Task Force to Resurrect Defunct Ecumenical Unit

By BARBARA MOYNEHAN

A task force was established last week and assigned the job of resurrecting the defunct Diocesan Ecumenical Commission.

Prompted by his disappointment over the lack of diocesan commitment to ecumenical cooperation, Monsignor George Cocuzzi, pastor of Holy Family and vice president of Genesee Ecumenical Ministries since January, called a meeting Sunday, March 26, at St. Anne's School auditorium.

Monsignor Charles Boyle, pastor of St. Anne's and chairman of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission that has been inactive since 1966, attended the meeting and co-signed the invitation sent out to former commission members, Catholics on GEM's board of directors and parish people who have voiced interest in ecumenical work.

When asked why the Diocesan Ecumenical Council has not met in seven years, Msgr. Boyle replied, "Members of that Commission have moved out of the Rochester area or been transferred out of the diocese."

Msgr. Cocuzzi called his "representation" on the GEM board a "charade" explaining that he represents nothing since the Pastoral Offices or diocesan departments give no active support.

Father Henry Atwell, executive director of GEM, put ecumenism in a religious context for the 16 men and women who attended the meeting. "Christ commanded that his disciples go into the whole world and make disciples of all nations," said Father Atwell, "and Christ's last prayer was that all his disciples be one."

"Today, the family of Christ, the Christian Church, is split into more than 250 often competitive denominations and only one twelth of the world population is Christian. So we have broken both the command and the prayer of Christ," explained the pastor of St. Agnes, Avon.

Atwell, who frequently advocates interdenominational ministry in works of mercy has been joined in his cause by Msgr. Cocuzzi.

Msgr. Cocuzzi criticized the diocese and other denominations who joined GEM but have not changed their thinking from denominational to ecumenical planning.

"There hasn't been the greatest response on a program level from any denomination," said Msgr. Cocuzzi. "Any dioceses here that are setting up social ministry programs are still working independently."

Individuals representing many denominations are working in GEM'S various committees, and neighborhoods and small towns are working together ecumenically in programs for the elderly and sick, Father Atwell reported.

GEM president, the Rev. Gene Ferguson, pastor of Trinity Methodist Church, explained that it is now necessary to establish a liason between grass roots workers and the umbrella group, GEM.

Father Joseph Brennan, a GEM hospital ministry committee member, feels it is not enough to call on grass roots people to organize and work together. "The responsibility lies with the men at the top to encourage and provide for ecumenical plans."

Brennan advised getting the Ecumenical Commission back into operation "since that is where ecumenical consciousness is supposed to emanate from."

He also suggested an ecumenical committee be provided in the Pastoral Council's constitution that is now being formulated; and that the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women be reinstated to work in this area.

Eugene C. Fuerst, of St. Margaret Mary's, agreed that the responsibility for ecumenical organizing lies with the Pastoral Officer; explaining that "lay people still look to top side for management."

Adolphe d'Audiffret of St. Januarius, Naples, however felt the parish level is the place to start. "Unless we get individuals in parishes interested, I feel the top men won't do anything." After two and a half hours of discussion the lay people and priests agreed the diocese should be actively involved in ecumenical programming and Father Atwell made a motion to start the process.

He suggested a task force be established to devise a proposal for Priests' Council consideration asking for the reinstitution of the Ecumenical Commission, stipulating what its field of activity should be.

Task force members are: Mrs. Ronald Gledhill of St. Catherine's, Mendon; Jerry Sass, of St. Louis, Pittsford, and a present member of the GEM board; Armand Tanguay of St. Louis, Pittsford, and Father Joseph Brennan, rector of St. Bernard's seminary.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE
Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

Everyone laments breakdowns in communications. Cheer up. We'll always have some. Recently I heard this story. "The CCD teacher asked the 6th graders: 'How many wives may a man have?' Johnny replied: 'Sixteen.' 'Sixteen! Where did you get that idea?' 'Father Murphy. I served a wedding last Saturday, and he said to the groom: 'Four better, four worse, four richer, four poorer. That makes sixteen.'" Something like that happened in your lively, indignant interpretation of my musing: "I wonder if that isn't one weakness in our CCD programs: the emphasis on **'professionalism.'** I consider the Church a family rather than an ecclesiastical General Motors."

It must be 30 years ago that the Brooklyn Tablet got into a hassle with Catholic Charities about "professionalism" in Charities. The hassle was bitter, and I suspect neither side really understood the other. The Tablet quoted John Boyle O'Reilly's devastating "Organized charity, congealed in ice, In the name of a cold, statistical Christ." The Charities people were furious.

Now, when I expressed concern about professionalism in CCD and in the Church, I assure you I was not thinking of substituting a disorganized, ragtag, incompetent program run by well-meaning but incompetent people. But technical competence, without the spirit of love, loyalty, reverence, is like charity, congealed in ice in the name of a methodological, soulless Christ.

May I be candid? Who are the religious professionals? What do they teach? How do they teach? We assume they are trained in theory and in method and in doctrine to help Catholics, adults and children, to grow and mature in the knowledge and spirit of Christ.

Medical internists and surgeons pretty well agree on medical theories amd methods. Yet psychiatrists violently disagree among themselves. I think the difference is that medical men deal mainly with the physical; but psychiatrists deal with the psyche. And they are divided.

And so are religion "professionals," even within the Church. For example, the texts and methodology of the Daughters of St. Paul are official in some dioceses. They are banned in others. Yet the Daughters are **professionals.** I am sorry to have to say that so much damage of the Faith has been done by professionals — certainly not meaning the Daughters! It is not just a local but a universal Catholic Faith problem. Have you read Has the Catholic Church Gone Mad? It is written by an English convert, John Eppstein. He comes down hard, but he has too much that is true to be complacent. Now get yourself a cup of coffee, let your blood pressure subside, and read my conclusions.

Am I against professionalism in the CCD and in the Church? Of course not, as long as it is directed for the extension of the true Faith, and so motivated. As Bishop Hogan put it: We are called "to remake our hearts, to accept the priorities of the Gospel." The key is the vision of priorities.

Do I oppose the CEDAR CCD program? Of course not. Nor do I think the coordinators are over paid. The problem, it seems to me, is both the burden of running our schools; and the proliferation of bureaus and committees which demand more and more money, as well as time and personnel. When I was a child my folks bought two white mice for my older brothers. The mice were of opposite sex, and within a year our garage which housed the mice became too small for both the car and the mice. So they got rid of the mice. We cannot function without some bureaus; but I think many dioceses would function better with less multiplication. And the pastors and the people who are frustrated about more and more parish taxes, would have money for CEDAR and similar programs. This, it seems to me, is a matter of priorities, in the context of the spirit of the Gospels.

Business In The Diocese

Anthony V. Savine an assistant vice president, at Lincoln First Bank of Rochester.

Savine joined Lincoln First Bank in 1959. He was promoted to installment banking officer in 1968 and named manager of the Installment Loan Automobile Department in 1972.

Savine is president of the St. James Parish Council. He, his wife Mary, and their five children reside on Colebourne Road.

Ex-Chaplain Studying to Be Teacher

FATHER CHRISTIAN

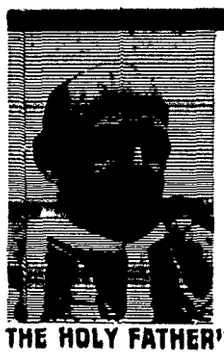
Father Christian G. LeFrois, OSB, a military chaplain for 20 years, has retired and returned to the monastic community at the St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pa. He holds the Air Force rank of lieutenant colonel.

The Benedictine priest, a native of Rochester, is a brother of Father Vincent LeFrois, pastor of St. Michael's, Livonia Center.

Last year, while stationed in San Antonio, he obtained a master's degree in education from Our Lady of the Lake College. He plans to pursue a doctorate and teach and counsel at St. Vincent's College.

Professed in the St. Vincent Community in 1941, he was educated in its institutions and ordained a priest in 1946. He had various pastoral assignments in the Latrobe area before entering the chaplaincy.

He was awarded the Bronze Star in 1970 for meritorious service during ground operations in Vietnam and holds also a Commendation Medal (1953) and Distinguished Unit Award (1955). He has served in Germany and in seven states, including Alaska and Hawaii.



LENT: SAVE THE PIECES

THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE ORIENTAL CHURCH

Has Lent so far been wasted? Have you really sacrificed enough? Easter is only a few weeks away. Right now is the time, for the good of your soul, to do something meaningful. . . . Build a mission church, and name it yourself for the saint of your choice. You can do it for much less than you think. The Holy Father says a church is urgently needed in Monimooly, India ($3,000), Ponkamdam India ($3,000) and a chapel for the Benedictine Sisters in Bethlehem ($2,500). . . . There is still time for you to make this Lent worthwhile.

MORE LENTEN SUGGESTIONS

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