

Boccaccio appointed to Canon Law Society position

By **JILL BODACH**

Hour Staff Writer

NORWALK — The Rev. Michael Boccaccio, pastor of St. Philip Parish in Norwalk, was recently appointed to a position within the Canon Law Society of America.

The Canon Law Society of America was established in November 1939 in Washington, D.C., and is based at the Catholic University of America. Its duties are to be active in the promotion of canonical and pastoral approaches to significant issues within the Roman Catholic Church as well as the revitalization of church law.

Boccaccio has been involved

with the society since the late-1970s as a judicial vicar of the tribunal for the Diocese of Bridgeport reviewing marriage annulments.

Boccaccio will serve as the society's convention chairman, making and overseeing plans for the society's national convention held each October. Boccaccio will also be responsible for researching locations for future conventions.

It is a five year position.

Boccaccio jokes that his job will really entail "making sure the coffee pot is plugged in and the microphones are working properly." But, he is really honored about the appointment.

"I already felt like my role with the society was something

that was worthwhile because it involved working with people who are in the midst of getting their lives together and building their relationships with the church, but I'm really flattered and honored to have been asked to do this," Boccaccio said. "I was also flattered when Bishop Lori, in a letter telling me to 'go for it' with the position, told me that it was an honor not only for me but for the Diocese as well."

Another part of Boccaccio's position with the Canon Law Society of America, although not an official part of his job description, is to make it more user-friendly to the parishioners of his parish.

Boccaccio said that parishioners have already become

more comfortable asking him Canon-related questions, something they might be unable to do if not for his familiarity with the law.

"As I've become more and more involved with the society I've realized that the purpose of the Canon is to protect the laity of the church, even from the clergy," Boccaccio said. "It's unfortunate that the law has gotten a bad name when it's goal is really to protect."

Canon law addressed many different aspects of the Catholic Church including the sacraments, duties of tribunals, obligations of parishioners and the regulations of clergy.