The Priesthood in a Time of Change and Challenge. Edited conference proceedings among church leaders and foundation trustees on precipitous declines in priestly vocations and its impact for parish Catholics today. Among the contributors: Rev. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, Sr. Katarina Schuth, OSF, Archbishop George H. Nierderauer, Donald Senior, CP, and others. \$19.95. Available through FADICA. May 2006.

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