

Priests Debate Retirement

Following an unusual hiatus, the Priests' Council met last week to discuss a number of items, among them a proposal to extend the mandatory retirement age of priests to 72, and a proposal to recommend creating a full-time position of diocesan director of vocations.

The severe weather and storms which have plagued the diocese in recent weeks had forced cancellation of the January meeting and postponement of the February session of the group.

A number of items, described by council president Father James Marvin as "housekeeping," also were attended to by the priests.

The name of Father Joseph Brennan was proposed to Bishop Hogan at his request for candidates to serve on a priestly life and ministry committee. Father Brennan is this year finishing out a term as rector of St. Bernard's Seminary.

A rather lengthy debate centered on a request from Father Douglas Hoffman, director of pastoral ministry and coordinator of the diocesan Call to Action program, that the Priests' Council prepare a five-page report on the document entitled "The Church," issued last year by the national Call to Action.

Both the time limit imposed for submitting the report and items within the document to be reviewed surfaced as concerns of the priests in council. It was finally decided that Father David Mura would prepare the report, that an extension be requested in the deadline for submission, and that the council would vote on Father Mura's report at its next meeting, prior to submitting it to Father Hoffman.

A statement expected to be issued shortly by the new diocesan Commission for International Justice and Peace, condemning apartheid policies in Southern Africa, came before the council for its

endorsement. The document was given to the council's own social action committee for study and review. It is expected that the priests will act on the document at their March meeting.

The council also moved on a new process for electing priests members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Following on a discussion raised at the council's December meeting, the priests rejected a proposal that they recommend the bishop extend the mandatory retirement age of priests from 70 to 72.

The initial proposal came from the Priest's Retirement Committee. The move to quash came from the council's own personnel committee.

An ancillary issue in the debate, whether or not to recommend raising the retired priests' incomes from \$300 to \$400 a month was passed by the council.

such an office were forthcoming.

Sister Elizabeth Anne Le Valley, a member of an inter-congregational group of sisters studying the problem of vocations, also requested the priests postpone moving on the resolution until further information was available.

It was agreed in council to table the motion. The priests however did pass a resolution to create a task force to study the entire question of vocations in the diocese and to present specific recommendations on the findings by June of this year.

In other council action, the work of the Mission Task Force, was generally praised. A section of that group's paper, presented last year, dealing with the theology of mission came under fire; and the priests decided to present it to the diocesan missions office for review.

BETTER WORLD

Movement for a Better World comes this weekend to St. Mary's, Scottsville. The parish retreat begins with a 7-10 p.m. session Friday, Feb. 18. On Saturday and Sunday, the meetings will run from 2 until 10 p.m., with Mass at 5 and supper at 6. Sessions Monday through Thursday will be from 7 to 10. To register or secure transportation or a baby sitter: 889-3100 (rectory) or 889-2465 (Loftus).

SETON 80

Members of the 80th Seton Branch meet tonight, at 8:30 with Mrs. Paul Miller of Brooklea Drive.

EUCHRE

St. Margaret Mary Men's Club has arranged a euchre tournament for 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 18, in the school cafeteria.

LEGISLATORS

The League of Women Voters has published a list of elected officials in the area, with their addresses. The pamphlet, Who Represents You in 1977, is available at public libraries and at the league office, 11 N. Goodman.

faith in our own century — and are still preserving that faith only at great cost and personal risk. If for no other reason than that we ought to know them better and honor them as we do the martyrs of ancient times.

Due to numerous and complicated factors, the Orthodox became separated from the Roman Catholic portion of the Church just about 1,000 years ago — in the year 1054. Attempts at reconciliation have been few and far between. Pope Paul has taken the initiative in healing the breach more so than any of his predecessors. His most dramatic gesture in this matter was his journey to Jerusalem to meet and embrace the Greek Patriarch Athenagoras in 1964. He has subsequently welcomed several other Orthodox prelates and has repeatedly stressed our need to be united as we once were.

We should also be aware that many of these eastern Christians have preserved both their eastern traditions and their bond of unity with us Roman Catholics. In our diocese these are chiefly the Ukrainian and Melkite Catholics.

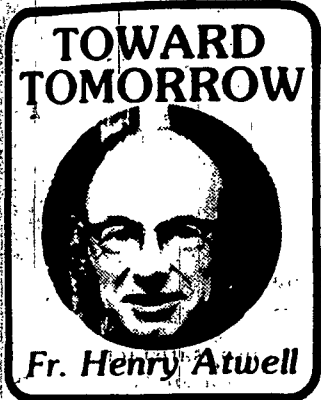
Before another 10 years go by, we ought to try to be a bit more ecumenical right here within our own diocese and with our own neighbors.

SUNDAY SERVICE

Seneca Falls — Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place Sunday, Feb. 20, at St. Patrick's, from 2 until 5 p.m. Opening services will include the rosary. Closing services, beginning at 4:30, will consist of readings, homily and benediction.

MARDI GRAS

Bradford — Mardi Gras, the final festivity before Lent, will be moved up to Saturday, Feb. 19, at St. Stanislaus. The celebration will include music by the Eddy Olszyk Combo, a plenteous buffet and costume prizes. Everyone is invited, from 8:30 until midnight.



TOWARD TOMORROW

Fr. Henry Atwell

Catholics have been ecumenical officially for more than 10 years now. But many of us would admit we still have difficulty telling the difference between a Baptist and a Methodist, between a Lutheran and an Episcopalian.

And I wonder how many of us could give a really good description of a Greek Orthodox. The Orthodox are at least 500 years older than the oldest Protestant religion, and from one point of view they are even older than Roman Catholics for they trace their roots back to St. Peter even before he went to Rome.

The Orthodox and other "Eastern" Christians are those church people whose traditions go back to Jerusalem, Antioch and especially to the ways of belief and worship centered at Constantinople back in the sixth and subsequent centuries.

Constantinople is now called Istanbul. Its great cathedral, called the Hagia Sophia or Holy Wisdom Church, became a mosque 600 years ago and is now a museum. Greek patriarchs had presided there in majesty for a thousand years. Today's patriarch has only a little church and a cluster of shabby buildings, the sad remnant of past glory. This symbolic center of Orthodoxy is called the Phanar (or Fener), the nearest thing to a Vatican for the 500 million Orthodox Christians, most of whom live in Communist-dominated nations.

As thousands of Roman or Western Christians were martyrs for the faith in the first centuries of our faith, so thousands of Orthodox or Eastern Christians have been the martyrs for the

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