

The Organization of Concerned Priests

195 Dover Point Road
Dover, NH 03820-4693

Preamble

"Be merciful, as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

"Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God, through Christ has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

September 26, 2006

Dear Brother Priest,

As you can see by the Preamble, this letter will be about mercy, the mercy of priests to priests in need. We do not want to forget them. We are proud to be priests in the Diocese of Manchester because we continue to seek ways to deal mercifully with our brothers.

Bishop McCormack was supportive of the project when we proposed this as something we would like to do. As you know, the Bishop had asked Fr. Patrick Glavin, OFM, Cap. to be pastorally present to unassigned priests. Fr. Dick Thompson has since taken over these responsibilities. We, as priests would like to make a special contribution to show our solidarity with our brother priests in keeping with Pope Benedict's Encyclical, "God is Love," in which he says, speaking of the responsibility of the church, "the exercise of charity became established as one of her essential activities... love for ...prisoners and the sick and needy of every kind." (#22).

Our program is two-fold:

1. We want to arrange personal contact with all our priests so that no priest will be left by himself.
2. We want to have a financial source, "Mercy Fund," from which we can aid any priests with the money he might need to meet necessary expenses.

We are classifying our priests in the category of "Unassigned". That would include retired, sickly and involuntarily unassigned priests and those who have been laicized.

We are asking all priests to prayerfully consider a donation of \$1,000 or more or whatever they can afford. Any priest who makes a donation, large or small, will automatically become a member of "The Organization of Concerned Priests". Our "Mercy Fund" will be administered by a Board of Directors of no more than twelve (12) priests, whose names are listed at the end of this letter. To obtain money from the fund the priest in need or a friend may simply contact any member of the Board of Directors. We believe that the personal contact that we are encouraging will spiritually and socially energize our whole Presbyterate. When the day comes that the funds will no longer be needed, monies will be transferred to the Diocesan Fund for Sick Priests.

Brief History of the Organization of Concerned Priests Rev. Michael J. Griffin

In the spring of 2005 in the midst of the turmoil, we began to sympathize with the men involved in the scandal. We could not imagine how we could have coped if we were in their shoes. How would we face our families, the members of our parishes, our friends and the youth to whom we had ministered? How would we respond to being deprived of our priestly activity that had been the center of our lives for so many years, the pain of the publicity in the press, TV and radio?

We decided to do something for our brother priests who had to endure the consequences of the scandal. We called a number of priests that represented a cross-section of our presbyterate and asked each one how he felt about organizing a group of priests to assist any of the disciplined priests of our Diocese who were in need of support and some financial aid. We would ask our brother priests for a donation of \$1,000 to help establish a fund. Almost all who were contacted agreed with the concept, although some had reservations on the amount requested as a donation.

We then met with Bishop McCormack who was supportive of the project and has been kept informed of our progress.

Attorney Eileen Nevins and Accountant Tom Bridge, CPA both of Hampton were contacted and agreed to help us file papers to become a non-profit, tax exempt organization. Both said that they would not charge for their services and even more significantly was that they each said spontaneously, "what a wonderful idea." We believe that this reflects the attitude of a good number of laity.

A steering committee was then organized, consisting of: Fr. Michael Griffin, Fr. Paul Gregoire, Fr. Bob Cole and Fr. Aaron Pfaff. These priests were purposely from the Dover area to facilitate the traveling to meetings we would have.

The first step we took was to contact the National Organization of "Opus Bono Sacerdotii," a lay organization helping disciplined priests. We requested a copy of their Constitution and By-Laws. They strongly urged us to come under their umbrella. It was then that we realized that we would be a special organization. Bishop McCormack and presumably other Bishops were providing a stipend and insurance coverage to some of the disciplined priests and the lay organization of "Opus Bono Sacerdotii," was helping disciplined priests. It pointed out the void of us priests doing nothing in an organized fashion to ease the tremendous pressure on our disciplined priests.

We chose not to join the lay organization. Fr. Ed Arsenault became our contact with the Bishop. We also contacted Fr. Pat Glavin, who was the Bishop's representative to the disciplined priests. Fr. Pat was supportive of our efforts. We have since worked with Fr. Dick Thompson who has replaced Fr. Glavin.

We have chosen to extend our assistance to include all unassigned priests of our Diocese, the retired, sick, disciplined and laicized. We expanded our group to twelve members to form a "Board of Directors." We have attained a non-profit tax-exempt status.

We have placed our organization under the patronage of Jesus, our High Priest and Mary, the Queen of Clergy.

September, 2006

We will hold a meeting in September 2007 to review our activities and give a financial report. We presume that you might have a number of questions. Feel free to contact any member of the Board of Directors. We are walking in new territory and would welcome any suggestions.

Enclosed you will find a card for your donation and the name or names of any unassigned priests with whom you will be in contact. Please return this card in the self-addressed envelope provided.

We are placing our program under the patronage of Jesus, our High Priest and His Mother, the Queen of the Clergy.

Thank you for your support and God bless you always.

Sincerely in Christ,



Rev. Michael J. Griffin

Listing of Officers and Board Members

Serving for three years

President – Rev. Michael J. Griffin 742-3523
Vice President – Rev. Robert F. Cole 742-4837
Treasurer – Rev. Paul L. Gregoire 625-1135
Secretary – Rev. Aaron J. Pfaff 692-2172

Serving for two years

Rev. W. Pierre Baker 332-1869
Rev. Gary J. Belliveau 595-0843
Rev. Charles E. DesRuisseaux 625-6409
Rev. Msgr. Thomas J. Hannigan 622-4966

Serving for one year

Very Rev. Thomas L. Duston, V.F. 432-8711
Rev. Richard Kelley 882-0632
Rev. Maurice D. Lavigne 964-6440
Very Rev. Richard A. Roberge, V.F. 752-2880