

'FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP'

Coaching Available to Clergy

After a successful first year, the Diocese would like to make mentoring, or "faithful friendship," by an older, experienced priest more widely available to clergy.

Last year, Bishop Daniel started the initiative by asking four retired priests to serve as mentors to less experienced clergy in the Diocese, with an emphasis on assisting priests who are engaging new ministries. Those in the Diocese who have availed themselves of this opportunity have found it helpful and supportive.

Mentoring, or "faithful friendship," is one of the rich traditions in the church. Every ministry has challenges. An extra set of eyes and the wisdom that comes with years of reflecting on the experience of ministry can be very helpful to an active priest in developing strategies and dealing with challenges as they arise.

Many priests do not have mentors or colleagues to consult with about difficult issues. Often, parishioners make poor confidants and rarely are they unbiased about parish issues. Even those on a staff where there are multiple priests may benefit from a knowledgeable and independent ear.

Based on our experience over the past year, most mentors—who play a role similar to coaches—meet with their priests about once a month for an hour or two of conversation, encouragement and reflection on ministry. The meeting can be arranged at a mutually agreeable location or conducted by phone. In some cases, the meeting can take place by e-mail after initial face-to-face meetings.

Priests in the Diocese who would like to explore a mentor/"faithful friend" relationship with one of our experienced priests are welcome to call the Rev. K. Palmer Hartl at 215-925-1992.

The coaching team also includes the Rev. MaryJo Melberger, the Rev. Peter Stube and the Rev. Bill Wood.

- The Rev. K. Palmer Hartl

Learning & Discernment