Three Lafayette religious elected to national offices

By Barbara Lenox

LAFFETTE

Three people from Lafayette were elected to national offices at the 1981 National Conference of Black Catholic Clergy and Religious in Washington, D.C. recently. Father Val Pullman, Vicar for Black Catholics, Diocese of Lafayette, was elected vice-president for the National Black Clergy Caucus. Father A.J. McKnight, C.S.Sp., director of Southern Consumers Development Fund, was re-elected treasurer.

Sister Addie Walker, S.S.N.D., consultant for black catechesis in the Office of Religious Education, Diocese of Lafayette, was elected board member for the National Black Sisters Conference.

Father Paul Metrejean, Vicar for Religious Personnel for the Diocese of Lafayette, said he is proud of the black religious leaders in the diocese and delighted that their leadership is being nationally recognized.

“While both church and state are far from meeting the ideals of justice and mercy toward blacks,” the vicar said, “we should not lose sight of the true advances made with pain and sometimes understated or ignored. This election tells me that while all is not well, something is going right in this diocese.”

“One of the best things about being part of the national caucus is the support I get from black brothers, priests and sisters,” new-elected vice-president Father Pullman commented. “It sustains me throughout the whole year and enables me to carry on my ministry, it sustains me in the work of the Lord, which we are all doing.”

He noted that the tremendous support available to members of the group helps them realize that their problems are not unique and gives them courage to cope with the stress, loneliness and headaches which are naturally a part of the job.

“When we pray together at those national meetings,” he said, “there’s nothing like it. The human and divine touch very closely through some very holy people who know that their talents belong not to them but to the group and we all draw strength from them.”

Sister Addie Walker, who has been in the Lafayette diocese for a year, working in black catechesis, sees her election as an opportunity to share her experience of working in a predominantly white congregation with her black sisters throughout the United States who are in the same situation.

“I see it as an opportunity to affect black Catholic life in America,” she said, “because I am connected to a broader vision of Church. It’s an opportunity to help foster black vocations throughout America, to speak to the whole church in America from a black perspective. I’m looking forward to working with the group.”