

# Retirement

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Seeberg said, the development office had to be created to operate such a campaign.

The development office is currently considering the nature of the capital campaign required to meet this need, and may be ready to begin the effort as early as this summer, Seeberg reported.

But Seeberg cautioned that funding for the retirement needs of women religious must be viewed in light of the diocese's overall funding needs. If all the recommendations contained in the report of the Five Year Financial Planning Task Force were to be implemented, the diocese would have to generate more than \$90 million.

Further, Seeberg observed, once the development office staff actually has explored all of the available funding sources, it may find that not enough money is available to meet all the needs listed in the task force report. And, he added, even when a capital campaign begins, the effort will not consist of collections, but will be a multi-year, multi-faceted effort.

The Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of Mercy, meanwhile, are not waiting for the diocese to clarify its plans. Both orders have created development offices of their own.

The Sisters of Mercy — with 245 mem-

bers, the smaller of the two local congregations — also is saving the money the diocese began paying to congregation members in retirement benefits. Those benefits, coupled with money taken from operating funds, have provided for the retired members of the congregations.

But taking money from operating funds restricts the amount of funds available to support ministries in which the congregation is involved, Sister Miller said. Thus, she added, the congregation is looking to the diocesan campaign for help.

Most of the 65 Mercy sisters who are above the age of 70 currently live at the motherhouse, Sister Miller reported. Those retirees frequently help with such office projects as bulk mailings, and at the high school, which is attached to the motherhouse.

The same is true of the Sisters of St. Joseph, noted Mary Ellen Potts, director of public relations for the congregation.

The retired members of the congregation are involved in a variety of ministries, such as prayer ministry or helping in the congregation's office, Potts noted.

The congregation — which currently numbers some 508 members — has 83 women above the age of 80, and 204 members in their 70s, Potts reported. Thus more than half of the congregational membership is not generating income.

Among the options being considered to help meet these costs is the construction of

retirement facility on the motherhouse grounds. This facility is intended not to house retired women religious — who are cared for at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary — but to generate rental income that would help support the retired members of the community.

Such a facility may also help meet the call for a retirement site for well diocesan priests, noted Father Robert Schrader, director of the Department of Priests' Personnel in the Division of Personnel.

Currently, retired priests who are well often live in nursing homes, which are increasingly overcrowded. Father Schrader reported that the diocese has also placed five priests in the SSJ's St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.

Most healthy retired priests live as boarders in rectories, while others — including the Fathers Gefell — reside in apartments or houses of their own.

Three rectories within the diocese have become retirement centers of sorts. Rochester's St. Thomas the Apostle currently houses three retired priests; five reside at St. Alphonsus, Auburn, five; and four live at St. Vincent DePaul's, Corning.

Father Gaynor said he chose to live in the St. Alphonsus rectory because he thought "the atmosphere would be better than living in an apartment.

"It would be quite lonesome living in an apartment by yourself," Father Gaynor said, observing that a retirement center for

well priests "would be a good idea."

Father Hayes, a longtime advocate of a retirement home for well priests, pointed out that not all retiring priests want to remain in rectories, however. He noted that such neighboring dioceses as Syracuse and Scranton have retirement homes, and that the diocese has received bequests amounting to approximately \$2 million to create a residence for retired priests.

Father Schrader acknowledged that a large bequest had been made for the needs of retired priests — although he was unsure of the exact amount. But that money has not all been received, and it was set aside for the needs of retired priests, not just for a retirement home, he said.

Nevertheless, he said the diocese is "continuing to study the retirement center idea of the Sisters of St. Joseph."

Thus, as the diocese considers its options, it appears likely that debate will continue as to whether a retirement home for well priests is needed.

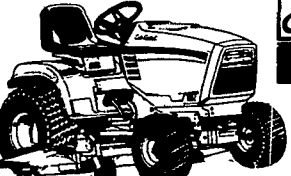
So, too, will concern about where the money will come from to support the retired members of religious congregations both locally and nationally.

"There never was an intention to rely on the charity of others," Sister Hudon declared. "The congregations have been working hard. The hope is that by 1997, most congregations will have accumulated enough in their own funds to support retired members."

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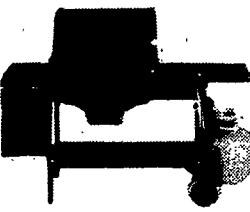
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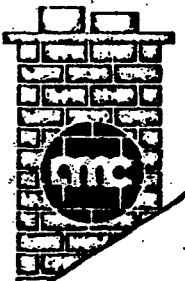
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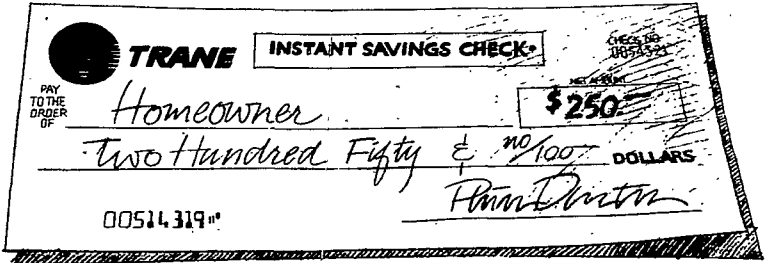
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