

Formation of Deacons' Assembly Under Way; Steering Committee at Work on Details

Less than four years after the first permanent deacons were ordained for the Archdiocese of Newark, the establishment of an Assembly of Deacons was put in motion on April 25 at a general meeting of deacons in Bloomfield.

The Assembly, which would be the equivalent in some ways to the archdiocesan Senate of Priests and Sisters' Assembly, was said by Father George Mader, secretary of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Personnel (which includes the Office of Coordinator of Ordained Deacons) to have been approved by Archbishop Peter L. Gerety. Father Mader told the Bloomfield meeting that the Archbishop had expressed a desire to have permanent deacons establish their Assembly.

Steering Committee at Work

A Steering Committee of eight deacons who were elected from the four vicariates of the archdiocese last year to be representatives to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Assembly (the Archbishop's advisory body of priests, deacons, religious and laity) were designated at the Bloomfield meeting to study the framework of an Assembly and present their findings to a general meeting of deacons, probably in September.

The Steering Committee began its work in May. It resolved to draft a proposed Statement of Purpose for the Assembly, and recommend how the first Assembly should be structured. Its recommendations were to be circulated to all deacons during the summer for their consideration. All deacons will then have an opportunity to accept, reject or modify the Steering Committee's recommendations at a general meeting in early Fall.

The Steering Committee was guided in its work by expressions of deacons at the Bloomfield meeting. Some of those expressions incorporated the following areas of possible concern for an Assembly:

- Should be a unified body to which bishops, priests and laity could

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This drawing of Monsignor Henry Beck is by Dick Kramer, of Nutley, a deacon in the Class of 1976.

Msgr. Beck 'Retires' to Virginia For Diaconal Work 'Rest of My Life'

The formation program for Newark's permanent diaconate lost one of its original, and most beloved, faculty members in May when Monsignor Henry G.J. Beck retired as pastor of Sacred Heart parish in Lyndhurst to live in Winchester, Va.

At the conclusion of his final class in Early Church History for first-year candidates, Monsignor Beck told the men in the lower room at St. Joseph's that he would devote "the rest of my life to serving the sick and the aged" in hospitals and nursing homes in and near Winchester where

he has a home and has spent time in recent years.

Monsignor Beck, who has for many years been widely recognized as a leading church historian and teacher, has been a priest in the Newark Archdiocese for forty-two years. He was among the first members of the faculty assembled in 1973 by Monsignor Richard M. McGuinness, former director of the formation program, and taught his first course in the winter and spring of 1974 to the first class of candidates.

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