

## Father Brennan assumes new post at U of R

By Teresa A. Parsons

Although it isn't so stated in his title, Father Joseph P. Brennan's new job is in the bridge-building line.

As the University of Rochester's new director of religious affairs, Father Brennan will attempt to bring congregations of various faiths together to "facilitate discussion of major moral and ethical issues of our time."

As a full-time faculty member in the university's Department of Religious and Classical Studies and manager of its Interfaith Chapel, he will be fully involved in the academic world. At the same time, he will retain pastoral ties with St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Scottsville, where he has been pastor for three years and where he will continue to live.

Pastor and scholar, teacher and administrator — each is a facet of the new position Father Brennan will undertake this coming August.

"It is a pleasure to have a person with Father Brennan's combination of intellectual, practical and pastoral experience join the university community," said Dennis O'Brien, university president. "This university was founded by individuals of religious faith, and though it has moved beyond its denominational setting, it has not lost contact with the faiths that sustain and challenge. Father Brennan will continue our heritage."

A master of eight languages, including biblical Hebrew, biblical Greek, Aramaic and Ugaritic, Father Brennan has taught Old Testa-

ment history, Old Testament literature, biblical theology, biblical Hebrew, the prophets and the psalms.

"Father Brennan is an enormously gifted man," said Peter Kountz, dean of students at the university and associate professor of religious studies. "Though his background is Roman Catholic, he has a deep commitment to ecumenism. He values religious expression in all faiths."

Father Brennan earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Bernard's Seminary in 1951 and was ordained in Rome in 1954. The following year, he received a licentiate in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University there. In 1957, he received a licentiate in sacred scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome.

Returning to Rochester, he taught scripture studies at St. Bernard's Seminary. In 1966, Bishop James E. Kearney appointed him rector and chief executive officer of the seminary. Eleven years later, he resigned the post, but returned to the seminary two years later as professor of Old Testament and Hebrew.

In 1980, Father Brennan was appointed dean and fellow of St. Edmund's House, a graduate college of the University of Cambridge, England.

It was during his tenure there that he learned, through word of mouth, of the opening at the University of Rochester.

"They wanted somebody who wanted to be both a teacher and an administrator," he recalled. "I wanted the same . . . University teaching is the kind of work I feel I do best."

Yet he is equally comfortable teaching ecumenical Bible school classes in Scottsville. He describes himself as "not a pure academic."

"I have always done pastoral work at least part-time," he said. "The parish is where you take all you've learned and translate it into practice. That's what it's all about, isn't it?"

Throughout most of his academic career, Father Brennan has worked with candidates for professional Church ministry. He expects the University of Rochester, like Cambridge, to be a more diverse community, culturally and vocationally.

"In a university, you're dealing with a lot of

### National convention celebrates two decades of development, progress in pastoral music

Two local parish folk groups will be among the featured attractions at a celebration of pastoral music and musicians this month at Rochester's Genesee Plaza Holiday Inn.

Corpus Christi Parish's Thursday evening folk group and St. Augustine's folk group are two of the four groups chosen to perform during the Ensemble Festival of the National Pastoral Musicians' 1986 Northeast Regional Convention, July 14 to 17.

"It's not a competition, beyond the choosing of groups," said Todd Flowerday, who directs St. Augustine's group and participates in Corpus Christi's. "The whole idea is to sort of share music."

That's also the idea behind the convention, entitled "Hope and Beyond: The Developing Musician."

"Liturgical music has come a long, long way in the 20 years since Vatican II," said John Kubinec, associate director of the diocesan Office of Liturgy and one of the event's organizers. "There's still a lot of work that needs to be done. But looking back, you can see that a lot of good has been accomplished."

Back in 1976, congregations were singing little or no contemporary music at Corpus Christi Parish. The parish's first folk group



A scholar, but not a "pure academic," Father Joseph P. Brennan will bring diverse talents to his new position as the University of Rochester's new director of religious affairs.

people who are questioning. You're constantly forced to keep up with them," he said. "It's the same thing in a parish, but with a slightly different emphasis."

"Today, the Church is dealing with issues it didn't address 30 years ago when I was ordained," he added, citing sanctuary and apartheid as examples. "There weren't even structures to deal with them in the Church."

Academic interest in religion was heightened during the 1960s, as such church leaders as Martin Luther King Jr. began to take on leadership of social movements. Since then, Father Brennan believes, religious communities have assumed as ever-more prominent place on the campuses of secular universities. Ideally, he said, they should function as "catalysts for trying to help people with or without a religious background who are searching for meaning in life."

"I would like to make this chapel a place where a lot is happening, where religious life in all its traditions is flourishing," he said.

began playing at Thursday evening Mass. When the original group moved to Sundays, a new group formed for the Thursday service.

In the ensuing years, under the direction of Michael Aha, the latter group has developed a repertoire of nearly 200 songs. They vary from well-known contemporary folk music to traditional American spirituals performed on such instruments as the lap dulcimer and autoharp.

Flowerday has only directed St. Augustine's folk group for a year, but it was founded more than 10 years ago. Most of its repertoire consists of familiar contemporary and charismatic songs which the group has transformed with original arrangements.

Hosting the convention will be the Rochester NPM chapter, which achieved permanent status only last year. More than 200 volunteers and nearly 20 committees have been planning the event since last June. Although so far about 500 people have preregistered, organizers expect nearly 700 people from the Northeastern United States and Southern Canada to participate throughout the week.

For more information about the convention, contact the diocesan Office of Liturgy at (716)328-3210.

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